



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 8, 2018

Answering Atheists: Italy's New Government Promotes Christ in Schools

The Italians don't have anyone like the Nebraska principal who recently [tried to ban](#) even candy canes and red and green items at Christmastime. But they do have a war on the season, as some Italian schools have moved to prohibit Nativity scenes and crucifixes in the name of "inclusiveness" and "respect for other cultures."

This prompted a backlash from the ruling patriotic government, with Interior Minister Matteo Salvini calling the move "idiocy" and [writing](#) that the Christmas displays are "not just about religion, but about history, roots, culture." He added, "I will not give up! Long live our traditions, and may they spread!"



Chiming in was Education Minister Marco Bussetti, who said, "For me, the crucifix is a symbol of our history, our culture, our traditions"; moreover, he told "a meeting of 180 teachers and school leaders from across the country he believed the same to be true for Christmas trees and nativity displays at this time of year," [reports Breitbart](#).

This comes as the "[Italian media is describing an 'open war' on nativity scenes](#) in the classroom, where local administrators were forbidding the Christian imagery [from] being displayed in schools across the country," *Clash Daily* [adds](#). "Parents in Venice, however, protested the decision[,] which was blamed on 'lack of funding.'"

The site continues, "[This explanation was quickly shot down by the populist Lega party](#)[,] who said that local officials had set aside 50,000 euros for Nativity scenes at schools."

Funding excuses are often the last refuge of cowards; they justify monetarily what they can't defend morally.

There are other cop-outs, too. For example, Italian website Aleteia [blames](#) a "malevolent atheism" that continually uses the now stale excuse, "There are students of other religions, [sic] we must respect them." (It should be mentioned that aiding these anti-theists are naïve sorts genuinely imbued with cultural/religious-equivalence doctrine.)

A case in point is a school in Terni, Italy, that [canceled](#) its traditional nativity recitation, claiming it was "'a sign of respect' for pupils from other cultures," *Breitbart* also informs. Yet reacting to this, local populist Lega Party representative Valeria Alessandrini pointed out, "'Only by respecting [our own traditions] ... can we make others understand everyone is free to practice their own faiths but that it is also required they respect the history and culture of the country in which they live,'" *Breitbart* relates.

In reality, weakness breeds contempt. It's hard to command respect from others if you clearly don't respect yourself — this applies to cultures, too. Just consider what foreigners may infer from the West's



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 8, 2018

lukewarm attitude: “Wow, if Westerners’ won’t defend their faith and culture, they must not be worth defending.”

And then are they worth embracing?

Of course, this is more of an issue than ever in Italy, and the West generally, with the rapid influx of Third World migrants, many of whom are religiously chauvinistic Muslims. It’s worth noting here that these newcomers don’t share the West’s relativism and won’t return the “tolerance” favor should they ever take control. Just consider the warning that is the Muslim world: Persecution of Christians is common there and “freedom of religion” [uncommon](#).

Yet another warning, for Italy and others, is us. In deference to the “separation of church and state” — [not actually in the Constitution](#) — we’ve separated sanity and state, going so far as to allow [satanic “Christmas” displays](#) in “anti-establishment’s” name.

Yet what of this notion that faith doesn’t belong in the public square? Not only was it belied by the Founders’ behavior, but does it make sense? Consider the following argument.

If the “religious” ideas in question really have been handed down by God, the Creator of the Universe and Inerrant Author of All, don’t we actually have a duty to infuse our public sphere with them? Is it not then an imperative that we immerse schoolchildren in this divine light? Of course, an atheist will respond, “Not everyone worships sky fairies! These are just man-made beliefs.”

Yet this is where their argument collapses. For what then justifies putting “religious” beliefs on the back of the bus? How is it that the man-made beliefs we happen to call “secular” may be in the public square, but the man-made beliefs we happen to call “religious” may not be? If they’re all man-made, wherein lies the difference?

This striking truth leaves us with only two possibilities: Either religious ideas are man-made, in which case they *may* be in schools.

Or they’re from God — and *must* be in schools.

Secularists may now, sputtering, claim that religious ideas can be “offensive.” But this is wholly subjective. Most everyone is offended by something and most everything offends someone. Whose feelings of umbrage will be judge and jury?

In reality, everyone accepts dogmas knowingly or not, and all these battles concern whose dogmas will prevail. Secularists may claim offense at having “religious” isms (e.g., Catholicism, Protestantism) in schools, yet put their own isms (e.g., multiculturalism, feminism) in them. They’re so ideo-centric, too, that this never even strikes them as a double standard.

The confusion begins, though, with the acceptance of the religious/secular dichotomy, a distinction that is, in the most important sense, a *false one*. For how does this religious/secular discrimination model serve to separate good from bad influences? Does the “secular” label magically cleanse Nazism or Marxism? Does deeming “Thou shalt do no murder” “religious” render it bad counsel? In reality, there’s only one truly relevant distinction, only one that should determine public-square presence: the true and the untrue.

Having lost sight of this, we wallow in cultural/religious relativism and what it often breeds, apathy. The result is that too many Westerners don’t care enough to defend their own faith and culture. Thus, where a confident West once colonized and evangelized the Third World, it now invites the Third World to gradually colonize and Islamize it.



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 8, 2018

Photo: Crisfotolux/iStock/Getty Images Plus



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.