

"Political correctness" is being forced into every area of our lives.

For several years, there has been a concerted effort in this country to remove Christianity from the public square. This includes replacing Christmas-tree lightings and Christmas parades with holiday-tree lightings and holiday parades.

I submit that there are four good reasons to hold onto our Christmas traditions.

The first reason is history. America was founded as a Christian nation. The Mayflower Compact -- America's first self-governing document -- begins with these words: "In the name of God. Amen."

The Pilgrims came to the New World to glorify God and advance the Christian faith. In 1639, Connecticut adopted a set of Fundamental Orders to govern itself according to the laws of God in order to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Education, at the founding of this country, was thoroughly Christian. The main purpose for teaching children to read was so that they could read the Bible. The New England Primer taught Biblical doctrine in the alphabet. For the letter "A," the children learned: "In Adam's fall we sinned all." B: "Heaven to find; The Bible Mind." C: "Christ crucify'd For sinners dy'd."

Harvard was founded to train ministers of the Gospel. Yale, Columbia, Princeton and Dartmouth were all founded as Christian schools.

Christianity is at the very heart of the Declaration of Independence. That founding document acknowledges God as the Creator of man and the only giver of the unalienable rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

One of the great myths of our time is "the separation of church and state." That phrase is not found in our Constitution. It comes from a letter that Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Danbury Baptists, in which he suggested that the First Amendment erected a "wall of separation between church and state."

The best way to judge Mr. Jefferson's words is to look at his actions. He wrote that letter on Jan. 1, 1802. On Sunday, Jan. 3, Jefferson went to his first church service held in the House of Representatives of the United States. It is obvious from Mr. Jefferson's actions that the "wall of separation" he wrote about did not prevent the "church" from holding services in the "state's" buildings.

At the Constitutional Convention Benjamin Franklin exemplified the Founders' beliefs when he moved "that hereafter prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven be held in this assembly every morning." This "least religious" of all the Founders saw no conflict -- at the Constitutional Convention -- in praying to the God of Heaven and quoting from his eternal word!

When the First Amendment received final approval, it contained the two clauses that we are familiar with today: the Establishment Clause, which prohibited the federal government from

establishing a national denomination, and the Free Exercise Clause, which prohibited Congress from interfering with the public expression and practice of religion.

The interesting thing is that all of the restrictions are placed on the government; none of the restrictions are placed on the people. This is precisely what Thomas Jefferson meant in his letter to the Danbury Baptists. The "wall of separation" that he wrote about was designed to keep the federal government from interfering with any town in America that wanted to have a Christmas-tree lighting and a Christmas parade.

In 1892, in *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*, the unanimous decision of the court was that America is a "Christian nation." Nearly half of this decision is devoted to the support of that statement. In a "Christian nation," tree lighting ceremonies and Christmas parades are both legal and encouraged!

The second reason is public consensus. According to the latest polls, 76 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christians, 95 percent of Americans celebrate Christmas, and 72 percent prefer "Merry Christmas" to "Happy Holidays."

The third reason is logic. During the course of a year, there are numerous holidays on our calendar. Which of these holidays does a holiday parade purport to commemorate? People don't just up and light a tree and have a parade for no reason. Holidays have names and reasons for their celebration. That is what gives them meaning and significance.

To take a named holiday (Christmas) that has meaning and significance in the minds of 95 percent of Americans and pretend to celebrate it under the generic name of "holiday" defies anything that is reasonable to the rational mind.

The fourth reason is that God is for it. Psalm 33:12 says: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." The infallible proof of this verse is this great nation. There has never been another one like it. And our exceptionalism is due to only one thing: This is the only nation in history that was founded from its very beginning on the word of God.

It is time to stand up and not be afraid to have a Christmas-tree lighting and a Christmas parade. History is on our side. Consensus is on our side. Logic is on our side, and God is on our side.