

# HSBC: BEACON OF CORPORATE BIGOTRY

Just when we thought we had heard the last story about the “holiday wars” of 2002, a bank issued a statement that really caught our eye.

At the end of January, HSBC USA apologized for altering the religious imagery of a fifth-grader’s holiday card submission. Gregory Paladino, a student at Our Mother of Sorrows outside of Rochester, New York, had won \$1,000 for his school when his card was declared the winner in the HSBC holiday card contest. But the card the student submitted—showing a dove hovering over a village—was declared objectionable by the bank judges because it also showed a church with a steeple and a cross.

Instead of rejecting the card because it violated the HSBC policy of prohibiting religious imagery, HSBC decided to print the winning card after they had removed the steeple and cross; by excising the church, it was intentionally made to look like other houses in the scene.

An apology for altering the card was granted by Youssef A. Nasr, chief executive of HSBC. He hastened to add that the card should never have been chosen as the winner since it violated the bank’s policy regarding religious imagery.

Here is the text of our news release on this subject:

“HSBC doesn’t get it. It made two egregious errors: a) the decision to bar religious imagery and b) the decision to delete it. Responsibility has only been taken for the latter.

“Holiday cards in December do not celebrate Martin Luther King’s birthday any more than they celebrate President’s Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day or Thanksgiving. They celebrate Christmas.

Everyone knows this but many elites in our society prefer to live in complete denial. They are more interested in protecting the sensibilities of non-Christians than they are in giving due recognition to Christians. In doing so, they unwittingly suggest that all non-Christians are offended by the Christmas holiday. This is itself a bigoted statement aimed at Jews, Muslims and non-believers, most of whom are no more bigoted than are Christians.

“Because we have some traitors in the U.S., look for HSBC to bar patriotic imagery from cards that celebrate the Fourth of July.”