

CHRISTMAS FOES ADVANCE; OUR SIDE PUSHES BACK

Every December the Catholic League is embroiled in the never-ending war on Christmas, and this past Christmas season was no exception. However, there were two important differences: foes of Christmas changed strategies and our side fought back with vigor.

The usual tactic employed by the enemies of Christmas has been to access the law: they prefer to go directly into federal district court seeking to ban nativity scenes on public property, or to censor Christmas songs from being sung in the schools by threatening legal action. While this gambit is still used, the most popular method this time around was to promote “contrived competition.”

Basically, what this comes down to is an attempt to neuter Christmas by celebrating every conceivable holiday or event that occurs in December. Indeed, it even goes beyond this by heralding every racial, ethnic, religious and cultural group worldwide. The goal, under the rubric of promoting diversity, is to deny the central role that Christmas plays in the life of most Americans every December. It is a scam, and nothing more.

The good news is that our side fought back all over the nation. From the state of Washington where the governor allowed militant atheists to foist their hate speech on the public, to Long Island, New York where a village turned a Christmas tradition into an all-inclusive holiday event, Catholics and Protestants fought back by filing lawsuits, staging protests and withdrawing sponsorship.

None of these assaults on Christmas happened purely because of groups like the ACLU. It happened because millions of

Americans, including Christians, have been indoctrinated into thinking that the celebration of Christmas should be a mostly private affair. They have been made to feel defensive about their own holiday.

The willingness to fight back occurred because millions of other Americans have had it with attempts to stymie Christmas. They picked up their cultural cudgels in a way not previously seen, giving hope that this perennial culture-war event may yet be won.

There are still those, mostly in the media, who try to pretend that there isn't a war on Christmas. But as this issue of *Catalyst* discloses, it is no myth. Moreover, the violence that takes place—in the form of vandalizing religious statues and trashing church grounds—is testimony to the ferocity of our adversaries.

As always, the media courted a response from the Catholic League, and as always, we didn't let them down.

PLAYBOY OFFENDS & LIES

The Mexican edition of the Christmas *Playboy* issue showed a nearly nude woman on the cover resembling the Virgin Mary. After a protest led by the Catholic League, the publisher of *Playboy* Mexico apologized.

When asked for a comment by the media entertainment outlet, TMZ, Bill Donohue said: “*Playboy's* juxtaposition of the sacred with the profane is a game that many have played, but to exploit Catholicism and insult Latinos in the same breath is novel. The December cover of its Mexican edition demonstrates once again that when it comes to good taste, *Playboy* remains

quintessentially virginal.”

To make matters worse, the apology was insincere. “The image is not and never was intended to portray the Virgin of Guadalupe or any other religious figure,” said publisher Raul Sayrols. “The intent was to reflect a Renaissance-like mood on the cover.”

When Rick Sanchez of CNN asked Donohue whether he accepted the apology, he replied, “They are liars. I mean everybody knows it has nothing to do with the Renaissance.” Sanchez then asked whether it would have made a difference had they not lied. “No,” Donohue said, “I wouldn’t be okay with it. But at least I wouldn’t call them dishonest.”

This is not the first time *Playboy* has played fast and loose with Catholic iconography. Nor is it the first time it has attacked Catholicism in its pages; the American edition has a long record of abuse. The good news is that *Playboy’s* sales are hurting.

SOME REALLY LOVE ABORTION

William A. Donohue

The pro-life movement knows that 2009 will test its reserve more than ever before. It is an appropriate time, then, to consider what we’re up against.

Most of those in favor of “choice” don’t have the courage to complete the sentence. The “choice” they support does not entail choosing between chocolate or strawberry, but between life and death. Deep in their hearts they know this is true, and their gutlessness is at least testimony to their guilt:

they are tacitly acknowledging that the choice they advocate is nothing to celebrate.

So in fairness, it would not be accurate to say that most of those who are “pro-choice” are actually “pro-abortion.” But it is a monumental mistake to assume that the abortion rights movement is not dotted with those who truly are “pro-abortion.” Indeed, some actually love it so much that they call it a “positive good,” or a “blessing.” Some even call it a “sacrament.” Here’s the proof.

Feminist lawyer Gloria Allred knows that abortion is murder, yet she contests the idea that our society would be better off without abortion. For example, in 2003, she told Sean Hannity that she took the side of Laci Peterson, the pregnant woman who was killed by her husband (she had named her unborn son Connor). When the D.A. considered the evidence, Allred said, “the fact that there are two individuals who are dead here, Laci and Connor, that has to be the most important consideration of everything.”

This is quite an admission given that three years earlier she had the following exchange with Bill O’Reilly. O’Reilly: “Wouldn’t it be better if there were never an abortion?” Allred: “I think that’s a world we’re never going to see, so I wouldn’t speculate.” O’Reilly: “All right, but wouldn’t it be better if a...” Allred: “Not necessarily.”

So it would not necessarily be a better society if there were no abortions, notwithstanding the fact that abortion kills. It therefore seems plausible, according to Allred’s way of thinking, that society might be better off with abortions. This isn’t the voice of someone who is reluctantly “pro-choice.”

In the late 1980s, the Fund for a Feminist Majority released a video, “Abortion for Survival,” that included advocates hailing abortion as a “positive good.” A few years later, a

retired women's studies professor from the University of Washington, Patricia Lunneborg, wrote a book called *Abortion: A Positive Decision*. According to a rave review in *Publishers Weekly*, Lunneborg found abortion clinics "to be places where women are highly valued and patients' self esteem is carefully tended." Sounds like a resort.

A few years ago, in a book entitled *Beyond Choice*, Alexander Sanger lashed out at those who say "abortion is the lesser of two evils." According to him (he is the grandson of Planned Parenthood founder, Margaret Sanger), such reasoning was faulty. The time had come, he argued, to recast abortion as a "positive good." Beverly Harrison, a professor of Christian ethics at the Union Theological Seminary, had previously come to the same conclusion. She contended that abortion was not only a "positive good"—it was a "loving choice."

In 2007, a writer from England, Caitlin Moran, said that she regards abortion as "one of the ultimate acts of good mothering." Ex-priest Daniel Maguire upped the ante in 2001 in a book, *Sacred Choices*, wherein he maintained that abortion for the right reasons is "a holy choice, a sacred choice." He is still teaching theology at Marquette University.

In 2008, radical feminist Erica Jong wrote a piece dubbed, "If Men Could Get Pregnant, Abortion Would be a Sacrament." She credited the late feminist, and anti-Catholic, Florynce Kennedy, with first coining this line. Another anti-Catholic, Freedom From Religion Foundation founder Anne Nicol Gaylor, wrote a book in 1975 called *Abortion is a Blessing*; it was hailed by feminists Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem for seeing abortion as a blessing.

Patricia Baird-Windle, one time owner of three abortion clinics, has also held that "abortion is a major blessing, and a sacrament in the hands of women." Catholic dissident theologian Mary Hunt, who runs the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual, admits that she "dares" to call

abortion “sacramental.” Episcopal “priestess” Carter Hayward has similarly said that “Abortion should be a sacrament even today.”

No one beats French author Ginette Paris. After having an abortion, she explained her “radiance” as such: “What’s going on is that I’ve just had an abortion and lived an impossible love and accomplished a great reconciliation with myself. But it was my secret and my gift.” She broke her secret in her 1992 book, *The Sacrament of Abortion*.

So it is not true that all those in the “pro-choice” movement are struggling with a difficult choice. Some really love abortion. Remember this the next time some apologist for abortion rights tells you how everyone on his side finds abortion problematic. And then tell him to purge his side of these very sick people.

DIVERSITY IS CODE FOR BIGOTRY

The following is a sample of how diversity was celebrated in December:

- Elementary school students in Plainfield, Illinois decorated a “Holiday” tree that represented 18 countries
- A “Holiday Revelry” was performed at the Framingham Civic League in Massachusetts; it was a “multicultural” event that included “PAC Sword Dancers” and “traditional” Christmas songs such as “Pat-A-Pan”
- “Winter Traditions” was celebrated at the Fort Collins Museum in Colorado. They include “Celebrations of Light” that highlight “traditions, cultures and celebrations from across

the world”

- At a high school in Ocean City, Maryland, the annual “Winter Concert” this year featured a performance entitled “Eid Mubarak,” a Muslim holiday song
- At the Comcast Center in Philadelphia there was a huge “Multimedia Holiday Show” that featured secular songs. Religious Christmas songs were expressly prohibited
- At Missouri State University, a new school rule explicitly banned the menorah and the nativity scene from being displayed in common areas. Nonetheless, the menorah was displayed; the crèche was not
- At an architectural firm in Wichita, Kansas there was no Christmas party; but there was a party. The CEO said, “we call our December party a holiday party”

Darby Harrington, a Colorado lawyer, wrote a column defending these kinds of things. According to her, “People of other religions tend to harbor some ill feelings toward all things Christmas.”

We issued a release to the media stating that the “Cultural fascists invoke ‘diversity’ every December as cover for neutering Christmas—they never choose some other month to practice their multicultural religion.” Who are these people from other religions who hate Christmas? Most of us have never met one. It would be more accurate to say that it’s precisely the persons who make this charge who hate Christmas.

ANTI-CHRISTMAS STRATEGIES EVOLVE

There was no anti-Christmas agenda until the 1980s, and at that time it was led by the ACLU. The strategy of choice was to ban the display of religious symbols, especially the crèche, on public property. This legal strategy, which worked relatively well, has been superseded by a cultural strategy. The goal now is to dilute the significance of Christmas via contrived competition. To wit: every religious, racial and ethnic heritage—including invented ones like Kwanzaa—is now celebrated in December.

It is important to note that the agenda is not a positive one; it is not designed to honor world traditions. No, the agenda is negative—it is designed to combat Christmas. Here's a splendid example:

Margaret Downey, founder of the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia, sued Chester County in 2001 because a large Ten Commandments plaque was displayed at the Chester County Courthouse. After winding its way through the courts, Downey lost. Chester County, however, decided that the courthouse lawn should be open to all seasonal displays. The crèche and menorah were quickly displayed and soon the lawn was adorned with Downey's "Godless Holiday Tree"; it was decorated with the book covers of atheistic tracts.

True to her multicultural religion, Downey is not against all religions—it's just Christianity that gets her goat. "We'd love to see Kwanzaa candles and a Buddha statue, too," she said. Buddha is okay because it represents an Eastern religion (Western religions are taboo).

It's not just Downey and her merry band of atheists who ascribe to the contrived competition strategy. Elementary

school teachers in New Jersey informed officials at William Paterson University that they would not take their students to a holiday show if it centered solely on Christmas. They won. The moral of the story is: Best to throw the Nothought Scrooges a bone if the kids are to see Santa.

HATE GROUP JOINS THE FRACAS

The Westboro Baptist Church, a Kansas-based group, asked Washington Governor Chris Gregoire for permission to display an anti-Christmas sign next to the nativity scene in the Capitol building. The sign, "Santa Claus Will Take You to Hell," would also appear next to an atheist sign sponsored by the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The governor was responsible for this mess. Having first acceded to the requests of atheists to attack Christmas, she was then confronted with the likes of the Westboro Baptist Church, a viciously anti-Catholic group.

Hate groups have a First Amendment right to freedom of speech, but they have no right to set the time and place. Moreover, freedom of speech is meaningless unless it can prevail unobstructed by attempts to stifle it.

In other words, Gov. Gregoire should have allowed the atheist group to display its sign at a different location or a different time. If she had done so, she would have been able to treat the Westboro Baptist bigots the same way.

ROOT CAUSE OF THE WAR ON CHRISTMAS

The root cause of the war on Christmas, which is conducted almost exclusively by well-educated white people in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Australia—the very same people who like gay marriage—has almost nothing to do with fidelity to law (the First Amendment in the U.S.): it has to do with ideology.

The ideology is plainly an expression of left-wing secularism, and it is nothing if not anti-Western and anti-Christian. At its worst, it is driven by hatred; at its best, it is driven by a defensive posture, a deep sense of embarrassment over the legacy of Western civilization. There is no historical or moral justification for either. Moreover, those who are pushing this agenda generally lie about their work.

When Patricia Short, the principal of Will Rogers Elementary in Ventura County, California, said of the school's holiday choir that "We can't have anything with a religious reference," she was flatly wrong: not only is there no law barring religious songs being sung in the public schools, the courts have affirmed just the opposite (see the 1980 U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision, *Florey v. Sioux Falls School District*). To show how duplicitous these cultural fascists are, consider that when a Jewish woman from North Carolina failed to get an elementary school to ban "Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer," she pushed to get a Hanukkah song sung. So it's not religious songs that bother her, just Christian ones.

Want proof that hate is driving this assault? The head of the ACLU in New Hampshire, Claire Ebel, advises that if crèches are allowed in parks, it is permissible "for a display of satanic ritual."

This hatred of Christmas is not exclusive to the U.S. In England, Muslim preacher Anjem Choudary called Christmas “evil” in a recent sermon. No wonder they are banning words like “bishop,” “chapel,” “monk” and “nun” from the Oxford Junior Dictionary. And all of this is being endorsed, if not promoted, by self-hating Christians, as well.

NATIVITY SCENE ERECTED IN CENTRAL PARK

Take note all ye cultural fascists out to annihilate Christmas: The Catholic League placed a nativity scene on public property in New York City, right in Central Park. We put it on the corner of 59th and 5th so that people taking the 5th Avenue bus downtown couldn't avoid seeing it.

Every year we get a permit from the New York City Parks Department to display our life-sized crèche in Central Park, and every year there is some atheist group—the ACLU, Freedom From Religion Foundation, etc.—that files suit in federal district court trying to censor nativity scenes. Sadly, many municipalities give in to the tyrants.

The latest gambit by the anti-Christmas Czars is to flood public places with a vast array of cultural symbols. For example, at the Fort Collins Museum in Colorado, in addition to a crèche and a menorah, they are displaying the Indian Diwali Festival of Lights, the Buddhist celebration of Loy Krathong, the Chinese Lantern Festival, Kwanzaa, Ramadan and the Scottish Hogmanay festival.

It is insulting to Christians and Jews to dilute their long-standing holidays in a country founded on Judeo-Christian

principles by turning public areas into a junk-yard clutter of cultural artifacts. That is why only the nativity scene and the menorah should be allowed in the same place at this time of the year. The real goal of the cultural fascists is to water down the meaning of Christmas via contrived competition. Let the others find another spot or another time to display their symbols.

CHRISTMAS IN THE WORKPLACE

The anti-Christmas Czars were busy in the workplace again this past Christmas season. Here are a few examples:

Cindy Wigglesworth, founder of Conscious Pursuits, said Christmas represents a “challenge” to employers. The “challenge” is how to have “an enthused workforce and be faith-friendly and faith-neutral and not violate any laws.” She didn’t say what laws might be violated. “We’d much rather bring your child to work than bring your faith to work,” she said, “We have not had a safe way to talk about faith.”

Dawn Frazier-Bohnert works at a global consulting firm, and she advised employers not to hold Christmas parties—but “year-end” bashes, instead. She recommended “vegetarian alternatives” and to “be conscious that serving alcohol at parties might make some employees uncomfortable.”

Simma Lieberman specializes in “Diversity and Inclusion,” and it showed: she wanted employers to celebrate Diwali, along with non-Hindu holidays. But, she cautioned, “Make sure your holiday party isn’t a Christmas party in disguise.”

Sondra Thiederman is another “Diversity” expert, and she warned against Christmas decorations, recommending instead

“flowers, balloons, candles and snowflakes.” She also counseled against Christmas songs, suggesting “historical music, the big bands and the sounds of the ‘40s.”

So this is what our troops are defending in Iraq—the right of anti-Christmas Czars to promote thought control in America.

PRO-ABORTION GROUPS ATTACK RELIGION

More than 60 organizations issued a 55-page report advising the incoming Obama administration on the need to provide more money for abortion-related services. “Advancing Reproductive Rights and Health in a New Administration” calls for the most sweeping abortion-rights reforms ever envisioned. It not only wants more money to be spent, it recommends a host of regulatory changes, stressing the need to appoint judges who will implement its plans. Significantly, it endorses the Freedom of Choice Act, the most radical abortion-rights bill ever proposed.

From the very beginning, the pro-abortion industry has not only opposed any religion that is pro-life, it has adopted a confrontational approach. This document was no different. For example, in the section on “Comprehensive Sex Education,” it explicitly advises, “Do not teach or promote religion.” It also launched a preemptive strike against a regulation from the Department of Health and Human Services that protects the religious rights of health care workers. The document recommends that Obama rescind the “Provider Conscience Regulation.”

It didn’t surprise us that groups like the Secular Coalition

for America supported this assault on religious liberty. But when religious organizations gave their assent, it became troubling. Among the signatories were the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Union for Reform Judaism, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and Women of Reform Judaism; the anti-Catholic front group, Catholics for Choice, also signed the report. Evidently, their passion for abortion rights is so extreme that it eclipses any interest in the religious liberty rights of others.

We warned these groups to look for traditional Catholics, evangelical Protestants, Orthodox Jews and others to come together in an unprecedented way.