

A Savior for all – even those who reject him



Just because it's the Christmas season is no reason to pause the culture war. And here to celebrate peace and goodwill in its own peculiar fashion is the Secular Democrats of America PAC, with its program for pushing religion out of public life.

Spearheaded by the jolly elves who chair the Congressional Freethought Caucus, Reps. Jamie Raskin of Maryland and Jared Huffman of California, the Secular Democrats want the incoming Biden administration, among other things, to drop the national motto "In God We Trust" and tell government officials to keep religion "separate" from their work.

Chances are, Santa won't bring the Secular Democrats everything they want, but that's no reason for complacency. Efforts to drive religion out of sight will go on just the same.

Nothing new about that, either. Think back two millennia. The first Christmas happened in the obscurity of a manger, unknown and unheralded by anyone except shepherds. And not much time had passed before a bloodstained tyrant named Herod dispatched soldiers to Bethlehem with orders to find and kill the upstart king, while Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt to save the Child.

Now, the old pattern is repeating itself in our increasingly de-Christianized society – not in so violent a form, of course, but no less virulent, as the cancel culture seeks new targets in its continuing campaign to eliminate those who risk dissent from the woke agenda of secularism.

In "The Benedict Option," author Rod Dreher remarks that although the secularists won the culture war (a debatable

proposition, by the way), they have “no intention of living in postwar peace.” Rather, the forces of secularism are “pressing forward with a harsh, relentless occupation, one that is aided by the cluelessness of Christians who don’t understand what’s happening.”

That underlines the importance of the ongoing battle in the cause of religious liberty. From that perspective, the biggest Christmas present religionists have received in years is the apparent emergence of a Supreme Court majority that takes a friendly view of the First Amendment’s free exercise clause. (Those angry snarls from Scrooges writing in the editorial columns and op-ed pages of *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* certainly seem to suggest as much.)

As for us ordinary Christians, we need to apply ourselves far more energetically than we’ve been accustomed to in order to reevangelize our increasingly paganized world. Doing that, it hardly needs saying, is not a project to be carried on with fire and sword, but by spreading the message of the first Christmas by example and word.

What message is that? In a formulation that expresses the reality of Christmas in a way especially well suited to our racially troubled times, St. Josemaría Escrivá puts it like this: “There is only one race in the world, the race of the children of God.”

And in what is perhaps the best known and best loved passage of the entire New Testament, St. John the Apostle delivers a message that goes to the theological heart of the Christmas season: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:16-17).

There should be no doubt about it, either: That definitely

includes the Secular Democrats of America PAC and the Congressional Freethought Caucus. In those immortal words of Tiny Tim: God bless us, every one!

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