

THERE ARE NO CHRISTMAS WARS?

The following events/remarks were made at Christmastime 2005:

The *Palm Beach Post* said that in South Florida malls, "There are dangling ornaments, Christmas trees, but no crosses or angels, *certainly no Mother Mary cradling her newborn son*" (our italics). Senior citizens were told by government officials in Winter Park, Florida that they were not allowed to sing Christmas carols. Government workers in Illinois were ordered not to say "Merry Christmas." Christians in Rhode Island were told they could not put Christmas decorations on the City Hall's lawn.

In a park shared by Neptune Beach and Atlantic Beach, Florida, the private display of a manger scene was originally censored, but a large menorah was said to be okay. No schools in Palm Beach permitted crèches, but some allowed menorahs. School districts in Glendale, Illinois, Eagle County, Colorado and Long Island, New York, banned Christmas religious songs but allowed songs celebrating Hanukkah.

Residents in Middletown, New Jersey, got a holiday card from town library officials that included Christmas greetings in Spanish, Chinese, French and German, but not in English. Students at an Alexandria, Virginia school were told they could sing "Feliz Navidad," but not "White Christmas." A school in the Belleville, Illinois area banned all references to Christmas but allowed an Indian, John White Antelope, to speak about his native religion.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, writer Joel Stein said, "We Jews find it a little embarrassing that adults can still make such a fuss over Christmas. To us, Jesus was just a cool guy everyone liked because he died young. And even 16-year-old girls eventually take down their James Dean posters." Andrew Edlin, a New York gallery owner, offered, "All the people who

have murdered us over the years have Christmas trees.” The sign, “Jesus Is The Reason For The Season,” incensed Amanda Alpert of Raleigh, North Carolina because “I’m Jewish, and the reason for the season is upsetting to me.” When asked to explain why Christians were unhappy with her opposition to crèches, Rabbi Leah Richman of Pottsville, Pennsylvania said, “They’re taking my stand as being anti-tolerance and anti-diversity because I’m not tolerant of their nativity scene.”