opinion cont.

‘Secularization’ and holidays

(Continued from page 4) forms of religious compulsion in the United States today.

I am referring, of course, to the erection of MIT’s Christmas tree, the organization of Christmas observances on campus, the closing of the Institute on Christmas, without any reciprocal recognition of observances of other religions. Nothing (as far as I know) is in the charter of the MIT corporation authorizes it to act as a religious organization, organizing religious activities (although it may, of course, support such activities organized by student groups). I do not wish to be included, through my representation by MIT, in the erection of Christian religious symbols, and feel that MIT must recognize that much of its clientele (students and staff) are essentially being passively compelled to contribute to such activities through the actions of MIT.

In a certain sense, the problem with “secularization” of religious ceremonies is that people are trying to be nice to me and other non-Christian students, but are blowing it, due to ignorance. In order to “allow” non-Christian students to participate in such observances, such as Christmas parties, the organizers seek to demonstrate the religious aspect, and claim that the event is purely seasonal or social. It does not work, though, because the underlying truth remains evident; and it becomes a form of insidious compulsion, because the motive is non-compulsory, it is now under social pressures to join, with his principle objection (in the minds of the organizers) defused. This is not religious tolerance; religious tolerance requires recognition of the rights of followers of other religions not to participate in Christian ceremonies, not efforts to trick them into participating by lying about the religious significance of the event. That is a form of insidious proselytization, whether recognized for what it is or not. I would much rather that the Institute stopped this nonsense of pretending that Christmas is a non-religious, “seasonal” or “national” holiday, and recognized it for what it is. The means, of course relegating it to the realms of the religious organizations on campus. Either that, or provide equal recognition to observances of other religious groups, by closing (for example) on the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, just as the Institute is closed during the Twelve Days of Christmas. And don’t add insult to injury by erecting a Chanukah menorah next to your Christmas tree. It may save your consciences, but it just doesn’t have the significance you think. I won’t buy it.

Joseph Weinstein

“We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth.” (John 1:43)

“Surely our diseases he did bear, and our pains he carried; whereas we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded because of our transgression, he was bruised because of our iniquities ... and the Lord hath made to light on him the iniquity of us all... for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.” (Messianic Text, Isaiah 53:4-6, R: circa 712 B.C.E.)

“Our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet (Isaiah) is speaking of the King Messiah, and we shall ourselves also adhere to the same view.” (Rabbi Moses Abbeke, late 16th century C.E., Commentaries on the Earlier Prophets)

“He (the Messiah) will give himself and his life over unto death, and his blood will stone for his people.” (Luchoth Haberith: 26:24)

Jesus Hambell said, “for this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:28; cf. Jeremiah 31:31-33, Zechariah 11:12, Isaiah 59:25-26)

Courtesy of Jewish believers at MIT and at Ruggles Baptist Church.

Psychology, Science, Philosophy, and the Meaning of Life

A Course of human pragmatic concerns. East and West, involving free form personal thought, exertion, and expression of self. Influential ideas include those of Freud, Fromm, Jung, Adler, Erickson, Allport, Maslow, Reich, Piaget, Hegel, Husserl, Sartre, Locke, Descartes, Kant, Christian Theosophy, Hinduism, Zen and Buddhism, Islam, the Tao, Darwin, Einstein, Nietzsche, Dewey, Skinner, Reichenbach, Eibl-Eibesfeldt, and contributions from the seminar audience.

Call or write

Nancy S. Mroczek, Psychologist, Ph.D.
Specialist in Human Contingency Management

Beginning January 6, 1979
Saturdays 14 PM
390 Commonwealth Ave
Boston 536-9591

Fee: 10.00 per session