

Although a menorah (Jewish religious symbol for Hanukkah) and the star and crescent (Islamic religious symbol for Ramadan) are allowed to be displayed, the nativity scene cannot be. The argument is that Santa and trees are religious enough to satisfy the Christians in America. A spokesperson for Mayor Bloomberg said: "You want to practice your religion, do it on your time in your own church, synagogue or mosque."

This attitude, promoted by many in order to promulgate the myth of church/state separation, is frightening. Are we okay with public policy that completely obliterates Christ from Christmas except within the four walls of our churches? I pray not.

Typically, opponents have missed the entire point. In 1870 President U.S. Grant made Christmas, the day we celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus, a federal holiday. Most would say it's the best holiday of the year! Despite the fact that 90 percent of Americans understand the reason for the season, Christian freedoms to celebrate it are being continually eroded. Now more than ever, we need to fight to keep Christ in Christmas.

One group that is exposing the attack that pits baby Jesus against an army of elves, reindeer and singing Christmas trees is the Alliance Defense Fund, who this year has recruited 700 attorneys to defend the December dilemma over how much religious meaning will be allowed in the public acknowledgement of the holiday. Another group has promoted a nation-wide effort to reclaim company "holiday" parties as Christmas parties (see Page 2). A third group has launched a campaign to prevent blatant religious discrimination by bringing lawsuits against those who eliminate public displays of religious songs or symbols. They will also defend any governmental agency that abides by the constitution and allows the equal expression of religious views.

But what can we as individuals do? There are many simple ways each of us can stand up against the attack on Christmas as we know it. Make a conscious effort to portray the **real meaning** of Christmas in everything you do—your cards, your gifts, your decorations, your wishes, your celebrations. **This national holiday is all about Christ. Christ IS the reason for the season. Please do whatever you can to keep it that way.**

We at Hawaii Family Forum wish you a Christmas filled with the love of the baby Jesus who came to Bethlehem over two thousand years ago, who later gave his life for you and who is living in you everyday, everywhere you go, not just inside your church. Merry Christmas and God's blessings of peace and joy to you and your family throughout the season designed to celebrate the birth of the Savior of the world.

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December, 2003

In Defense of “Christ”mas

If you read the news these days, you know that two of the institutions we hold most dear in our society are under attack—first, marriage and now, Christmas. Even as the Christmas edition of the HFF newsletter goes to print, I find the all out attack on everything CHRISTmas hard to believe. Yes, nativity scenes on public property have been under fire for years, but the assault has intensified and expanded lately. (By the way, nativity scenes on public property ARE constitutional as long as the display also includes a secular symbol such as a Christmas tree). The quiet strikes against Christmas we have ignored in years past are now having profound impacts, especially on our children.

Despite the fact that a 2000 Gallop poll found that 96 percent of Americans celebrate Christmas, such festivities have become more problematic here in the land of the free. This holiday, set aside around the world to honor the birth of Christ, is being challenged to an unbelievable extent in America.

For example, a number of suits have been filed recently in several states attempting to remove all religious reference to Christmas. Three of the numerous attacks include:

1. The Norwood School Community in Massachusetts, which is being sued for the third consecutive year by the Americans United for Separation of Church and State for displaying a nativity scene funded, erected and maintained by private citizens. The group claims that the display encourages divisiveness and religious debate and should therefore be removed from public property.
2. In Wisconsin, an Air National Guard sergeant was told he could not place a “God Bless America” ornament on the city tree due to an unwritten policy that “no ornaments of religious nature” could be displayed on the so-called “holiday” tree (formerly known as a “Christmas tree.”) After Christian legal intervention, a settlement was reached and the state agreed to hang nearly 2,000 ornaments it had received “without regard to any ornament’s religious expressive content” as the Constitution permits.
3. One of the most outrageous attacks has come through the New York City school system, which the Thomas Moore Center is suing.

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