

CONCESSIONS GRANTED

The edict issued by the University of Tennessee's Office of Diversity and Inclusion effectively banning Christmas celebrations on the campus drew the ire of local and federal public officials, students, faculty, and alumni. From Bill Donohue's perspective, it was not only offensive to Christians, it was constitutionally suspect.

Following Donohue's issuance of the above letter, requesting of all members of the Tennessee state legislature who are responsible for education issues that they establish a panel to "critically assess the policies of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Tennessee," Chancellor Jimmy G. Cheek announced that the offensive "suggestions" had been taken down; they no longer appear online. In addition, the person who wrote them, Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion Rickey Hall, has been "counseled" by his superiors. Furthermore, he will no longer be permitted to write any guidelines for this office.

This announcement makes sense, but it is disingenuous of Chancellor Cheek to maintain that the problem was purely a matter of "poorly worded communications." It was not. The problem is deeper—it stems from a mentality that is common to all university offices that are charged with advancing diversity and inclusion. To be specific, there is a built-in intolerance for Christianity, in particular, and for Western Civilization, in general.

The steps taken by the University of Tennessee are reassuring, but more needs to be done. Donohue has stood by his call for a probe of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.