

# Taking Christ out of Christmas, sacrilege

By George Curry  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

This is the season to be jolly, but you'd never know it, considering all the attacks on Christmas. In a well-intended but misguided effort to be more inclusive of other religions, some government units, businesses and civic groups are urging everyone to stop saying, "Merry Christmas" and replace it with a bland, and presumably more acceptable, "happy holidays."

This is where I part company with many of my liberal friends. The purpose of Christmas — the commercialization issue notwithstanding — is to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, which is recounted in the first chapter of Matthew, beginning with verse 18.

As a Christian, I make no apologies for celebrating my faith. There is no getting around it: Christmas is about the birth of Christ. Period. It would be the ultimate insult to relegate Jesus to the background in an effort not to offend non-Christians. We can celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ while wishing our Jewish friends, for example, a Happy Hanukkah. The two are not mutually exclusive.

Like it or not, the reality is that this nation was founded by Christians and established, at least in principle, on Judeo-Christian values. The Founding Fathers, most of whom owned slaves, did not always exhibit the

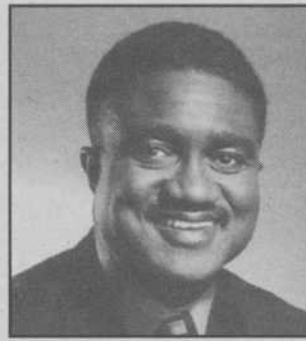
Christian spirit but they at least held it up as an ideal. So much so that our currency still reads, "In God we Trust." At Christmas, the last group that should be offended is Christians. But that is exactly what's been happening in recent years.

A controversy erupted in Boston recently over what to call their city's 48-foot spruce tree in a December 1 ceremony. The city's website called it a "holiday tree" instead of a Christmas tree and that touched off an angry backlash, especially among Christian conservatives. Evangelist Jerry Falwell told Fox television, "There has been a concerted effort to steal Christmas."

City officials finally relented. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino told reporters that he would keep calling the spruce a "Christmas tree." He explained, "I grew up with a Christmas tree; I'm going to stay with a Christmas tree."

Some of the back-and-forth over what to call the trees has taken place with less fanfare.

Until the late 1990s, the lighted, decorated tree on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol was called a Christmas tree. Someone came up with, shall we say, the bright idea of referring to it as the "holiday tree." Now, House



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Speaker Dennis Haster, R-Ill., has instructed federal officials to return to the old name — the Capitol Christmas Tree.

Last year, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger reversed a decision by his predecessor, former Gov. Gray Davis, and began referring to the state's symbol as a Christmas tree, not a holiday tree.

It's astounding how far some have gone in recent years to be politically correct — or incorrect, depending on your point of view.

Last year, the Plano, Texas, Independent School District banned students from wearing red and green at their winter break parties because they were considered Christmas colors. Students were forbidden from exchanging gifts with religious messages on them, apparently fearing "Merry Christmas" and reindeers might offend others.

While that was happening in Texas, the Maplewood and South Orange, N.J., combined school system was banning Christmas carols — even those about Santa Claus. Christmas without "Silent Night" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing?" I can't even imagine it, and I have a pretty lucid imagination. I suppose that would be tantamount to trying to have an Easter egg hunt without eggs.

Oops, I guess if we're not supposed to make references to the birth of Christ, then celebrating his resurrection is really off-limits. My bad.

Speaking of bad, things got so bad that a public school in Wisconsin told students to change religious words in Christmas carols for an upcoming concert. In Jackson County, Ga., they reportedly banned certain jewelry, which would presumably include pins that read, "Jesus is the Reason for the Season."

Finally, let me address the political aspects of this controversy. Make no mistake about it: The driving force behind reclaiming Christmas is conservatives, through such organizations as the Alliance Defense Fund and Liberty Counsel, both affiliated with Jerry Falwell. The televangelist and others at the forefront of this movement also actively oppose affirmative action and other social programs that I, to the contrary, support.

But as a free thinker, I don't take positions only if right-wingers don't take them. They are not part of my thought process. We should take positions because they are right and not oppose a view simply because it is supported by the right. And if we get confused, we can always fall back on: What Would Jesus Do?

Merry Christmas!

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service.

## Farley's Coffee: Right blend of success, giving

By James Clingman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

"The coffee with a classic taste" is the slogan that always follows the Farley's name, and I can personally attest to the truth of that statement. Do you know about this privately-owned Black company in Seattle? Have you tasted its fine coffees? Are you aware of Farley's commitment to and involvement in economic empowerment and community development? Did you know that Farley's demonstrates its corporate citizenship by giving back to schools, youth programs and other worthwhile causes? Well, if you don't know about Farley's Coffee Inc., just sit back, read this and enjoy a refreshing insight on one of this country's most progressive businesses.

Creative, innovative, altruistic, conscientious and conscious. All of those words describe the owners and operators of Farley's Coffee. Since first speaking to company President, Ricky Fyles, I have been impressed with his warmth, his sincerity and his follow through. Not only is he an astute businessman, he is genuinely concerned about Farley's social impact on others. In demonstration of that, Farley's has implemented a brand new "give back" strategy with its new Hip Hop Blend, which was exclusively designed and is marketed to help Historically

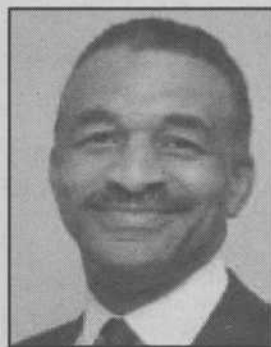
Black Colleges and Universities and underprivileged students.

Fyles states, "We will direct a portion of the proceeds from each sale of our Hip Hop Coffee Blend to [HBCUs]."

Chairman and CEO, Raymond Wilford said, "With increasing demands to help sustain education, it is important to take the time to support our communities within one's capacity to give." He went on to emphasize, "We are missing economic opportunities by not investing our dollars within our own communities... we have a heart and a responsibility to our communities."

Those two statements alone reeled me in like a fish on a hook, along with the great taste of "the coffee with the classic taste." I immediately ordered a couple of pounds and have been drinking Farley's fine gourmet coffee for several weeks now. There are many blends and varieties from which to choose, and you can read all about the company online at [www.farleyscoffeeinc.com](http://www.farleyscoffeeinc.com).

Farley's has a special partner, too. Familiar to all who follow pro basketball (unless you're my age and knew him during his days



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at Providence), NBA legend Lenny Wilkens has joined Farley's Coffee Inc. "Something has to be done to improve the future of society and create positive opportunities for our youth. It begins one person at a time. We need to support each other," stated an exuberant Wilkens.

What a team! Farley's, with an annual minimum blending, roasting and delivery capacity of 10 million pounds, with the infrastructure capacity to deliver 25 million pounds, finds itself on the cusp of greatness. We can all benefit from its continued growth. Thus, it's up to us to support this and other companies owned by conscious brothers and sisters if we are serious about doing more for ourselves and building — and leaving — an economic foundation for our children.

Ricky Fyles laments on why a Black-owned coffee company does not get the level of support from Black people commensurate to our overall consumption of coffee. Of course, he is not asking that only Black folks support the company. It is not a charity case. Farley's sells its coffees to all consumers; however, as I have seen over the years, and many of my readers know, our tendency is to opt for the products and services of others, despite how great our goods and services may be. Thus, while Farley's wants your business, it's not simply because it's Black-owned. Farley's desires your business because it delivers an excellent product — and because it wants to do as much as it can to help our youth.

If we do need incentives to support our own, however, they can be found in Farley's Coffee Inc. Everyone who reads this should immediately look for ways to give Farley's some business. Yes, I have already done so,

through a company I work with called The Bike Detail, a 13-year-old business that provides special services to outdoor events, mainly multi-day bicycle rides throughout the country. We serve gourmet coffee to the cyclists, and now they will be drinking Farley's Gourmet Coffee.

Here's the bottom line: We must redirect our coffee dollars to Farley's. There are many ways to boost sales for this Black company and allow it to do more for our youth and for other worthy causes and institutions. Let's start with our churches. Imagine for a moment the thousands of Black churches in this country buying and serving Farley's Coffee. I could stop there, but I won't. How about all of our HBCUs serving Farley's Coffee in their campus cafeterias? That's a no-brainer, right? After all, a portion of the proceeds goes to those schools.

Black firms, make Farley's Coffee the brand you serve. Black conventioners, conferees and meeting planners insist that Farley's Coffee be served with your meals in all of those hotels and banquet halls you support. Sponsoring a cruise? Insist on Farley's. Black restaurants, if you are not serving Farley's, you should start. As the commercial says, "Imagine the possibilities."

One of Farley's goals is to provide 200 franchise opportunities to prospective entrepreneurs. Coffee, virtually a recession-proof commodity, second in worldwide sales only to oil, some of the best of which is grown in Africa, can provide profitable, vertically integrated business ventures for Black people. Let's not miss this opportunity.

Farley's is a glowing example of doing good and doing well at the same time. Support Farley's Coffee, "The coffee with a classic taste," one delicious sip at a time.

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## LaGrande

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ties are included in the mix.

After the formation of the independent expert panel, who has been charged with the responsibility of reviewing child death cases, their work will in turn be reviewed by a "blue ribbon review committee." In the meantime, more children will be abused, neglected and killed.

There's an old saying, "Our children are

our future." Our future can't look too bright if we can't allocate the time and resources necessary to protect the most vulnerable in our society — our babies and our children. In fact, if we continue to stand back and continuously allow them to be killed and abused, we just might not have a future at all. Future child deaths and maltreatment of children in Nevada must be prevented, no matter the cost.