

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN 2016 LOOMS LARGE



Bill Donohue comments on why religious liberty is such a key issue:

An AP-NORC survey finds that the vast majority of Americans believe that preserving religious liberty is a paramount goal, especially for Christians. There is much evidence to support this conviction, and plenty of reasons why this issue looms large in 2016.

The unrelenting assault on the autonomy of Catholic hospitals is the ACLU's number-one obsession. This is a coordinated nationwide effort that ties together two ACLU staples: its passion for abortion and its hatred of Catholicism.

American Atheists is not interested in promoting atheism: its goal is to attack Christianity. If it were to erect pro-atheist billboards, no one would care; this explains its anti-Christian approach of attacking Christmas. Similarly, Freedom From Religion Foundation likes to display mock nativity scenes—it has nothing positive to offer.

Gay activists from the Human Rights Campaign and GLAAD have forced their way into Catholic affairs in multiple ways. The former stirred up public sentiment against a Catholic school because a teacher violated her contract regarding the sacrament of marriage. Both organizations sought to pry their way into papal events in Philadelphia, pushing their agenda. GLAAD even issued a papal guidebook to journalists hoping to

manipulate the event. Fundraising for gay causes is so attractive that even non-gay, but anti-Christian, groups such as Americans United jumped on board by condemning the pope for not promoting gay marriage.

2016 will also see the rise in new alliances attacking Christians. Atheists and Satanists are working hand-in-hand these days, and so are entities such as the American Humanist Association and Catholics for Choice (an anti-Catholic front group). The former is also working with the extremist Muslim group, CAIR (they opposed a Christian war memorial).

The survey findings suggest that the American people will be increasingly receptive in 2016 to groups such as the Catholic League. We will not disappoint them.

SARAH SILVERMAN'S CHRISTMAS GIFT



Bill Donohue comments on Sarah Silverman's latest outrage:

Sarah Silverman, the foul-mouthed, anti-Catholic bigot, is at it again. On Christmas morning, she tweeted, "Merry Christmas! Jesus was gender fluid." Thus did she use the celebration of our Lord's birth to mock Christian beliefs about marriage, family and human sexuality.

Silverman has a long history of exploiting Jesus and attacking

Catholics. And it is not the first time that she has hijacked a sacred season to do so. Last February she took aim at our observance of Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, tweeting, “I never noticed this until today—Christians have filthy foreheads.”

Early last year, she acted out a skit in which Jesus was portrayed endorsing abortion, describing himself as “Jesus F***ing Christ,” and referring to Silverman as “a good little Jewish girl” as he rubs her sexually. Previously, she defamed Pope Benedict XVI as having had “involvement in the Holocaust.” And back in 2007, she portrayed herself having sex with God.

Silverman’s perversions would be her own problem if she kept them to herself. But when she insists on shoving them in our faces—especially during some of the holiest times in our calendar—Christians must be outspoken in their condemnation of her sick behavior.

MSGR. LYNN’S CONVICTION OVERTURNED



Bill Donohue comments on
Monsignor William Lynn:

There are many innocent priests who have been railroaded by lying accusers, malicious so-called victims’ advocates, rapacious lawyers and biased newspapers, but few have been

more badly treated than Philly's Msgr. William Lynn. Yesterday, a Pennsylvania appellate court overturned his conviction—for a second time—and ordered a new trial. The badly tainted Philadelphia D.A., Seth Williams, has not said whether he will appeal.

Finally, Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge M. Teresa Sarmina was taken down for her disgraceful decision to present evidence against Lynn that antedated his birth. The Superior Court judges ripped her for presenting evidence that was "trivial or minimal." It was obvious from her deceitful ploy that she was putting the entire Catholic Church on trial. But she is far from the only unethical official in this scam.

- On March 31, 2001, I sent Philly D.A. Lynne Abraham (Williams' predecessor) a letter in the overnight mail asking her to identify which "religious organizations and denominations" she pursued other than the Roman Catholic Church (that was her specific charge). She never answered.
- On February 1, 2012, I publicly called on Judge Sarmina to step down as the presiding judge, citing an anti-Catholic remark she made from the bench. She said she "misspoke."
- The key witness for Philly D.A. Seth Williams was "Billy Doe," a known drug addict, thief, and serial liar who was kicked out of two high schools. Even his own mother testified against him.
- The *Philadelphia Inquirer* was so anxious to put Lynn in the slammer that when I offered it \$58,000 in 2013 to run a full-page ad exposing the many faces of corruption, I was turned down.

The depth and breadth of dishonesty, vengeance, and bigotry that marks this witch-hunt is astounding. Shame on all the parties to it.

Merry Christmas to Msgr. Lynn, attorney Tom Bergstrom, and the

SONY BENDS FOR N.F.L. — NOT CATHOLICS



Bill Donohue comments on the Sony film “Concussion”:

“Concussion,” which stars Will Smith, opens on Christmas Day, and while it may not put the N.F.L. in the best light, officials at Sony made every effort not to bash the football industry. They never afforded Catholics similar treatment.

We know from a revealing story in the *New York Times* last September that Sony “found itself softening some points it might have made against the multibillion-dollar sports enterprise that controls the nation’s most-watched game.” Indeed, “dozens of emails” show how Sony executives, the film’s director, and representatives for Mr. Smith “discussed how to avoid antagonizing the N.F.L. by altering the script and marketing the film more as a whistle-blower story, rather than a condemnation of football or the league.”

By contrast, when Sony released “The Da Vinci Code” in 2006, and “Angels & Demons” in 2009, it refused pleas to post a disclaimer admitting that these films are fictitious.

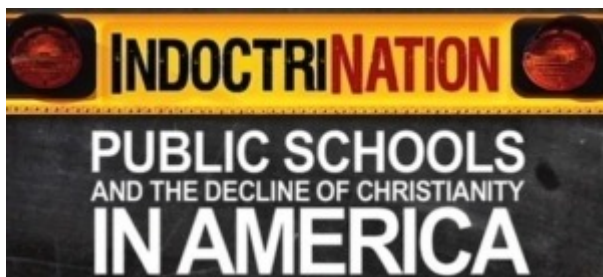
When I asked director Ron Howard to put a disclaimer in “The

Da Vinci Code,” I was denounced for infringing on the artistic rights of Sony. Yet when Sony released “The Merchant of Venice,” the movie opened with a disclaimer noting the prevalence of anti-Semitism in 16th-century Venice. In “A Beautiful Mind,” a Ron Howard film, the movie ended with a disclaimer noting that it differs from the account afforded by the book of that name.

When “Angels & Demons” came out, it debuted in India with a disclaimer noting that the movie is a work of fiction (the request was made by the government). My request that the same disclaimer be posted in U.S. theaters was turned down.

Sony’s sensitivity to Jews is based on respect; its sensitivity to the Indian government is based on politics; its sensitivity to the N.F.L. is based on money. Its disrespect for Catholics is based on bigotry

REVOLT AGAINST ISLAMIC INDOCTRINATION



Bill Donohue comments on the revolt against Islamic indoctrination

At the same time that schools are censoring “Silent Night” from being sung at their annual “holiday” concerts, others are forcing students to pay homage to Muhammad. Regarding the latter, when a teacher at Riverheads High School in Virginia assigned students to practice calligraphy by writing, “There

is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah," the school district defended the decision. Many parents strongly disagreed and the ensuing ruckus led officials to close the school today. It should stay closed until sanity prevails.

If a public school teacher were to assign students to write, "Jesus is the Son of God," here's what would happen: (a) the teacher would be fired (b) administrators would hold a press conference condemning the indoctrination (c) all teachers in the school district would be ordered to undergo sensitivity training (d) grief counselors, accompanied by dogs, would be summoned to deal with emotionally torn students (e) an ACLU attorney would lecture the community on church and state issues, and (f) the national media would give this incident top billing.

But, of course, no one was fired and administrators defended the assignment. There will be no sensitivity programs, no grief counselors, no dogs, and no ACLU lawyer. And most of the big media have ignored this story.

We checked to see how the most prominent atheist organizations, as well as the most influential church-and-state groups, have dealt with this abuse of power. None have said a word, even though this story was first reported on December 15. They are too busy censoring Christmas celebrations to worry about Islamic indoctrination.

We can thank multiculturalism for this condition. Its goal is to denigrate Christianity and elevate challenges to it. That's why Muhammad is okay and Jesus is taboo.

Thank God parents are smarter than the educators. We need more of these kinds of revolts.

“CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS” WRONGLY NIXED



Bill Donohue comments on the latest anti-Christmas incident:

The superintendent in charge of schools in Johnson County, Kentucky has censored all references to religion in this year's Christmas celebrations. Specifically, he has banned a presentation of "A Charlie Brown Christmas" at one school, and ordered another not to allow "Silent Night" to be performed. He said he was following the advice of school district attorneys.

This is madness. It is also not constitutionally mandated. In my [letter](#) to Superintendent Thomas Salyer, I pointed out that the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a 1980 ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, that conditionally permitted religious themes at Christmas assemblies. Pursuant to this ruling, the Sioux Falls School District allowed Christmas presentations of a religious nature to be performed as long as they were presented "in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday." This is a reasonable, and not very high, bar to clear.

Who's to blame for this yearly debacle? There is much blame to go around. For example, the U.S. Supreme Court has not definitively ruled on this issue, allowing for some degree of uncertainty. To be sure, school officials such as Superintendent Salyer are neither required nor forbidden from allowing assemblies of a religious nature. But if anything, the ruling in *Florey v. Sioux Falls* empowers them to permit

these annual events.

It's time school attorneys got up to speed on this issue. There is no legal reason to ban bona fide Christmas performances in the schools.

SATANISTS SURGE AT CHRISTMASTIME



Bill Donohue comments on the surge in Satanism:

In a world where Christians are routinely being murdered and raped in the name of God, even non-believers must be curious about the rise of Satanism. Here at home we are also witnessing a surge in Satanic attacks.

Until two years ago, Satanists were never bothered by the presence of a menorah on public property in Tallahassee. But when Christians decided to erect a nativity scene at the Florida state Capitol, they went wild: they succeeded in getting a Satanic display on state grounds. Though neither Christians nor Satanists are displaying their symbols in the Capitol rotunda this year, Satanists have put Christians on warning: if you dare to erect a crèche, we will counter with

our own display.

This weekend, the Satanic Temple of Detroit will perform a “Satanic ceremony” in Lansing, on the grounds of Michigan’s Capitol. Its demonic statement is being made to counter a nativity scene.

On Christmas Eve, a Satanist and registered sex offender, Adam Daniels, pledges to pour blood over a Virgin Mary statue in front of a Catholic church in Oklahoma City. He admits that his display, “Virgin Birth is a Lie,” is aimed at the Catholic Church.

There is nary a word of condemnation about these events. If anything, media reports have been kind. Take CNN: on December 13 it aired a very sympathetic show on Satanism. It even allowed an un-named mother—she is a Satanist—to blame Christianity for her gay son’s suicide, providing no evidence whatsoever. Worse, she was enticed by reporter Lisa Ling to do so. “Do you blame the church?” “Oh, yes, absolutely,” the Satanist said.

On Thanksgiving Day, Jex Blackmore, the national spokesman for The Satanic Temple, poisoned her child, in utero, and then posted a blog bragging about her abortion. This is the face of Satanism that the media refuses to profile.

CHRISTIANS OWN DECEMBER



Bill Donohue comments on
atheists at Christmastime:

Atheist Herman Mehta insists that "Christians don't own December." In fact, we do. Just as blacks own February—it is Black History Month—Christians own December. Atheists own nothing, which is consistent, of course, with what they believe.

This has to be said given all the forlorn stories generated by the media this year about all the hapless atheists at Christmastime. Take CNN.

CNN's iReport has a story, "Holiday, Minus God," that records the "thoughtful, heartwarming, engaging and, above all, cheerful" comments made by atheists about Christmas. It lists, for example, a remark by David Fibush from California, who says, "We strongly believe that religion is the cause of many of the world's problems, but like bad weather and taxes we accept the situation as it exists." So cheerful.

CNN also has a neat article on "5 Things You Didn't Know about Satanists." Point #2 is, "They are OK with Celebrating Christmas." As proof, it quotes Satanists saying, "Christians stole this holiday from the pagans—Santa Claus has come to signify indulgence...." So thoughtful.

CNN also wants us to read its piece, "How Do Atheists Celebrate Christmas?" We learn that "the holiday season—even calling it a 'holiday season'—can be problematic for atheists." How engaging.

For some strange reason, CNN has been lax in reporting how

atheist organizations are taking out newspaper ads denigrating Christmas, posting billboards urging a church boycott, erecting anti-Christmas displays next to nativity scenes, banning religious songs from Christmas school concerts, and the like. How heartwarming.

Atheists are lucky to live in a nation that was founded by Christians imbued with the Judeo-Christian ethos. It's why we typically afford them more tolerance than its activists show us.

MANGER SCENE DISPLAYED IN CENTRAL PARK



Bill Donohue comments on the Catholic League's manger scene:

For the past 20 years, [the Catholic League has erected a life-size nativity scene in Central Park](#). This year's display is right in front of the Plaza Hotel, on 5th Avenue between 58th and 59th Streets (Central Park South). New Yorkers and tourists love to take pictures of it—it is our treat to them. It will be on display until January 4.

We hope that Christian groups across the country get the message and mimic our effort. It is entirely legal to put a manger scene on public property as long as (a) it is privately paid for and (b) it is a public forum, i.e., it is an area that is open to art displays, concerts, rallies, and the

like. All that needs to be done is to apply for a permit; the New York City Parks Department grants us a permit every year.

Last year, a Pew Survey found that 72 percent of Americans agree that Christian symbols should be allowed on public property; only 20 percent disagree. That's another reason to erect a nativity scene—the public approves.

In 1995, when we displayed our first nativity scene in Central Park, Monsignor John G. Woolsey blessed it in front of our staff. Just as we were about to walk away, a beautiful rainbow appeared above. But it didn't shine everywhere—it shone directly on our crèche. We take that as a sign that more than the public approves of our display.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

“SAY MERRY CHRISTMAS”



Bill Donohue would like to share something special:

“The video, ‘Say Merry Christmas,’ is produced by the Say Merry Christmas network; it is a joy to watch. Anyone who supports the Catholic League will realize why it is so dear to us. The presentation is flawless. I would like to thank

Catholic League members Rita and Denis Larrivee for bringing this to my attention. Please pass it around.”

Enjoy the video by clicking [here](#).