



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on December 23, 2018

Why Is There a War on Christmas?

The Christian beliefs of America's forefathers and residents supplied the bedrock upon which the United States was built. But the Founding Fathers who did the building never intended to use the power of government to favor any particular religious view. They knew that religion would be necessary to guide the conduct of the people. So they carefully balanced the need for government with the need for religion.



When the Founders insisted in the First Amendment that there should be "no law respecting the establishment of religion," they never intended to create a Godless state. They knew that temporal happiness would flow from the peoples' religious views that bound them to moral principles. The government would be ruled by law, they believed, and the people would be limited by a freely accepted moral code such as the Ten Commandments.

George Washington summed up what the Founders expected when he stated: "And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

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The sound foundation written into our nation's beginning resulted in self-reliant people possessed of virtue anchored in religion. It was a benign fostering of religious consciousness, not a mandate issued by government.

But times are changing. For many years, individuals and organizations have worked to destroy the beneficial influence of religion. One of the most notable casualties is the downgrading of Christmas. Converting the birth of Christ into a celebration featuring snowmen and reindeer, and substituting "Happy Holidays" for "Merry Christmas," indicate that the birth of the Babe in the crib is under attack. And the attack comes from the courts, not just in the commercial life of the nation.

It was in 1958 that New Jersey's large Bamberger's department store departed from longstanding practice and substituted various United Nations symbols and emblems in place of its traditional Christmas displays. Other than some raised eyebrows, no serious objections were raised and a campaign to have other stores do likewise in 1959 was begun. But the infant John Birch Society (formed in December 1958) learned of plans to have other area stores follow the Bamberger lead. A hastily created letter-writing campaign aimed at storeowners and managers in the region succeeded in persuading them, even Bamberger's, to display the customary Christmas decorations.

However, the war on Christmas continued and court rulings started banning anything even hinting at the religious meaning of the great day. Soon, the most brazen perversion of the annual celebration saw promotion of UNICEF greeting cards in place of traditional Christmas cards. Many of UNICEF's offerings had been created by known Communists. More letter-writing by Birch Society members and friends put an end to that.

By 2005, FOX news host John Gibson authored an entire book about the campaign attacking Christmas.



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His *The War on Christmas: How the Liberal Plot to Ban the Sacred Christian Holiday Is Worse Than You Thought* awakened many. But the war continued. We now find religious floats no longer in annual Christmas parades. Corporations have told employees to offer “Happy Holidays” instead of “Merry Christmas” when dealing with the public. For many, a “Christmas Tree” has become a “Holiday Tree.” And manger scenes with the Babe in a crib surrounded by Mary, Joseph, the Magi, and some shepherds no longer appear on property housing public buildings thanks to challenges raised by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Reliance on a tortured meaning of the First Amendment has become a battering ram used to diminish and ultimately ban the true meaning of Christmas. Who gains in this campaign? The obvious answer is those who want to remake our nation’s fundamentals so the United States can fit nicely into a UN-led new world order.

Ask a non-Christian American if he or she is harmed by Christian fellow Americans who live according to the moral strictures of the Christian religion. Be prepared for a speedy negative response. What George Washington stated so many years ago is a correct analysis of human nature. Expecting morality to prevail without religion is an absurdity. And we add that an absence of morality is a huge step toward creating conditions where a would-be ruler will deal with chaos by establishing tyranny.

Like many similar traditions that have made America the envy of the world, keeping the real meaning of Christmas alive cannot be overstated. Merry Christmas to all!

John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#).



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