

O' Unity Tree, O' Unity Tree

By Dr. Paul Kengor

'Tis the season.... That is, to not refer to the *Christmas Season* as the "Christmas Season."

Of course, that's old news. But what's new news, or recent news, is the bewildering refusal in some quarters to call a *Christmas tree* a "Christmas tree." Unfortunately, this isn't new to those of us from the Pittsburgh area. On that, I'd like to enlighten folks around the country, hopefully providing some exposure to something that merits national ridicule.

Each year, the City of Pittsburgh kicks off the "Holiday Season" with its "[Light Up Night.](#)" The crowning touch (for almost a half century) is the lighting of the Christmas tree. This wonderful tradition connects Pittsburghers to the roots of their parents and grandparents.

For me, however, as a native Pittsburgher and a Christian, the moment has been spoiled: the Christmas tree is no longer called "the Christmas Tree." No, it is called "*the Unity Tree.*"

Seriously, I'm not making this up. Outsiders will recoil or laugh hysterically at the thought, but it's true—and has been for quite a while now. ([Click here.](#))

There's a curious thing about the Unity Tree, which always baffles me: It only comes out at *Christmas* time. Why is that?

Well, we know the unspoken reason—the same reason that's the reason for the season: Because the Unity Tree is a Christmas tree. And what could be more offensive to Christians than some anonymous power renaming their tree, and expecting them to accept this politically correct delusion in silent acquiescence?

I would never, for instance, dare insult my Jewish friends by refusing to call a Menorah anything but a Menorah, or demand a public renaming. I respect them, their faith, and the symbols of their faith.

Actually, I can even see the rationale in calling the "Christmas Season" the "Holiday Season," given that other faiths indeed share the season, and, further, given that the season generally encompasses holidays beyond Christmas, such as Thanksgiving and New Year's. I don't like it, but I can see it.

But how can you call a Christmas tree anything but a Christmas tree?

It isn't right to take the most common symbol of the season, found in every household that celebrates Christmas, and demand it be called something else. It *disunites* Christians from a unifying symbol that bonds them across their wide-ranging differences and denominations.

And aside from the spiritual aspect, it isn't right from a *technical* standpoint.

Overall, it entails going out of the way to arrogantly rename something you have no right to rename.

Yet, this is what happens every year in Pittsburgh—at Christmas time. Whether the new-speak architects realize it or not, they have—in the name of unity—affronted Christians during their special time.

Of course, all of that is obvious. It has outraged me for years.

And yet, that said, on further reflection, I've recently come to think that the name change is not so bad. Consider:

First, this year's Unity Tree has a sponsor, the healthcare company Highmark. It has been rechristened the "Highmark Unity Tree."

Well, on further reflection, the concept of a business sponsor is fitting. Commercialism has hijacked the religious holiday. Spending money buying things is the chief devotion for Americans this time of year. Far more deliberation is done in stores shopping than in churches praying. As a Christian, I must concede this truth.

Hence, it seems appropriate that the Unity Tree is elevated nearer Black Friday than Christmas morning. It honors not Jesus Christ but materialism. The sponsor of the Christmas tree is Christ; the sponsor of the Unity Tree is business. No argument from me.

Second, "unity" is a synonym for "diversity." Had those who divined "Unity Tree" suffered more time in our universities, they would have designated it the "Diversity Tree," which, incidentally, would have been a boon for tourism, drawing liberals everywhere in an annual pilgrimage to the Steel City. (The mayor's office blew that one.) Among the American left and campus community in particular, diversity is not only the buzzword but the central object of homage; it is the contemporary babe in the manger.

Of course, needless to say, excluding Christ from Christmas is not an act of diversity. It excludes, not includes. This is the ongoing fraud perpetuated by "diversity's" disciples.

Third, barring "Christ" from the tree is a tribute to secularism. What else is the Unity Tree, really, but a monument to secularism?

In sum, what we have with the Unity Tree is a tree that honors not Christ but secularism, commercialism, and the sham that is "diversity." If you think about it, this unholy trinity is truly what Christmas has become.

Yes, Pittsburgh has a symbol alright—an image that stands apart from Christ, separated from Christ. Maybe the do-gooders never intended *that*. But, hey, once you remove Christ from His place, it's a slippery slope.

Merry Christmas, everyone.

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