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Changing Christmas Traditions Revealed in New Survey

Chesterfield, MO – New research conducted on behalf of the National Christmas Tree Association has shown a major erosion of key aspects of Christmas celebrations among U.S. adults since a similar survey conducted in 1996.

“While participation in activities associated with commercial elements have remained about the same in the last 10 years, activities revolving around Christian values and Christian celebrations have dropped dramatically,” NCTA Chief Executive Steve Drake reported at the first annual Christmas Traditions Summit, held recently in St. Louis. The Summit is a conference of companies and organizations engaged in the Christmas holidays. “We have been concerned about changes in consumer attitudes surrounding Christmas and invited others who are involved in Christmas traditions to join us for discussions about trends and possible collaborative efforts.”

Among activities traditionally considered Christian:

- attending a religious service during the Christmas holidays declined 20 percentage points from 63 percent to 43 percent
- taking time for religious reflection declined 22 percentage points from 57 percent to 35 percent
- giving food, money or clothing to those less fortunate declined 15 percentage points from 68 percent to 53 percent
- reading the Bible or other religious books declined 27 percentage points from 51 percent to 24 percent
- volunteering for charitable activities declined 23 percentage points from 36 percent to 13 percent

Meanwhile, among activities often considered more commercial:

- exchanging gifts increased eight percentage points from 77 percent to 85 percent
- decorating a Christmas tree was about the same at 74 percent

- decorating the home was about the same at 71 percent
- sending greeting cards was about the same at 69 percent
- attending Christmas parties was about the same at 56 percent

Among other activities during the Christmas holidays:

- cooking a holiday meal declined 11 percentage points from 73 percent to 62 percent
- making Christmas cookies, candy or desserts declined nine percentage points from 61 percent to 52 percent
- attending family gatherings remained the same at 75 percent
- playing Christmas music remained the same at 68 percent

Methodology

Harris Interactive® fielded the current study from May 25-27, 2005, via its QuickQuerySM online omnibus, interviewing a nationwide sample of 2,012 U.S. adults aged 18 and over. Data were weighted to reflect the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online. Though this online sample is not a probability sample, in theory, with a probability sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy.

Methodology For 1996 Study

The Tarrance Group and Lake Research conducted the 1996 research for *U.S. News & World Report* and Bozell Worldwide. The poll – conducted November 6-November 10, 1996 involved telephone interviews with a national adult sample of 1,003.

Note: Data analysis of the two studies carried out by **DRAKE & COMPANY** on behalf of NCTA.

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