

Christmas Memories And Joys Of The Season

One of my favorite songs of the Christmas Season that exemplifies one of the premier attributes of this time of year is Give Love on Christmas Day by the Jackson Five. The title says it all. When hearing the melodic harmonies of that and numerous other Christmas Season ditties, I am reminded of the wonder years of my childhood in Cleveland. During the first twelve years of my life, our neighborhood was a joy to live in. Our neighbors were such good friends and in some cases were closer to us than a few family members. It was a tight knit community filled with good people from numerous ethnic backgrounds. There were Polish, French, American Indians, Italians, Jewish and Black families.

Despite the various backgrounds, the one thing we all considered ourselves was Americans and except our good Jewish friends, we were either Christian or Catholic. On Independence Day, Memorial Day, Flag day, Veterans day and on numerous other occasions, most residents in our neighborhood at almost every house flew old glory's stars and stripes of red white and blue. It was an impressive site to see. For most of the time, it was a good life throughout the year. But it all paled in comparison to my favorite time of year, from Thanksgiving Day until New Years Eve, otherwise known as the Christmas Season. Even a couple of weeks before Thanksgiving one could sense the change in the atmosphere as the most wonderful time of the year was approaching.

I will not lie to you, as a child I did look forward to gift giving and the receiving of Christmas gifts. But Christmas to me was so much more than that. Our generation was just a hare's breath before politicly correct leftist grinches banned the celebration of Christmas in government schools. I will never forget how every Christmas season at Parkwood elementary

the student body made Christmas ornaments for the big Christmas tree displayed in the school lobby. We were so proud because it was our school Christmas tree that residents either walking or driving by our school would see shimmering under a shower of light emanating from ceiling spotlights. It saddens me to witness the cold sterile interpretation of this special time of year thus denying millions of American students the unbridled joy that used to be associated with Christmas by most sovereign American.

As a little boy, it was usually great to hang out with my Dad, but from Thanksgiving until just after Christmas, was simply wonderful. The week leading up to Thanksgiving after school I gleefully helped Dad decorate the outside of our home. It was usually cold, but we did not care. After all, as dear old Dad put it, the lights, the Christmas tree and all the decorations were simply a part of the overall celebration of the birth of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. If you are wondering, old St. Nick was highly regarded as well. Just as we were decorating our home, so were most of our neighbors. There were friendly rivalries home decorating rivalries between many neighbors to see who would have the most spectacularly decorated house. The results were nothing less than blocks and blocks of Christmas inspired displays of twinkling lights, nativity scenes and Santa Clauses everywhere.

I truly miss the Christmas carolers strolling throughout the old neighborhood bringing song and merriment. Dad would always have hot cocoa and cider for those bringing the sound of seasonal merriment to our front door. Another huge highlight of the Christmas Season while growing up in Cleveland was to go downtown, either via transit train or motorcar. The Christmas displays were mind blowing, especially when compared to the mostly watered down less imaginative displays seen today. The eight department stores were themselves literally turned into wonderlands that I sometimes thought were inspired by God himself. One of my favorites was Sterling Linder Davis

where they displayed literally the worlds largest indoor Christmas tree that was taller than the Rockefeller Christmas tree in New York City. The ornaments on that mega tree were the size of beach balls. The massive crowds of Christmas shoppers added to the delightful atmosphere in downtown Cleveland. My sister and I used to joke about being able to jump up and be carried by the crowds because they were so thick.

But despite the hugeness of the crowds, the mile long shopping district on Euclid Avenue between Cleveland's Public and Playhouse squares that rivaled Chicago's magnificent mile, people were very friendly and seemingly as excited about the Christmas Season as I was. At the age of ten I was especially inspired by the beautiful Christmas tree displays at Higbee's Department store downtown Cleveland. It occurred to me that we needed to seriously upgrade how the decorations were presented on our family tree. So, I waited until the next evening at dinner to try and convince my family that I could do a much better job by myself decorating the tree than everybody working on it together. Of course, my older sisters were not having any of that. But Dad overruled and said go for it. He later told me he thought I wouldn't do as well as I thought. But he wanted to give me a shot because he liked the fact that I wanted to achieve something and succeed or fail, I deserved the opportunity to try because that is one of the ways people grow and learn how to accomplish things. After successfully decorating that tree, it was my duty from that year on. My inspiration was well founded.

My childhood Christmas memories of gatherings with family and friends will forever be etched in my mind as among the best times of my entire life. The pure love and joy of the Christmas Season was so strong, that even our Orthodox Jewish neighbors would visit and share in our love of God and one another. In our house, Dad made sure that my two older sisters and I fully understood the real meaning of Christmas

not only in words, but in deeds as well. Usually after the traditional early morning Christmas prayer, the opening of gifts and a fantastic breakfast, Dad would summon us to get dressed for an excursion. By afternoon, Mother would make sure my sisters and I were ready to join Dad in the family car for our Christmas afternoon outing.

Before long, Dad had driven us to either a friend or relatives house that were a in a difficult way and weren't able to fully engage in the blessings of the Christmas season. Not only would Dad have gifts for their children, but Mother and Nana brought food they prepared for the family. Dad would ask my sisters and I to contribute a small portion of our savings along with he and Mother's share which he would discretely give to the father head of the household. When one of my older sisters asked why she had to give up some of her money for such an endeavor, he sternly said that we needed to learn about the blessings of giving. He would add "If Christ gave his life for us, then we should follow His example and give sacrificially of ourselves especially on the day chosen to celebrate his birth". Looking back on those fond memories of Christmases of long ago, I am forever grateful for Dad, who taught us through both words and deeds the true meaning of Christmas and to appreciation our republic. Those wonderful memories are too numerous for the space allotted for this column. But many more shall be chronicled in my upcoming book

So to you and yours, may your Christmas be happy and your life be filled with joy and your new year be on of new beginnings and fulfilment of your ordained purpose. God bless you, God bless America and may America bless God. Join me on Fridays on KCKQ AM 1180 Reno, Nv. and worldwide on americamatters.us, SHRmedia.com and Spreaker at 1:00 PM PT, 4:00 PM 1:00 PM ET. See you on the radio.

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