

By L&T Managing Editor Larry Phillips



There are several items in today's edition that give the faithful hope. Many Christians – nationally – know they have a target on their back if they outwardly express their love of their religion, and in many cases – if they practice it in public. There are examples every day where the ACLU or atheists file suit against schools or city or county councils across the country for saying a prayer or listing the Ten Commandments on the courthouse wall.

There are signs though that people in little spots across the country are fighting back – and winning.

Here is the lead paragraph from an Associated Press story that's on Page 2B – the Religion Page:

“A judge ruled Wednesday (in Houston) that cheerleaders at a Southeast Texas high school can display banners emblazoned with Bible verses at football games.” We out here in Middle America might say, “What's wrong with that? Why did that go to court?”

Well it seem the Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a complaint with the Kountze school district saying, “... the banners violated the so-called First Amendment Establishment Clause that bars government – or publicly funded school districts in this case – from establishing or endorsing a religion.”

The AP article explains: “Initially, the school district ruled the banners could not be displayed. But after a public meeting in February, the school board of trustees issued a resolution in which it wrote that the district was not required to prohibit messages on school banners that displayed ‘fleeting expressions of community sentiment solely because the source or origin of such messages is religious.’ But the trustees said the district retained the right to restrict the content of school banners.”

The judge agreed and said, “... the banners are the speech of the school, not private speech, so the school has a right to have editorial control of the banners.”

Here are the words on the banner that created the dispute: “If God is for us, who can be against us.” The players then crash through the paper banner on their way onto the field.”

Supporters pointed out the banner was “not asking anyone to believe in Christianity or accept the faith.”

Fortunately, the school decided to fight the suit, and top state officials also engaged in its defense.

“... various state officials, including Gov. Rick Perry and Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, who filed court papers seeking to intervene on their behalf. A Facebook group created after the ban, Support Kountze Kids Faith, has more than 45,000 members.”

A small victory for faith but a victory all the same.

Also on Page 2B, there’s an article about how the North Carolina Senate is moving two bills through committee and the Senate that will protect students’ organizational rights and student-led prayer.

AP reporter Chris Kardish writes: “One measure gives student organizations at the state’s public colleges and universities the right to select leaders and govern themselves without interference from administrators, so long as their actions don’t violate state or federal law. Another bill clarifies students’ rights to religious expression as long as they don’t disrupt public schools.”

One of the Senators, “... argued the bill provides a necessary First Amendment defense regardless of a group’s religious or political affiliation.”

Kardish added, “The bill passed with one dissenting voice vote and now heads to the full Senate.”

Even here in Liberal, the high school started a class years ago called “History and Philosophy of the Bible.” School administrators asked then-government teacher Chris Perkins to develop the class and curriculum. (See Perkins’ column on PAGE 2B.)

The course – strictly an elective class – started in the late 1990s, and LHS was the first public school in Kansas to offer such a course, “to the best of my knowledge,” Perkins said.

He pointed out, “The Constitution doesn’t forbid us from prayer in school, or for developing curriculum. The current interpretation doesn’t allow us to do so in a public manner in school, but doesn’t have any restriction on our communication with the Lord in a private manner.”

Another point Perkins make in his column today is, “the First Amendment states freedom ‘of’ religion, not freedom ‘from’ religion.”

These examples are small but important victories for those who believe – and are not trying to force their beliefs on anybody else – it’s important to keep God in their lives.

Of course, the lefties and atheists will go bonkers, and they’ll whine about this column – their “intolerance” oozing vile from every pore of their body, but we can’t just give up and walk away like we have for decades.

We have to take stands, fight back, because this is a culture war – and a real war for the very soul of this nation. They will do everything in their power to eliminate religion from every aspect of America life. And they will win if we don't fight back – even in the smallest ways.

It's funny how they mock religion and the Constitution when you consider what George Washington said in his farewell address after serving as our first President.

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion.”

Well said George, well said.