



Jesus Banned From Christmas Program at Virginia Middle School

It's that time of year again: Christmas decorations are going up outside homes and businesses. Christmas trees adorn nearly every home. Nativity scenes are taking their place outside churches and public squares. And another school is banning Jesus and faith from its Christmas programs.

This year (so far) it's Robious Middle School in Midlothian, Virginia, where school officials have assumed the role of Grinch and nixed the inclusion of Christmas carols that refer to Jesus or Christian faith.



David Allen, whose child attends Robious, told local television station WWBT that he received an e-mail from the school's choir instructor informing him that officials from Robious Middle School had made a decision to ban the singing of holiday tunes that included any direct reference to Jesus. "We had a few students who weren't comfortable singing a piece I have done many times in the past," wrote the Robious Middle School choir teacher, "but it is of a sacred nature and does mention Jesus."

Allen said that the gist of the decision by school officials was that they wanted to avoid songs or the mention of anything "of a direct sacred nature" in order to be sensitive to an increasingly "diverse" student population.

"I'm trying to rationalize how you can encourage diversity and yet be exclusionary in one specific area," Allen said, adding that with a variety of songs, including Christmas carols, students "can get a feel of what each individual religion, ethnicity, and nationality has to offer. It's a school, it's a learning educational experience.... I wouldn't object to my children singing a Hindu song during their celebratory period of time."

While the annual "war against Christmas" seems to have lulled compared to past years, schools and local governments apparently still need to be reminded of the limits to their power to secularize the holiday season.

In a letter to the Chesterfield County School District, of which Robious Middle School is a part, attorney Michael Berry of First Liberty Institute, a conservative legal advocacy group, pointed out that schools do not have the authority to simply ban Jesus from Christmas celebrations or choir concerts. "Federal courts have upheld the constitutionality of public school holiday programs that include the use of religious music, art, or drama," wrote Berry, "so long as the material is presented in an objective manner 'as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday.'"

As for the public at large, each year Christmas in America appears to be growing less religious and more of a secular affair. According to a 2017 survey by the Pew Research Center, while 56 percent of Americans think that the Christmas season is less religious than in the past, only 25 percent of those surveyed are troubled by that slide.



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 28, 2018

Similarly, fewer numbers of Americans believe that Christian holiday displays should be allowed in schools or on government property. Of those surveyed, only 37 percent approved of Christian displays such as nativity scenes at government facilities, down from 44 percent in 2014.”

And as for Christmas greetings, the numbers of those who would prefer a religious greeting such as “Merry Christmas” over a secular one such as “Happy Holidays” has also slipped over the past decade. More than 50 percent of those surveyed said how they are greeted by businesses and others doesn’t matter, compared to those surveyed in 2005, when 45 percent said they didn’t care about the type of holiday greeting they received. By contrast, only 32 percent of those surveyed said they preferred “Merry Christmas,” down significantly from 2005, when 43 percent said they preferred a Christian holiday greeting.

Most alarming is the decrease in biblical beliefs about the Christmas story. According to the 2017 Pew survey, only:

- 66 percent of Americans believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, down from 73 percent in 2014.
- 75 percent believe that Jesus was laid in a manger, down from 81 percent in 2014.
- 68 percent believe that wise men, guided by a star, brought gifts to the baby Jesus, down from 75 percent in 2014.
- 67 percent believe that angels announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds, down from 74 percent in 2014.

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