Atheist Attacks on Christmas

by Phyllis Schlafly

December 12, 2012

Bill O'Reilly asked this question on his Fox News program last week: "Why do I have to be the leader defending Christmas against its attackers?" O'Reilly was criticizing Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee's renaming his state's Christmas tree a "holiday tree."

Good question. It's time for Christians to realize that their religion is under attack and they had better start fighting to win the war for religious liberty in public opinion, in the courts, and in the schools.

The war against Christianity has been waged by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, and similar groups. Their tactics use the threat of litigation, with the hope that supremacist judges will accept their reinterpretation of the First Amendment as Americans have understood it for over two centuries.

The reelection of Barack Obama has made this issue even more pressing. Throughout his first term, he waged a persistent campaign to secularize America, to push all religion behind church doors, and to ban all mention of religion from every public place, park, building, military facility, school, and speech.

The public schools have become the front line in this battle to banish Christmas from celebrations, songs, and events, and anti-Christmas public school rulings have been accelerating. Here are a few examples.

Pennsylvania fourth graders were prohibited from handing out religious Christmas cards to classmates, Massachusetts ninth graders were told they could not create Christmas cards that depict a nativity scene, a Georgia school board deleted the word "Christmas" from the school calendar, Minnesota middle school kids were disciplined for wearing red and green scarves in a Christmas skit and for ending the skit with wishing all a Merry Christmas, and dozens of schools banned Christmas carols in favor of songs such as Frosty the Snowman and Winter Wonderland.

A New Jersey second-grader was prohibited from singing the pop song "Awesome God" at an evening talent show, and a Colorado school counselor changed the words of the Pledge of Allegiance on the public-address system from "one nation under God" to "one nation under your belief system" (that was, fortunately, overturned). A Massachusetts elementary school censored God from Lee Greenwood's famous song, changing the line "God bless the U.S.A." to "We love the U.S.A."

A first-grade girl in North Carolina wrote a poem for her school's Veterans Day assembly honoring her two grandfathers who had served in the Vietnam War that included the sentences, "He prayed to God for peace. He prayed to God for strength." The school censored the word God out of the poem before the kid read it. A Texas high school ordered the football coach not to bow his head or kneel when the team said a prayer before a game.

Cranston High School West in Rhode Island banned a prayer banner that had hung on the auditorium wall for 38 years without complaint. The banner read in part: "Our Heavenly Father, Grant us each day the desire to do our best. … Help us to be good sports and smile when we lose as well as when we win. Teach us the value of true friendship. Help us always to conduct ourselves so as to bring credit to Cranston High West. Amen."

A Plano, Texas school banned an 8-year-old from handing out candy canes with Jesus' name on them to classmates at a school holiday party, confiscated a girl's pencils because they mentioned "God," and banned an entire classroom from writing "Merry Christmas" on cards to be sent to our troops serving in the Middle East. Litigation followed the action of a Texas high school that tried to forbid cheerleaders from displaying a banner at a football game with the Bible verse: "And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us."

President Obama is a major part of the campaign to secularize America. For the fourth straight year, Obama again deleted God from his Thanksgiving Day address as he personally read it from the teleprompter into a camera.

Of course, there is nothing in the U.S. Constitution that requires this anti-Christmas nonsense. The purpose of all these actions is to mandate a religion of secularism, which is completely contrary to American history, heritage, and constitutional law.

Christians had better wake up and realize the threat of the secularists to the First Amendment. Our answer to the ACLU and atheist lawyers who are trying to change America should be the favorite words of Scrooge in Charles Dickens' story, "A Christmas Carol": "Bah, humbug!"