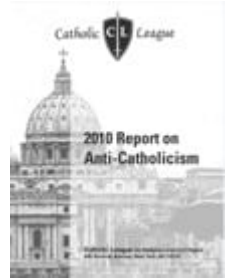


The War on Christmas

November



We sent all 50 governors a manger scene to be displayed during the Christmas season, and most did not have the courtesy of even replying. As you can see from the list below, we received the best regional response from the South; the worst came from the West Coast. New York returned the crèche, though the letter we received was respectful: because of new ethics rules, it could not be accepted as a gift.

The strong response from the South is important: that was the area of the country which was once considered the most unfriendly to Catholics. The lack of response from the West Coast was predictable: for a very long time, Washington and Oregon have been the two most heavily agnostic/atheistic states in the nation. California, at least as far as the elites are concerned, has a secular reputation.

We are happy we did this: had we not done so, many states would not have displayed a nativity scene on public grounds. Moreover, because many decided to display them—and they did so without triggering a constitutional crisis—it just goes to show how utterly flatulent is the argument that the governors are restrained by law from doing so.

The following governors displayed the crèche donated by the Catholic League on public property this past Christmas season: Alabama: Gov. Bob Riley; Alaska: Gov. Sean Parnell; Arkansas: Gov. Mike Beebe; Idaho: Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter; Kansas: Gov. Mark Parkinson; Kentucky: Gov. Steve Beshear; Maine: Gov. John Baldacci; Mississippi: Gov. Haley Barbour; Montana: Gov. Brian Schweitzer; Nevada: Gov. Jim Gibbons; New Hampshire: Gov. John Lynch; North Carolina: Gov. Bev Perdue; Rhode Island: Gov. Donald Carcieri; South Dakota: Gov. Mark Sanford; Tennessee: Gov. Phil Bredeson; Texas: Gov. Rick Perry; Utah: Gov. Gary Herbert; and Virginia: Gov. Bob McDonnell.

December

New York, NY – The big battle this Christmas season was the showdown between the Catholic League and American Atheists. In early November we learned that the atheist group would be erecting a billboard at the New Jersey entrance of the Lincoln Tunnel that would read, “You Know It’s a Myth. This Season Celebrate Reason!” We effectively checkmated their message on the Manhattan side with a billboard of our own funded by an anonymous donor that read, “You Know It’s Real. This Season Celebrate Jesus!” (See the competing billboards on page 68.) The media love conflict, so it was no surprise that our response generated big news.

What meant a lot to us was the enthusiastic response we received from Protestants: they wrote letters of thanks, sent checks, called to congratulate us, etc. we even heard from Jews who were happy with our riposte.

The militant response this Christmas season on the part of atheists was disturbing: they will stop at nothing in their crusade to eradicate Christmas.

On December 21, Bill Donohue appeared with American Atheists president David Silverman on the Fox News Channel to discuss a study which showed that those who do not celebrate Christmas often suffer emotional harm in the workplace. Donohue told Silverman “to get over it” and stop the whining.

Pope Benedict XVI has spoken eloquently about the twin evils of our time—radical secularism and religious fundamentalism. While religious extremists are a threat to our national security, radical secularists are a threat to our Judeo-Christian culture. Our billboard was designed as an appropriate cultural response to secular militancy.

December

The Christmas season was marked by relentless attacks on Catholics and Christians by atheists and non-believers. They campaigned to neuter Christmas with billboards, bus ads, banners and posters. Here is a list of the atheist campaigns from this Christmas season:

The American Humanist Association erected billboards stating, “Why believe in god? Just be good for goodness; sake” and “Want a better world? Prayer not required.” The group also ran a television commercial contrasting words from various religious texts such as the Bible with quotes from different humanists.

Every year in Loudon County, Virginia atheists and Christians compete for 10 spots on the front lawn of the county courthouse. This year atheists ended up with 6 out of the 10 spots. Where a Nativity scene once stood for 4 decades was replaced this year by a banner that read "Celebrating our Constitution: Keeping Church and State Separate since 1787." A billboard was also erected saying, "Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens and enslaves minds."

The group NY Atheists ran bus ads saying, "You Don't Have To Believe In God To Be A Moral Or Ethical Person."

The Seattle Atheists ran a billboard saying, "Question with boldness even the existence of God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear.—Thomas Jefferson"

The group also erected a "Tree of Knowledge" on the Capitol campus in Olympia. What looked like a Christmas Tree was decorated with pictures of Albert Einstein, Charles Darwin and other famous atheists. It had a sign next to it that reads: "At this winter Solstice, as people embrace light and hope, Seattle Atheists celebrates human knowledge: Inquiry and discovery, invention and exploration, the investigation of mysteries subatomic to astronomic ever growing, ever reaching, ever striving."

Iowa Atheists and Freethinkers ran a bus ad that said, "Don't believe in God? You are not alone."

The Washington Coalition Of Reason placed ads on bus shelters with the message, "Don't Believe in God? Join the Club."

The Freedom From Religion Foundation erected several billboards throughout the country. Among the messages were: "Imagine No Religion"; "I don't believe in God because I don't believe in Mother Goose"; and "Atheism is OK in Oklahoma. Saluting Gore—First Atheist Senator."

FFRF also placed a Winter Solstice placard in the rotundas of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Capitols stating:

"At this season of the Winter Solstice,
may reason prevail.

There are no gods, no devils, no angels,
no heaven or hell.

There is only our natural world.

Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds."

In Brookville, Indiana the FFRF attempted to remove a Nativity scene on court-owned property saying that it “steps over the line separating church, and state.”

The Triangle Freethought Society placed a billboard stating “Reason’s Greetings” in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The Florida Atheists and Secular Humanists ran an ad campaign on buses and billboards saying, “Being a good person doesn’t require God. Don’t believe in God? You’re not alone.”

Metroplex Atheists placed ads on buses in Fort Worth, Texas with the message “Millions of people are good without God.”

Believers in the area responded with an ad campaign of their own with the message, “I still love you—God.”

The United Coalition of Reason and the Freedom From Religion Foundation teamed up to place ads on buses and billboards in the following cities: Detroit, Fayetteville, Philadelphia, Washington, Austin, Des Moines, Louisville, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Jacksonville, St. Augustine, St. Petersburg, Tampa, Tucson, Sacramento, St. Louis and Seattle. The ads read: “Millions of Americans are Good without God” and “Don’t believe in God? You are not alone.”

In Denver the Colorado Coalition of Reason erected three billboards responding to a nativity scene on government property. The signs said, “Stop government support of religion. MOVE this Denver Nativity scene to a church.”

Christmas Vandalism

During each Christmas season, we are loaded with stories on Christmas vandalism. Here is a list of incidents that came to our attention this year:

November

Chicago, IL – A van used by Kidz Korna—a charity that gives away thousands of presents to needy children at Christmas—was torched by vandals.

November 9

Mount Laurel, NJ – Vandals caused over \$500 worth of damage to the crèche at Fellowship Baptist Church.

November 29

Columbia, MO – Two fraternity brothers from the University of Missouri stole Christmas decorations from homes near campus. Among the decorations were figures of the Baby Jesus and other nativity scene statuary, wreathes, Christmas trees, etc.

December 3

Hastings, MO – A 19-year-old man was arrested in connection with vandalizing homes and Christmas decorations covering the displays with swastikas, pentagrams and satanic messages.

December 6

Middleboro, MA – The town's police chief said he had received more reports of theft and vandalism to Christmas decorations than ever before.

December 15

Birmingham, AL – Vandals burned the City of Birmingham's Christmas tree from its downtown display.

December 19

Chicago, IL – A driver plowed through a residential Christmas display running over the Baby Jesus and decapitating figures from the nativity scene.

December 19

Grenada County, MS – The stable used to house a live nativity for the Hardy Baptist Church was torn down by vandals.

December 24

Frankenmuth, MI – Vandals damaged a historic nativity scene at a Christmas store causing \$40,000 worth of damage.

December 29

Fort Lauderdale, FL – Vandals toilet-papered Baby Jesus and a nativity scene at a private home around Christmas.

Figures of the Baby Jesus were stolen from homes, businesses or churches in the following locations: Red Lion, Pennsylvania; Taylorsville, North Carolina; Atlantic Beach, Florida; Lynchburg, Virginia; Redford Township, Michigan; Riverton, Utah; Elon, North Carolina; Easthampton, Massachusetts; Dublin, New Hampshire; Kirksville, Missouri; Fort Collins, Colorado; Middletown, Pennsylvania; Downers Grove, Illinois; Fayetteville, North Carolina; Waterloo, Missouri; Cookeville, Tennessee; Arkansas City, Arkansas; La Marque, Texas; Cranston, Rhode Island; Rochester, New York; Jacksonville, Florida; Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri; Lathrop, Missouri; Greeneville, Tennessee; Standish, Michigan; Yakima, Washington; Omaha, Nebraska; Alexander County, North Carolina; Pocatello, Idaho; Frankenmuth, Washington; Middleburg, Florida; Kansas City, Kansas; Phoenix, Arizona; Columbia, Missouri; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Saint Louis, Missouri; and Nikiski, Alaska.