

WE'RE WINNING WAR ON CHRISTMAS

By Bill Donohue

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The “War on Christmas” began in earnest in the 1980s when the American Civil Liberties Union was filing one lawsuit after another attempting to ban manger scenes on public property.

In the 1990s, the Christmas wars morphed into the multicultural agenda of the nation’s schools, affecting curricula and school concerts. Worse, even the private sector began a campaign to neuter Christmas in the workplace.

But after peaking circa 2005, there has been increasing evidence – especially in the past three years – that the anti-Christmas activists are losing.

The “War on Christmas” has always been a top-down phenomenon, led by such militant atheist organizations as American Atheists and the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF). By contrast, it’s mostly been a grassroots effort to maintain Christmas traditions, and this has certainly been the case in more recent years.

While there have been many organizations fighting the foes of Christmas – the Catholic League, the Thomas More Law Center, the Alliance Defending Freedom, the American Family Association – without the participation of men and women in our nation’s towns, villages, and cities, we wouldn’t be winning. Here are a few examples:

Last year, FFRF sent a threatening letter to city authorities in Faribault, Minnesota complaining about a nativity scene in the local library. This year the Faribault City Council voted

unanimously to display a crèche on public land. As one council member put it, "This really bugs me. I mean, one person complained. There are 17,000 members [of FFRF] in the whole nation. That's really a minority. We're the majority here."

In October, FFRF lost in a bid to have its hate-filled display erected alongside a nativity scene on the grounds of the Henderson County Courthouse in East Texas.

The Thomas More Law Center scored an impressive victory when a nativity scene that was built by a local resident was returned to its longtime home on a median in Warren, Michigan.

Thanks to Alliance Defending Freedom, students at Western Piedmont College in Morganton, N.C., were allowed to use the word "Christmas" to sell – you guessed it – Christmas trees.

The Catholic League moved quickly to restore a Christmas tree to a residence of senior citizens in Newhall, California after learning that the private company that owns the home ordered the Christmas tree removed on the imbecilic grounds that it is a religious symbol.

FFRF took it on the chin again when a judge told them to take a walk after the atheists sought to ban a nativity scene on public grounds in Crockett, Texas.

The mayor of Woodcliff Lake, N.J. rightly said, "There's no controversy. There's no story. It is a Christmas tree and Menorah lighting." His strong response was to another attempt by the New Jersey chapter of the ACLU to censor Christmas celebrations.

The citizens of Oskaloosa, Iowa turned out in large numbers to attend a city council meeting on whether to keep a nativity scene in the city's public square. The city council voted to keep it.

Last year, FFRF complained about a manger scene on the town

property of Woodbridge, N.J., but this year the city council preempted another strike by affirming the right to erect the crèche.

When the authorities of Santa Monica, Calif. took the easy way out by banning Christian and atheist displays alike, local residents made a cultural statement of their own when they reenacted the Christmas story with a live performance.

To be sure, our side did not win every battle, and nativity scenes continue to be vandalized in many parts of the nation. But Newsweek/Daily Beast wasn't far off when it concluded, "The War on Christmas Is Over" and "Christmas Won." One thing is for sure: there is little doubt that the vector of change has moved our way.

Dr. William Donohue is the president of and CEO of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. The publisher of the Catholic League journal, Catalyst, Bill is a former Bradley Resident Scholar at the Heritage Foundation and served for two decades on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars. The author of five books, two on the ACLU, and the winner of several teaching awards and many awards from the Catholic community, Donohue has appeared on thousands of television and radio shows speaking on civil liberties and social issues.