

# CULTURE WAR ON CHRISTMAS GOES BESERK

Every Christmas season is a busy time for the Catholic League, but this past Christmas broke the record. Radical secularists across the nation went berserk trying to stamp out the religious significance of the holiday. Our response was equally unyielding.

Just as December began, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) wasted no time issuing a pamphlet, "The December Dilemma: Guidelines for Public Schools During the December Holiday." Within 48 hours, the Catholic League posted on its website a parody of the ADL's statement, making just enough changes to the ADL's language to contradict its message.

While secularists in Lexington, Massachusetts were banning Nativity scenes, the censors in Eugene, Oregon were prohibiting the display of Christmas trees on public property. The gag order in Eugene was explained as a way of "practicing diversity."

It got so absurd in Vancouver, Washington that they even banned bus drivers from wearing religious neckties, vests or hats. They tried to justify this on the basis of being faithful to the Constitution of the State of Washington. But this argument blew up in their face when the Catholic League provided evidence that the transit officials in Tacoma, Skagit County, Seattle, Leavenworth, Longview, Mercer Island and Port Angeles had no such ban, and all obviously abided by the same state constitution.

In Newton County, Georgia parents were informed that there would be no more "Christmas break" as pressure from secularists delivered a new holiday, "semester break." Parents in Fishers County, Indiana were also surprised to learn that

multiculturalism allows for explaining the religious roots of Hanukkah but not Christmas.

A review of what was being sold on the Internet disclosed that religious symbols such as the menorah and Star of David could easily be found, but not religious symbols such as the Nativity scene. Among the offenders were 1-800-FLOWERS, FTD.com, Hallmark, Bloomingdale's and AltaVista.com. And from McDonalds to the local mall, signs of "Happy Hanukkah" and "Happy Holidays" abounded. Rarely was there a "Merry Christmas."

Even worse, when we tapped into Yahoo.com under "Religious Holidays," we found six religions posted, but only under one was there an "Opposing Viewpoints" listed. It wasn't Islam or Judaism or Buddhism or Hinduism or Sikhism. It was Christianity. And, oh yes, it was replete with blasphemous and obscene commentary.

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## HOLOCAUST "EXPERT" OUTED

On Nov. 13, the *News Journal* of Wilmington, Delaware ran a story on a "nationally known Holocaust educator Jack P. McGough." McGough had spoken the day before at the student center on the campus of the University of Delaware (UD) in Newark; he was identified as a professor at UD. The Jewish Federation of Delaware sponsored his talk, "Where Were the Churches?" McGough singled out the Catholic Church for being the worst denier of the Holocaust.

The first thing we did was investigate McGough's credentials. What we found was a) he is not a nationally known expert on the Holocaust or on any other historical subject b) he is neither an author, historian nor social scientist and c) he is

not a professor at the UD. In fact, McGough is a retired executive who teaches continuing education courses at UD's Academy of Lifelong Learning.

We then blasted all three parties in a news release, singling out the newspaper as the worst offender. Subsequently, the *News Journal* did run a correction. As for McGough, he promised to send us his resume but then reneged when he discovered who we were. He told Patrick Scully "you're Donohue's group." As if that matters.

This episode provides convincing evidence that there is a disturbing eagerness to believe the worst about Catholicism. It also shows that by quickly and firmly addressing these issues, we can get offending newspapers to print a retraction.

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# **DISHONEST                      DEBATE                      OVER DIVERSITY**

**William A. Donohue**

There is not a school or corporation that doesn't mouth the mantra of diversity, whether it be in the form of a classroom discussion on multiculturalism or a diversity seminar for employees. What is particularly bothersome about this enterprise is the rank intellectual dishonesty that colors it.

In the language of multiculturalism, diversity nominally means respect for the beliefs, customs and traditions of others. In reality, diversity is a lie: more typically, it is a weapon used by professed enemies of Western civilization to impose a uniform set of politically correct rules on society. In short, cultural fascists employ diversity as cover for their agenda.

Think I exaggerate? We just finished the Christmas season—a good time to test diversity. If diversity were truly practiced, then devotees of multiculturalism would encourage members of every religious group to celebrate their heritage by publicly displaying their religious symbols and icons. Instead, they file suit in federal district court seeking to ban these expressions.

It's even worse than this. As the cover story of this issue of *Catalyst* details, many efforts were underway this past Christmas to scrub society clean of any vestige of Christian influence. That this happened while the religious roots of Hanukkah were being trumpeted suggests that diversity applies to some, but not to others. It is the lying, however, that really shows what a dishonest debate this is. Take, for example, what occurred in Eugene, Oregon.

Jim Johnson, the city manager of Eugene, Oregon, acting more like a commissar than a public servant, issued an edict banning Christmas trees on public property. Now this may come as news to some, but Christmas trees are not religious symbols. They're secular. Who says so? The U.S. Supreme Court, among others. But in the mind of Barry Lynn, president of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, it's okay to ban Christmas trees because they've "acquired" religious significance. Look for candy canes to be banned next year.

Had Johnson admitted that the reason he banned Christmas trees was his sincere devotion to censorship, no one could brand him dishonest. But true to form, he lied. When questioned, he said he was "practicing diversity."

The next holiday to be trashed by the diversity thugs is St. Patrick's Day. Every year, people of every race, religion, ethnic group and, yes, sexual orientation, are free to march in the parade. But because the march is a celebration of an Irish Catholic saint, the parade's organizers in New York and other cities do not permit units to march that seek to promote

their own political agenda. And for this they are vilified by the diversity dons.

Just as it makes no sense to allow anti-Israeli contingents to march in the Salute to Israel parade, it makes no sense to allow those who seek to veto the message of the St. Patrick's Day parade to participate in the march. The courts understand this, which is why ILGO (Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization) is barred from marching as a separate group in the New York parade. But so, too, are pro-life groups that seek to march separately. That doesn't make the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the parade's organizers, anti-life anymore than it makes them anti-gay.

But none of this matters to the doctors of diversity. Not a year goes by without them labeling the Hibernians homophobic. That they are liars can easily be proved. You can just imagine what they would say if, for example, anti-gays sought inclusion in the Gay Pride Parade by petitioning to march as a separate unit called Straight Is Great.

Ask the Boy Scouts what they've learned about the meaning of diversity. Having won in court as the Hibernians have, the Scouts are nonetheless called anti-gay because they don't want homosexual men going on camping trips with boys. And for this they are subjected to a witch-hunt.

At the heart of the Christmas and St. Patrick's Day Parade controversy is Catholicism; the Boy Scouts are a close sociological cousin given their embrace of a traditional moral order. It is not hard to deduce from this that Catholicism is enemy number one in the portfolio of the diversity gang. Indeed, they are constantly looking down the barrel of their cultural gun at the Catholic Church, ready to pull the trigger.

What is so ironic about all of this is that no institution in the world is as diverse as the Catholic Church—we're all over

the map, servicing people of every color and class. But it is the message of truth that the Church disseminates that makes the barbarians want to shoot the messenger.

This is where we come in. The Catholic League pleads guilty to the charge that we have a hard edge. And we had better have one if our side is to win. But fear not, the Catholic League proudly discriminates against wimps in hiring, affording no room for diversity.

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## **OBSCENE ATTACK ON CHRISTMAS**

This past Christmas season, a store in Berkeley, California sold T-shirts that said “F– Christmas”; the shirt bared the full name of the obscenity.

When William Donohue learned of this he personally called the store, Bear Basics, and asked a series of questions. What he discovered was interesting, to say the least.

The manager of Bear Basics, Sandie Handschoh, was not available when he called but he did speak to three of the store’s employees, including Mark who handles the store’s inventory. Without identifying who he was, Donohue said he wanted to buy three “F– Christmas” T-shirts and three “F– Hanukkah” T-shirts, using the obscene word in all instances. When he was told that they didn’t carry any “F– Hanukkah” T-shirts, he responded that this struck him as discriminatory. Continuing to press the issue, he was told that no one would make such a shirt, thus verifying what he instinctively knew to be true.

Donohue was then told that Bear Basics carries T-shirts that say “F– Halloween” and “F– Valentine’s Day.” Being Irish, he

took special note of their St. Patrick's Day line of T-shirts that read, "F- Me, I'm Irish," an obvious play on the phrase "Kiss Me, I'm Irish." Curious, Donohue then asked if they had any "F- the Jews" or "F- the Gays" T-shirts and learned that they did not. Just the Irish.

After describing this incident in a news release, Donohue offered the following commentary:

"Berkeley is not America but it is a leading indicator of what passes as politically correct. Among other things, it tells us that there is a market for those whose hatred of Jesus Christ is unparalleled in American history. Meanwhile, civil libertarians and other professed guardians of liberty are running around municipal buildings looking to see if there are crucifixes hanging from Christmas trees or kids singing 'Silent Night' in the lobby. And I wouldn't be surprised to learn that some of them are running around sporting their new 'F- Christmas' T-shirts."

If you would like to contact the store, write to Sandie Handschoh, Manager, Bear Basics, 2350 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, California 94704 or call her at (510) 883-9050.

Our members will be glad to know that when Rabbi Daniel Lapin of the Seattle-based organization, Toward Tradition, learned of the league's news release, he immediately had one of his employees call the Catholic League pledging to stand with us in protesting this outrageous incident.

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## MORE LIES

Some of those who hate the Catholic Church willfully distort the facts to make their point. Some simply lie. Kit Greenberg

fits the latter category.

Ms. Greenberg was quoted in the *San Jose Mercury News* as saying that the Catholic Church teaches that “AIDS and HIV are God’s curses on people who behave inappropriately.”

William Donohue wrote to her saying, “Now you and I know this to be a lie. The only real question is why you would make such an accusation. I would appreciate hearing from you.”

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## HERE’S A NEW ONE

Think you’ve heard it all? Here’s a new one.

On December 8, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a front-page story on how few women in Mexico use tampons. Two percent, to be exact. In Italy, the figure isn’t much better, registering a measly four-percent. Now what do Mexico and Italy have in common? You guessed it—Catholicism.

“The Roman Catholic Church says it has no official position on tampons,” is how the story developed. “Nonetheless, some priests have spoken out against the product, associating it with birth control and sexual activities that are forbidden by the Church. Indeed, Tampax faced objections from priests in the U.S. when it introduced tampons in 1936.”

We were curious and so we decided to ask some basic questions. Patrick Scully reached one of the authors, Emily Nelson, asking her for the names of the priests who had objected to tampons. As expected, she couldn’t produce one name. She rests her case exclusively on tales told to her by local women as she was traveling in Mexico. Swell. Our guess is the authors can’t tell the difference between folklore and theology. In



any event, it's a good thing for the Church that Emily didn't venture into bars while traveling—God only knows what she'd be telling the *Journal*.

We're also lucky that Nelson didn't investigate the Church's position on mouthwash, for upon discovering there isn't one, we'd no doubt be blamed for tolerating bad breath as well.

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## **ASHCROFT AND BOB JONES UNIVERSITY: MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**

Senator John Ashcroft, who has been selected by President-elect George W. Bush to be attorney general, has come under fire for accepting an honorary degree from Bob Jones University. When this issue first surfaced, the Catholic League staked out its position in a release to the media:

“Prior to George W. Bush's address at Bob Jones University last year, most Americans were unaware of the school's religious and racial philosophy. Once it was brought to light, Governor Bush expressed regret for leaving the impression that he condones bigotry of any kind, thus putting the issue behind him. Now the issue is back, and this time the focus is on Senator John Ashcroft.

“If Senator Ashcroft had accepted an honorary degree from Bob Jones *after* Bush's address, that would be cause for concern. But when he received the degree in 1999, the school was not under a national microscope and most people had no idea that it was anti-Catholic.

“If Senator Ashcroft had *defended* Bob Jones University once Bush’s talk drew attention to the school’s philosophy, that would be cause for concern. But just the opposite was true. ‘I didn’t really know they had these positions,’ he said. ‘Frankly, I reject the anti-Catholic position of Bob Jones University categorically.’

“Finally, Senator Ashcroft did the right thing by criticizing his senatorial challenger, the late Governor Mel Carnahan, when Carnahan sought to exploit the issue. Ashcroft pointed out that Carnahan received campaign donations from anti-Catholic groups such as NARAL; this group was active in the ‘See Change’ effort to downgrade the Vatican’s U.N. status.

“In short, the controversy over Ashcroft is much ado about nothing as far as the Catholic League is concerned.”

Nothing galls us more than listening to those who have never once shown the slightest interest in anti-Catholicism just foaming at the mouth over Bob Jones University whenever they see an opportunity to score points against a candidate they abhor for purely political reasons. Ashcroft is not an anti-Catholic and every fair-minded person knows this to be true.

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## PIUS XII’S HEROISM

Nikolaus Kunkel served in the German Army at the time of the Holocaust. In a recent interview, he credited Pope Pius XII with saving the lives of many Jews, arguing that less would have been saved had the pope been more vocal in his public pronouncements condemning Hitler at the time.

Kunkel recalled that German troops were told in October 1943 to round up all the Jews in Rome, numbering some 8,000 to

9,000. But because most took refuge in the Vatican, only 1,000 were actually arrested. Kunkel also said the German army had been ordered to draw up plans for the forcible occupation of the Vatican and the arrest of Pius XII. The plans never materialized, he said, because the pope delicately and effectively dealt with the Nazis by choosing not to be confrontational.

It is worth remembering that during the war many Jews begged the pope not to appear too forceful in his public statements on Hitler for fear of antagonizing the Fuhrer any further. While today's revisionists find this position unacceptable, the view held by Nikolaus Kunkel is persuasive: unlike the pope's critics, Kunkel is not hamstrung by ideology and speaks from experience.

But don't expect Kunkel, now 80, to be interviewed by "60 Minutes." They'd prefer to deal with James Carroll and other foes of the Church.

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## TIME COMES CLOSE

Our file on *Time* magazine grows each year as the weekly magazine continues to insult Catholics. However, its December 4 edition came close to doing a short piece that was quite good. Until the end.

*Time* ran a story on a play written by Karol Wojtyla that is currently being performed in Paris. The play, *The Jeweller's Shop: A Meditation on the Sacrament of Matrimony, Passing on Occasion into a Drama*, was written by Wojtyla before he became Pope John Paul II. The magazine had some kind words to say about the play but couldn't resist concluding that although "the poetry-slam-style high jinks are adorably dated," none of

Wojtyla's literary skills could "hold a candle to transubstantiation."

We look forward to day when *Time* treats Catholicism the way it does Buddhism. With respect.

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## **"60 MINUTES" DRAWS ON BIGOT TO SLAM CHURCH**

On December 10, the CBS show, "60 Minutes," did a segment on the merger of Catholic hospitals with secular healthcare institutions. The focus of the piece was the unavailability of contraceptive services and abortions at these facilities. Morley Safer conducted interviews with several persons, including Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC). Kissling was quoted as saying, "It's not like the old days. Doctors are no longer gods. Now we have bishops who are gods."

We contacted the press offering our take on this issue:

"For many years now, '60 Minutes' has worked hard to discredit the Roman Catholic Church. But rarely has it shown its anti-Catholic bias more than in its piece on 'God, Women and Medicine.' By drawing on perhaps the most notorious anti-Catholic bigot in the nation, Frances Kissling, '60 Minutes' exposed its true colors.

"'I spent twenty years looking for a government that I could overthrow without being thrown in jail,' Kissling once said. 'I finally found one in the Catholic church' [sic]. Moreover, her anti-Catholicism is so blatant that on two occasions the bishops have expressly denounced Catholics for a Free Choice

for fraudulently posing as a Catholic group. And this is the 'expert' that Morley Safer repairs to for commentary. It is on the order of asking those blacks who voted for George Wallace what they think about civil rights and then airing their self-hating views as representative of African American thought. The only difference being that Kissling is getting paid around a quarter of a million dollars by the Ford Foundation and their ilk for the doing the bidding of Catholic-bashing elites.

"We will ask our members, and all those who are opposed to bigotry, to write to the producer of '60 Minutes,' Don Hewitt, stating their objections to this remarkable segment."

You can contact Hewitt at "60 Minutes," CBS Television Network, 555 W. 57th Street, New York, New York 10019-2925. We did.