

Atheists Call Christ 'Myth' in NYC Christmas Billboard

The war on Christmas continues as a leading group of atheists' offensive billboard campaign is urging Americans to abandon the Jesus Christ "myth."

American Atheists' latest billboard, located in Times Square—the heart of New York City—displays images of a jolly Santa and a wooden figure of Jesus on the cross with the message, "Keep the merry! Dump the myth!" The billboard went up on Tuesday, and will remain in Times Square until Jan. 10.

"We know that a large population of 'Christians' are actually atheists who feel trapped in their family's religion," said David Silverman, the group's president. "If you know god is a myth, you do not have to lie and call yourself 'Christian' in order to have a festive holiday season. You can be merry without the myth, and indeed, you should."

Silverman continued, "We encourage people to be honest with themselves and their families this year. If you don't believe in god, tell your family—honesty is the greatest gift, and they deserve it."

Teresa MacBain, the public relations director at American Atheists, argued that Christmas may be more enjoyable without the religious connotations attached to it. The former Methodist worship and teaching pastor served in ministry for 20 years before turning her back on Christ to practice atheism.

"The true beauty of the season—family, friends and love—have nothing to do with the gods of yesteryear," MacBain said. "Indeed, the season is far more enjoyable without the religious baggage of guilt and judgmentalism. Dump the myth and have a happy holiday season."

The Catholic League has fought with the American Atheists in the past, posting opposing signs on the Lincoln Tunnel in 2010. Bill Donohue, Catholic League spokesman, said Silverman went too far this year.

“This year it’s different,” quoted Donohue as saying. “This is vile. When you depict Jesus on the cross with a crown of thorns, this is exploitative. We as Christians never harass, intimidate or insult atheists. But they can’t seem to say, ‘We simply disagree with you.’ They have to insult us.”