

Student #1

GS 3200

Week 1 Assignment

The statement, “This year’s multi-cultural, generic ‘holiday’ play is ‘Mary and the Magic Baby,’” is a reflection on the secularization that is occurring in the world. The implication with the terms used here is that the audience of this play has become secular enough that it has modernized every term for the Christian Christmas play that tells the story of the birth of Jesus. As of 2010, this could be a very likely statement for much of the



globe in terms of postindustrial nations and their practiced beliefs. However, even though church going and other statistics to measure secularization have decreased, in the countries showing increase secularization “the remnants of religion have not died away; in surveys most Europeans still express formal belief in God, or identify themselves as Protestants or Catholics on official forms” (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 5). The terms used in this introduction for the play further imply that the audience may take offense to any religious terms. From this perspective, considering that much of the world still declares an official religion of Christian origin the play would still be called a Christmas play, full of all of the traditional word choice for this story (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 45-47). Overall, this would not be a likely global statement for 2010.

This scenario would not really apply in a non Christian society and this really narrows down where this would be mostly likely to be an accurate situation. Based on the continued

religious stability of the United States, it is the least likely of the postindustrial nations to have this representation be accurate. The information presented in the initial chapter of *Sacred and Secular* illustrates a more religious society in the United States than is found in most postindustrial nations (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 4). Potential reasons for this include increased immigration to the United States from religious cultures, the way in which church has become a source of community and additional social services, and the freedom of religion and religious diversity offered in the United States (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 12, 22, 25). Based solely on the stable religiosity in the United States, this is currently not something that should be expected in the United States. However, the United States has also experienced a strong stance on political correctness that seems to override religious freedoms as far as public expression. Many are familiar with news stories and times when Christmas parties at work had to be called “holiday” parties and certain religious elements of decorations, such as nativity scenes were not allowed. Just this past month, another article was written discussing this phenomenon and the change in decoration in public areas in the name of political correctness, though the true intentions behind religion on holiday décor have been debated and yet to be seen with certainty (Fisher 2010). Based on political correctness pressures in the United States, this may actually be a very real situation in parts of this country. In the United Kingdom, there is a similar force from politically correct groups, but more support for the Christian roots of Christmas is evident. BBC News reported town councils being encouraged to show Christian elements of Christmas in their holiday decorations in spite of politically correct proponents. All things considered and with a limited scope of research, the United States could be the most likely of nations to have this scenario come to fruition.

## References

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Fisher, Dan. 2010. "Merry \_\_\_\_\_ mas." *New American*.

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