

# RIPPING UP THE RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF CHRISTMAS

As the lead story in this issue of *Catalyst* indicates, the “Holiday Wars” lost no steam in 2002. Here are some other examples of how deracinated our culture is becoming:

- Every December on New York’s Park Avenue the Helmsley Building nightly features a huge display of lights in the shape of a cross. This is the first year it has been discontinued.
- GAP stores on the East Coast banned Christmas decorations because they might make some feel “uncomfortable.”
- For the first time in 30 years, a Rossmore retirement community in Walnut Creek, California banned a nativity scene.
- The song “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” was censored from this year’s Old Town School of Folk Music holiday party in Chicago because some Jews labeled it anti-Semitic.
- All religious songs were forbidden by the Los Angeles Unified School District and replaced by tunes about snowballs.
- Teachers in a public school in Sacramento, California were told they were not allowed to utter the word “Christmas.”
- Virginia Tech issued a memo to all university employees warning that they “do not promote one cultural/religious tradition

at the exclusion of another” and that they should “make all students and employees feel included.”

- In Pittsburgh, the ACLU and others objected to a sign placed near a nativity scene that simply read, “Crèche Viewing”; the sign was put up to allow 10-minute parking near the site of the crèche.
- A sign in eastern Pennsylvania, in Phillipsburg, was also found objectionable by the ACLU. It read “Keep Christ in Christmas.”
- Schoolchildren in Nevada who wanted to distribute candy canes with the inscription “Jesus Loves You” on them were forbidden to do so. School officials reversed themselves after being threatened with a lawsuit.
- Kids at South Orange Middle School in New Jersey were told they were going on a school trip to see a rendition of the Charles Dickens classic “A Christmas Carol.” But then the trip was cancelled because of fear the play was too religious.
- A firefighter in Tennessee was ordered to take down a sign he placed on the lawn outside of his firehouse. City officials objected to the word “God” in his “God Bless America” tribute to the firefighters of 9-11 who lost their lives.
- In Dunwoody, Georgia, a musician was told not to play Christmas music at a large corporate Christmas party. He was told to stick to such songs as “Silver Bells” and

## “Winter Wonderland.”

It is so much bunk to say all religious displays must be banned because some feel excluded or uncomfortable. Christians, who are 86 percent of the population, feel excluded and uncomfortable by this kind of censorship! The answer is respect for diversity and free speech.