

TOP RELIGION STORY OF 2012



Bill Donohue comments as follows:

The top religion story of 2012 was *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* survey of American charitable giving, “How America Gives”; it was released in August. Its central finding was that the more religious a city or state is, the more charitable it is; conversely, the more secular an area is, the more miserly the people are.

The most generous states are Utah and Idaho, both of which have a high number of Mormon residents; the Bible Belt states account for all the other states in the top ten. With regard to cities, Salt Lake City and Memphis are one-two. The least generous states, ranked 45-50, are Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire. The two stingiest cities are Boston and Providence.

The findings are consistent with other studies. It suggests that the rise of the “nones”—those who have no religious affiliation—are a social liability for the nation. It also shows that those who live in the most liberal areas of the nation are precisely the ones who do the least to combat poverty. They talk a good game—liberals are always screaming about the horrors of poverty—but in the end they find it difficult to open their wallets.

There is little doubt that the “nones” and liberals (there is a lot of overlap) are living off the social capital of the most religious persons in the nation. Perhaps there is some way this can be reflected in the tax code.

WHY THE “WAR ON CHRISTMAS” IS LOSING



On December 19, Newsmax published a piece by Bill Donohue [click [here](#)] offering many examples of how the anti-Christmas agenda is losing. Today he explains why:

In the 1980s, when the “War on Christmas” began, everyone knew our side was on the defensive. However, in recent years it has been evident that things are turning around. (Note: While there are cable TV hosts who would have us believe they are the ones responsible for pushing back, in reality it’s been the work of civil rights groups like the Catholic League.)

For instance, with help from the Thomas More Law Center, the Catholic League sued the City of New York for discriminating against Christians; we’ve retaliated against corporations like Wal-Mart for buying into the anti-Christmas agenda; we’ve inspired Catholics in the states to push for their rights by arming them with legal documents; we’ve distributed paraphernalia urging respect for our rights; we’ve sent nativity scenes to all 50 governors; we’ve undercut the work of atheists by posting billboards to counter their message; annually, we’ve erected our own crèche on public property. And much more.

The good news is that what began as a battle of advocacy groups has evolved into a true grassroots rebellion. Our side is fed up with attempts to shove a politically correct secular agenda down our throats (of which the Christmas war is a

microcosm). In short, the troops have taken over where the generals left off. *That's not true of the other side.*

As important as any development, there has been a widespread revulsion against the negative message of radical secularists. It is one thing to post an ad saying, "Why believe in a god? Just be good for goodness' sake"; it is quite another to display a hate-filled poster next to a manger scene, or to exploit Jesus crucified on a billboard. This is why the average person—including non-believers—is turning against them.

For all these reasons, our side has the militant atheists on the run. Let's keep it that way. Merry Christmas!

MARK THOMPSON GETS A PASS



Former BBC chief, and current *New York Times* company president, Mark Thompson, has been cleared of wrongdoing in the BBC case involving Jimmy Savile. Bill Donohue comments on

the lengthy report that was issued on this subject yesterday:

It is entirely plausible that Mark Thompson had nothing to do with spiking the BBC "Newsnight" story on BBC child rapist Jimmy Savile. It is entirely implausible to believe that when Thompson told his BBC lawyers last September to write a letter on his behalf that he knew nothing about its contents: the missive threatened *The Sunday Times* with a lawsuit if it ran a story implicating Thompson in the Savile matter. Indeed, only a fool would contend that he who authorizes his lawyers to write a letter on his behalf wouldn't know what he was

authorizing.

On February 9, British pundit Guido Fawkes wrote that Thompson was told about the axed “Newsnight” report at a Christmas party. Yet on October 7, Thompson said he “never heard any allegations or received any complaints” about Savile’s predatory behavior. On October 10, Lord Patten, the chairman of the BBC Trust, said that Thompson was involved in the decision to kill the Savile story (the next day Patten inexplicably said he “misspoke”). On October 24, we learned that BBC foreign correspondent Caroline Hawley also told Thompson about the “Newsnight” story at the 2011 Christmas party. These October revelations were subsequent to the letter which Thompson authorized, the contents of which he says he knew nothing about.

Thompson should have said from the get-go that while he had heard rumors about Savile for years, and had learned of the spiked report last Christmas, he had nothing to do with the decision to nix the story.

As for the *New York Times* itself, it deserves credit for the way it handled matters. Arthur Sulzberger, Jr. didn’t stand in the way of either his reporters or the public editor, all of whom acted responsibly. It is our hope that the *Times* covers the Catholic Church with the same degree of fairness.

CHRISTMAS VANDALS NEVER QUIT



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on Christmas vandals:

Every year at Christmastime, incidents of vandalism are rampant, and while this year was not as bad as last year, there still were too many instances. The following towns and cities were hit by vandals this year:

Birmingham, AL; Madison, AL; Live Oak, CA; Longmont, CA; San Diego, CA; Torrington, CT; Frostproof, FL; South Bend, IN; Granger, IN; Quincy, MA; Menominee, MI; Mt. Pleasant, MI; Angus, MN; Warren, MN; Dover, NH; Shrewsbury, MA; New York, NY; Portland, OR; Carlisle, PA; Chambersburg, PA; Spartanburg, SC; Nederland, TX; Ulster, NY; Forest, VA; St. Albans, VT; Covington, WA; Federal Way, WA; Beloit, WI; Clintonville, WI; Moundsville, WV.

The worst incident this year occurred in Huntington, WV, where a hand-painted baby Jesus figurine was stolen and defaced with sexual obscenities, anarchy symbols, anti-religious statements, the numbers 666, and an upside-down cross; horns were drawn on the head, and offensive markings were inscribed on the face, chest and groin.

It is our hope that law enforcement distinguishes between random acts of vandalism, often committed by drunken teenagers, and what happened in Huntington, WV. That was pure malice.

“LES MISÉRABLES” IS SUPERB



Raymond Arroyo, *New York Times* best-selling author and host of EWTN's "The World Over," had a chance to preview "Les Misérables." This incredible movie opens on Christmas Day. Arroyo, who is a member of the Catholic League's board of directors, offered the following comments on the film:

"Tom Hooper's bold 'Les Misérables' is not just a cinematic achievement, but a soul-stirring experience that lingers like the melodies it contains. Hugh Jackman's Christ-haunted Jean Valjean is a revelation. The redemptive heart of the landmark musical has been amplified and the impact is deeply moving. It is so refreshing to see a film set in a consistent moral universe that connects on so many levels. Seeing 'Les Mis' you will 'hear the people sing' in the cineplex—and no doubt, on their way home as well."

"Every bishop, priest, pastor and cleric should be begging their people to go see this movie. It really is about the redemptive nature of man's redemptive quest. It's about the Cross and embracing it and putting yourself aside for the sake of others."

NEW YORK TIMES SALUTES POPE PIUS XII



Click [here](#) to see the Catholic League's ad from today's op-ed page in the *New York Times*.

MANGER SCENE IN CENTRAL PARK



Bill Donohue comments on the Catholic League crèche:

We've heard it said many times this year, as well as in years past, that it is unconstitutional to put religious symbols on public property. Still others maintain that religious symbols on public property can pass constitutional muster provided they are surrounded by secular symbols.

Both positions are factually wrong. Here's the proof: today the Catholic League erected a life-size nativity scene in

Central Park on the corner of 59th and 5th. I am happy to report that it is unadorned by Santa, reindeers, Jack Frost or snowflakes. It's a purely religious display. And it's nothing new—we've had our manger scene in the same spot every Christmas since the mid-1990s.

It's not just those who have declared War on Christmas who don't know what they are talking about; regrettably, it's people of goodwill on our side who have been snookered. Please take note: we didn't seek to have our crèche displayed on the grounds outside City Hall (that could arguably be construed as government endorsement of religion). Instead, we chose a public forum, a place used by musicians, artists and others who freely express themselves at various times of the year. That's not a small difference, and it is one that our side needs to recognize.

We are delighted that so many New Yorkers and out-of-towners are already taking pictures of our nativity scene. As for the haters who would like to censor our manger scene, we wish them all a Merry Christmas. We also hope they make a New Year's resolution to learn the virtue of tolerance.

IGNORING CHRISTMAS



Bill Donohue comments as follows:

The War on Christmas typically involves attempts by militant

atheists and multicultural fanatics to kill Christmas. But a much softer, and less obvious, way of neutering Christmas is to simply ignore it. Take, for example, the way the leading divinity schools address Christmas.

On the website of Harvard Divinity School, there are pictures and a list of events, but not one has anything to do with Christmas. Yale Divinity School's website has no Christmas pictures, and aside from one "Advent Service," that's it.

The University of Chicago Divinity School's website has no Christmas pictures, and save for one Christmas Eve event, the holiday is ignored. Emory's School of Theology has a website devoid of Christmas pictures, but lists a few Advent-related events and an off-campus Christmas concert. Duke Divinity School's website has no Christmas pictures and lists one Christmas Eve event. First prize goes to Vanderbilt's Divinity School which lists neither Christmas pictures nor events on its website.

It's not just liberal religious institutions that ignore Christmas. For instance, one of the most prominent liberal websites that has a section devoted to religion, the "On Faith" blog of the *Washington Post*, lists at the top of its homepage the following subjects: Noah's Ark, Atheists, Hanukkah, All Saints Church, Sistine Chapel, and Christmas (nice to know that the only group mentioned in the "On Faith" blog are those without faith). The Christmas section features 18 pictures, and aside from the first one which shows a statue of Jesus in the background behind Santa, there are no religious persons or symbols to be found. By contrast, all of the 14 pictures in the Hanukkah section show either a rabbi or a menorah, or both.

In other words, deep-thinking liberals who dabble in matters religious don't think too deeply about Christmas. Indeed, they just ignore it.

DENYING THE WAR ON CHRISTMAS



Bill Donohue takes issue with those who deny the War on Christmas:

An editorial in the *Duluth News Tribune* questions, "There's Still a 'War on Christmas'?" Atheist Jeff Sorensen flatly declares in *Huffington Post* that "There is no war on Christmas." *Statesman Journal* columnist Dick Hughes writes a piece about the "phony and irrelevant War on Christmas." MSNBC madman Lawrence O'Donnell says the War on Christmas has a "body count" of "zero." Frank Bruni of the *New York Times* says there could hardly be a War on Christmas given that "We have God on our dollars, God in our pledge of allegiance, God in our Congress." The *Boston Globe* editorializes that "Ignoring the 'war on Christmas' is the best way to eliminate it altogether."

There is little doubt that the anti-Christmas side is weakening. But the war is hardly over. The big battle won by the Thomas More Law Center in securing the right of a nativity scene to be erected on a public median in Warren, Michigan is evidence that we need to fight for our rights. Thanks to the Catholic League, senior citizens in Newhall, California got their Christmas tree back after management tried to ban it. Children who attend Terry Elementary School in Little Rock, Arkansas know about the War on Christmas: their planned trip to a local church to see "A Charlie Brown Christmas" was cancelled. An anti-Christmas billboard in Times Square that shows a depiction of Jesus crucified is testimony to the vile

nature of the War on Christmas. There is no shortage of such examples.

O'Donnell is right to say that this war has a body count of zero. The same is true of the alleged War on Women—no one has died in the battle over who should have to pay for Sandra Fluke's contraception. Bruni's point is undermined by the ACLU: it has tried to delete God from our coins and the Pledge, and has sought to deny Congress its chaplains. Finally, if the best way to eliminate a culture war is to ignore it, then the *Boston Globe* should remain agnostic in the War on Christmas.

Atheists say they want a public display of their beliefs. The complaint is bogus: most parks already have huge areas where there is absolutely nothing.

ATHEISTS EXPLOIT JESUS CRUCIFIED



Bill Donohue released the following remarks today:

Hanukkah is currently being celebrated, but fortunately for Jews they are not being attacked by David Silverman. No, like other haters in the atheist community, the president of American Atheists saves his vitriol for Christians.

Silverman's latest assault is a huge billboard in New York's Times Square. The message is neither new nor particularly

offensive: “Keep the merry! Dump the myth!” What is offensive is the photo below a picture of Santa—it depicts Jesus with a Crown of Thorns on the Cross [click [here](#)].

The decision by Silverman to exploit Jesus crucified as part of his annual attack on Christmas is not hard to explain. Two years ago, he ran a billboard on the New Jersey side of the Lincoln Tunnel that said, “You Know It’s a Myth: This Season Celebrate Reason.” I answered with a billboard on the New York side of the Lincoln Tunnel which read, “You Know It’s Real: This Season Celebrate Jesus.” We both actually had some fun with that exchange.

Last year Silverman’s billboard outside the Lincoln Tunnel featured a picture of a statue of the Roman god Neptune, a classical portrait of Jesus, a depiction of Santa, and a guy in a devil’s mask. It said they were all myths. When asked by the *New York Times* why I wasn’t upset, I said, “It’s inane. Nobody knows what this means. I mean, Neptune? Over here, we just looked at each other in puzzlement.”

This year Silverman wanted to make a big splash, so he decided to draw blood. It shows what he is made of. He and his supporters do not want to be left alone—they want to inflame the passions of those with whom they disagree. Unlike Christians who do not provoke, harass or otherwise mock atheists, Silverman and his ilk want nothing more than to stick it to Christians at Christmastime. It’s who they are.

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