

14th December 2006

Fröhliche Weihnacht überall

by Wesley Trobaugh



Disclaimer: If you love Christmas or even slightly like it, this Weekly Letter is not about you. Rejoice!

It's time for my annual pro-Christmas ramble. This year my love for the holiday season is even stronger after my trip to Germany and its *Weinachtsmärkte*. It makes one pine for the true Christmastime, with its evergreen branches, Advent wreaths, red ribbons, and golden angels. You can be a cynic and call it kitsch. Perhaps I love Christmas because it is the one time of year when it is OK to be kitsch.

In Germany, not one tree, not one lamppost, not one shop window is saved from garland. Not one square is saved from the smell of *Glühwein*, *Lebkuchen*, and *Bratwurst*. O! The glory of Christmas! I may be wrong but it seems that, as in my country, people live Christmas in a different way than in Spain. People are excited to decorate the tree, excited to put lights in the windows, excited to sing carols. Here people drag out the tree because they have to and the only ones singing carols are greedy children on Christmas Eve out to make a few bucks by mumbling some out-of-tune carols at your door.

People complain about spending, people complain about all of the people at the supermarkets, people complain about the family dinners. Here's my solution. Don't do it. Scrooges who hate Christmas ruin it for the rest of us by frowning and moaning. If you don't want to take part, don't!

I've heard time and again that Christmas is a hypocritical time of year when we are nice to people that we are mean to the rest of the year. Not true. If I hate you, I'm not going to be any nicer to you at Christmas than any other time of the year. Besides, I think people that say they hate Christmas say so just to be different, to be modern, to be hip, to sound intellectual. But as far as I'm concerned, they are not the least bit cool and are the biggest hypocrites of all because everybody likes a present!

I've heard time and again that Christmas is a sad time of year because we remember then people who are no longer here to celebrate with us. Don't you remember them the rest of the year? Must we stop living because they did? Would they appreciate your melancholic holidays? Christmas as a child is a marvellous thing but we are no longer children. We must look at Christmas from another perspective. Do not live in the past; it will never, ever return.

Christmas for me is *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. See it. It is kitsch, I admit it. I showed it to students once and they said "vaya chorrada." That hurt more than any "bah humbug" ever could. My favorite part is when Linus tells the story of Christmas after Charlie Brown asks if there is anyone who knows what Christmas is all about.

Merry Christmas!