

## **The Woes of Christmas**

It is all but ironic that the traditional carols of Christmas generally refer to the joy that the season is supposed to bring. Those busy shoppers who go on a spending frenzy are obviously relishing in the commercial element of Christmas. It is expected that the purchases are intended to bring some joy to family members, special friends and the less fortunate.

In recent times the face of Christmas cheer has been changing as many move away from the tradition of sharing, to focusing on themselves. It is questionable how many spare a thought for the poor and the needy. As it would seem, many of the less fortunate are sometimes reduced to receiving the things that are discarded, as persons replace the old with the new.

It has become apparent that the adage of ‘charity begins at home’ is becoming more and more meaningless. Why is this seemingly so? In the past many business enterprises sought to find a way to give back to the community at this time of year. Some offered food hampers, gifts of some kind or even sponsored a social event of some kind. This is slowly changing amidst the cries of the down turn in the economic fortunes of many business enterprises.

It is equally amazing that at this time of year some businesses are not showing signs of outreach to their employees. It was once tradition to have the enterprise sponsor a Christmas staff party, luncheon, or even distribute gifts to members of staff. Many may recall when the gift of a ham, turkey and a bottle of wine or some other alcohol beverage, made up the Christmas gift hamper. These are things that are slowly becoming extinct. It is now the practice that staff members are required to make a financial contribution to the Christmas staff party, luncheon or event; whichever form it might take.

This development is one that should cause people to think of the changing attitudes and outlook our societies have. In the past, annual Christmas social was the perfect opportunity for staff members to socialize, build and cement the working relationships. It presented management with the prime opportunity to connect with staff members and to sow seeds of contention that are necessary for the development of a strong employer – employee relationship.

As it stands now, many staff members opt not to be part of any Christmas social activities. Some become disgruntle at the fact that as it was in the past, they are unable to invite a family member to share in the planned activity at the workplace.

The fact that they are required to pay while the establishment declares high profit margins for the year, is considered to be offensive and insulting. What are we left with as the coming year approaches? It is not difficult to realize that the seemingly lack of interest by management in its outreach to the staff will lead to a demotivated, less committed and productive employee.

This need not be the case. It could easily be changed, but will require that companies review the ways they treat to their staff. If the establishment proceeds with the narrow minded view that they pay their staff and that is enough, then this is case of there being a lack of vision, which can result in a further down turn of business. Workers who are incentivized will likely to be more productive.

During the Christmas holiday period which is said to be a booming business period, enterprises can do no harm to their bottom line if they share the joys of Christmas in some tangible way with their staff. Since there are twelve days of Christmas, those employers who have failed miserably to be a good Santa Claus, still have time to make things right.