

“WAR ON CHRISTMAS” DOES NOT LACK FOR EVIDENCE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on various aspects of the “War on Christmas”:

The “War on Christmas” began in the 1980s with legal challenges to nativity scenes on public property, and then morphed into a multicultural rage in the 1990s. It peaked around 2005-2008, and then subsided.

The anti-Christmas forces are still out there, most notably on college campuses. One thing never changes: the anti-Christmas activists continue to make spurious legal and ideological arguments to justify their hostility to the holiday. But they do not speak for most Americans.

As a recent Pew Research Center survey showed, 90 percent of Americans celebrate Christmas. The majority still celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday, though somewhat less than a few years ago. The majority also note that the religious roots of Christmas are less emphasized now than in the past, however only a third say they are bothered by it.

Some observers conclude that since most Americans are not bothered by the diminishing religious role of Christmas that that is evidence of how contrived the “War on Christmas” is. Wrong.

The attacking and neutering of Christmas has had the cooperation of elites from many segments of society: the courts; the universities; the elementary and secondary schools; the media; the entertainment industry; and activist secular organizations. All have played a pivotal role. So it would be astonishing if the survey data were different.

It is important to note that the elites did not take their

cues from the people: there was no push by the public to accomplish this end.

Americans are a practical people. Their primary interests are both micro and local: they put their family and community first. In general, they tend to accommodate themselves to the prevailing winds of the culture, even if they would prefer different conditions. This includes the transformation of Christmas.

Instead of asking respondents whether they are “bothered” by the decline in the religious elements of Christmas, Pew researchers should have asked if they are “happy” with this outcome. No doubt that would have elicited a different response.

Most Americans are not cultural warriors, so when they note changes in the culture that they dislike, they tend to shrug, saying such things as, “it is what it is.” That should not be read as an endorsement: it is a way of practically adjusting to new norms and values.

Similarly, if the American people had been asked some 30 years ago, when the “War on Christmas” began, whether they would prefer to preserve the religious roots of Christmas, or adopt a more secular approach, it is a sure bet they would have opted for the former. But the elites never asked—they never do—they simply imposed.

Anyone who thinks the “War on Christmas” is not real should go to the Catholic League website and check out our Annual Reports; there are hundreds of examples available online. To read a short list of some of our favorites, click [here](#).