

Why PetSmart Is in the Dog House With Some Christians

American Family Association (AFA) is calling for a limited, one-month boycott of the pet retailer PetSmart over the company's censorship of the word "Christmas" in its seasonal shopping marketing materials.

For years, PetSmart has refused to use the word "Christmas" on its website or in television commercials, newspaper ads and in-store promotions, despite tens of thousands of consumer requests to recognize Christmas and in spite of repeated requests from AFA to do the same.

"PetSmart has ignored the pleas of its shoppers and AFA for years," said AFA President Tim Wildmon. "As consumers, let's tell PetSmart that we won't be doing any Christmas shopping for Fido and Fluffy in its stores this year."

This morning, AFA sent an Action Alert to its one million-plus friends and supports, asking them to take action in the following ways:

- Sign the 'Boycott PetSmart' online pledge.
- Call the PetSmart corporate office at (800) 738-1385, ext. 2518 and let the company know you are serious about taking your business elsewhere.
- On Facebook, leave a comment on PetSmart's Facebook page.
- Contact local PetSmart store managers and politely let them know that you won't be shopping at PetSmart this year and ask them to pass your comments along to the corporate office.

Shoppers who want proof of PetSmart's lack of Christmas spirit can visit www.petSMART.com and type "Christmas" in the search bar. As of today, the website yields no results, even though the

company's website is clearly marketing to Christmas shoppers. Instead, at PetSmart consumers will find a "Holiday Shop," a "holiday" wish list and plenty of "holiday" mentions but not one reference to "Christmas."

Ironically, PetSmart had no problem using "Halloween" in its marketing by promoting its "Halloween Shop" heavily for several weeks in October.

"PetSmart is censoring the word Christmas, pure and simple," Wildmon added. "Yet the company wants all the people who celebrate Christmas to do their shopping at its stores. Until PetSmart proves it recognizes Christmas by using the word in its newspaper, radio and television advertising or in-store signage, the boycott will be promoted throughout this Christmas season."

AFA has successfully influenced many of the nation's largest retailers to embrace the use of Christmas in their advertising. But at PetSmart, it's "Bah, Humbug!" AFA will regularly update PetSmart on the numbers of potential shoppers who have signed the boycott pledge.

In 2013, AFA encouraged a similar boycott of the Christmas-unfriendly Radio Shack, which saw dismal electronics sales and was forced to close 200 locations this year. In fact, many of Radio Shack's franchise owners joined AFA in urging the company to include "Christmas" in its marketing. This year, the shopping season at Radio Shack looks much different. The tech retailer began using "Christmas" well before the end of October. In fact, in a press release dated Oct. 22, Radio Shack promoted an "exclusive lineup of Christmas gifts."