



THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

ADF Defends Christian Barred From Sharing Gospel on SUNY Campus

The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against Ulster County Community College on behalf of Greg Davis, a resident of nearby Indian Lake. Davis claims school officials forced him to leave the campus under threat of arrest for merely sharing the gospel with students on campus.

Davis' attorney, ADF affiliate Nate Kellum, says when his client asked school officials why he was not permitted to speak, they told him campus policy only allows for expression that has "cultural, educational, social, or recreational value." The lawyer feels the school had no business making such an arbitrary determination about Davis' speech.

"It is improper for someone to make a subjective decision as to whether certain speech is cultural, or whether certain speech has social value," Kellum says. "But perhaps even more poignant with this matter, it's absurd to suggest that Christian speech -- speech emanating from a Christian perspective -- has no cultural value, has no educational value, and has no social value."

According to the ADF attorney, Davis was at first told by a school official that he could speak about his faith on campus, but was told later the same day that he would need to submit a facilities use permit application, even though he did not intend to make use of any school buildings. He eventually left campus after yet another school official informed him that his religious expression was prohibited altogether.

Ulster County Community College officials argue that Davis' religious speech violated campus policy; however, Kellum maintains that the school not only violated his First Amendment rights but also engaged in anti-Christian discrimination.

"I do think we have bigotry here," the ADF attorney says, "in the sense that you have overzealous university administrators who simply dislike the message and are trying to do something about it; and yet, they are painfully ignorant that Mr. Davis has a fundamental constitutional right to do what he was doing."

ADF filed the lawsuit, *Davis v. Katt*, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York (Albany Division). Kellum says the lawsuit is necessary to protect Davis's constitutional rights and ensure that the school does not continue to discriminate against those who engage in speech with a religious perspective.

"The Constitution does not say that speech is only free if it meets certain arbitrary categories developed by public officials," Kellum asserts. Moreover, he says it is "ridiculous" for the school to say that religious expression does not fall into one of those categories.

(Source: Agapepress)

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