

YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS A WAR ON CHRISTMAS – WHATEVER THE NEW YORK TIMES TELLS YOU

By Don Feder

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There is no war on Christmas – so says the secular left as it fires off another salvo.

Of course, these are the same shameless ideologues who tell us with a perfectly straight face:

- **There is no war on marriage** – as they go about busily trying to deconstruct an institution that serves as the bedrock of society and create an obscene parody called gay marriage, which would open the door to government sanction of polygamy and pedophilia.
- **There's no war on parental rights** – all the while they're sexualizing your children (through the public schools), distributing condoms to adolescents and then, when she gets pregnant, providing an abortion for your 15-year-old daughter, without your knowledge or consent.
- **There is no war on faith** – despite the fact that they're demolishing Ten Commandments monuments, want to take “one nation under God” out of the Pledge of Allegiance, remove “in God we trust,” from our coinage and currency, and stop public prayer at the nation's military academies.
- **There is no media bias** – even though the mainstream media blathers endlessly about the “religious right,” but refuses to acknowledge the existence of a religious left.

But, I digress.

In response to growing public outrage over efforts to purge Christmas from our culture, liberals offer the following rebuttals: 1) Bill O'Reilly invented the whole thing as a publicity stunt, 2) The war on Christmas is a myth concocted by groups like American Family Association and Alliance Defense Fund to raise money from the unwary, and/or 3) It's part of a religious-right conspiracy to advance a theocratic agenda.

In an opinion column in the December 4th New York Times ("This Season's War Cry: Commercialize Christmas, or Else") Adam Cohen says religious conservatives suffer from schizophrenia. In years past, they complained about the commercialization of Christmas. Now, they're the ones trying to commercialize it, by pressuring retail establishments to say "Merry Christmas," Cohen maintains.

And how exactly do the words "Merry Christmas," commercialize the holiday?

You're already at the checkout counter. You've spent your hard-earned money. All we're looking for is a recognition of the reality that 9 out of 10 shoppers aren't buying presents for Kwanza, or Hanukah or the Winter Solstice.

Yes, but censoring the word "Christmas" is sensitive, Cohen claims. "For decades, companies have replaced 'Christmas parties' with 'holiday parties,' schools and stores have used phrases like 'Happy Holidays' and 'Seasons Greeting' out of respect for the nation's diversity."

There it is, the secular left's ace-up-the-sleeve – the diversity card.

But the nation is far more homogenous than diversity-mavens would have us believe. America is 85% Christian. (96% of us celebrate Christmas.) They don't say "Have a Happy Holiday" in Israel at Hanukah, though a third of the nation isn't Jewish. They don't say "Seasons Greetings" in Egypt, when Ramadan rolls around.

Why must America be the only nation on earth that refuses to acknowledge its religious roots? Why must we be the only nation to studiously ignore the majority's faith?

But there's something much darker at work here, Cohen discloses, "The Christmas that Mr. O'Reilly and his allies are promoting ... fits with their campaign to make America *more like a theocracy*, with Christian displays on public property and Christian prayer in public schools."

If you can't plausibly accuse someone of being a theocrat, say they're more like a theocrat. Clearly, no one in their right mind believes that a Nativity scene in a public park or a non-denominational prayer in the public schools equals 15th century Spain or modern-day Iran.

So, you know, "more like a theocracy" – the kind of theocracy which contents itself with voluntary measures and symbolic gestures, the kind of theocracy America was circa 1962.

If – as the left contends – conservative Christians invented the war on Christmas to move us down the road to a theocratic state, which religion will hold the reins of power – the Catholicism of Bill Donohue of the Catholic League, the Methodism of Don Wildmon (head of the American Family Association) or the Judaism of Jackie Mason and Rabbi Aryeh Spero, who stood with me on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral last week to denounce efforts to purge Christmas from the culture?

Or, perhaps we'll have an historic first -- a diversity theocracy?

Writing on the Washington-insider website salon.com (“How the secular humanist grinch didn’t steal Christmas”), Michelle Goldberg insists: “In fact, there is no war on Christmas. What there is, rather, is a *burgeoning myth* of a war on Christmas, assembled out of old *reactionary tropes, urban legends, exaggerated anecdotes*, and increasingly organized hostility to the American Civil Liberties Union.”

Yeah, like us old reactionaries really have to work at getting ordinary Americans to despise the Boy Scout-baiting, religion-hating, terrorist-friendly ACLU.

Fran Quigly, executive director of the Indiana ACLU, agrees that his group is under siege. Hype about a war on Christmas is the product of “a well-organized attempt by *extremist groups* to *demonize* the ACLU, *crush* religious diversity and *make a few bucks* in the process.”

So, when the Mayor of Boston attempted to rename the city’s Christmas tree a “holiday tree,” was news of same a reactionary trope, an exaggerated anecdote or an urban legend? And Atlanta’s “Grand Tree,” Purdue University’s “Union Tree” and the U.S. Naval Academy’s “Giving Tree” – more urban mythology?

How about the Housing Resource Development Corporation in Winter Park, Florida, which told the elderly residents of a nursing home it operates that they can’t sing Christmas carols, or the public housing authority in Mechanicsburg, PA, that instructed residents of a project for low-income seniors not to put up Christmas decorations in the building’s common areas? More exaggerated reports from a war that doesn’t exist?

New York City's Environmental Protection Agency allows employees to put up Hanukkah banners and celebrate the Hindu festival of Diwali, but has banned red and green decorations and even removed "holiday trees" (lest they be mistaken for the dreaded Christmas tree). In Diversity America, every religion gets a seat at the table, except the faith adhered to by 85% of the American people.

If space permitted, I could offer hundreds – nay, thousands -- of such urban anecdotes and exaggerated myths – doubtless, all dreamed up by the religious right to generate donations and "Christianize" America.

In fact, so successful are O'Reilly and other war-on-Christmas-mongers, that they've managed to get most Americans to buy in to the myth.

When a November FOX News poll asked respondents "Do you feel like Christianity is under attack in the United States today?" – 59% answered "yes." When the Anti-Defamation League re-phrased the question slightly (Do you think "religion is under attack" in America), 64% agreed.

Yes, Virginia, there is a war on Christmas. We don't need "The O'Reilly Factor" or the Alliance Defense Fund to tell us about it – though they've done a good job of documenting it.

The casualties are everywhere. The aggression is so blatant that only the ideologically deluded could deny its existence.

The effort to drive Christmas underground is part of a much broader campaign to eliminate the influence of the vestiges of Judeo-Christian morality.

Public celebrations or acknowledgements of Christmas remind Americans of our religious heritage. They also contradict the myth that America is a mosaic. America has a religion. For the overwhelming majority of Americans, it's Christianity. Christmas celebrates the birth of its founder.

Christianity is all that stands in the way of the left's cherished goals – to make America like Europe (whose leaders can't even acknowledge the continent's Christian heritage in the proposed constitution for the European Union), like Sweden (that almost imprisoned a pastor for preaching the Biblical view of homosexuality), like the Netherlands (that has legalized euthanasia, prostitution, group marriage and drugs), like France (whose natives have negative population growth which, when combined with open-borders and generous welfare benefits, is creating an Islamic republic of the future), like -- San Francisco, Times Square and Berkeley all rolled into one.

Christian activists proved their effectiveness with successful referenda campaigns for marriage – from Ohio to California. To put it in World War II-terms, Christian conservatives are the RAF that must be swept from the skies by the left's Luftwaffe for elitists to achieve total dominance of the culture.

Conservatives weren't the ones who turned Christmas into a front in the culture war. And we're not about to apologize for fighting back.

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