

Charges Dropped Against Two Christians Arrested for Distributing Bibles

On July 27 a judge dismissed charges against two members of The Gideons International.



All charges against two members of The Gideons International arrested while distributing Bibles near a South Florida school were dismissed July 27, the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) reported. In January Anthony Mirto and Ernest Simpson were giving away Bibles near Key Largo School, a K-8 public school in Monroe County, Fla., when the principal called in police after receiving complaints from parents. A sheriff's deputy asked the Gideons to leave the area after observing Mirto and Simpson distributing Bibles on what they said was school property, Baptist Press reported. The men were arrested as they were leaving. ADF senior legal counsel David Cortman filed suit on the men's behalf, arguing that Mirto and Simpson were not on school property and that the First Amendment protects their right to engage in religious speech on a public sidewalk. According to Cortman, the judge dismissed all charges because the men had actually been given permission by the principal's office to be near the school. "Christians cannot be treated as second-class citizens," Cortman said. "These two men have the same constitutional rights as everyone else to pass out literature on a public sidewalk. We are pleased that the court agrees that these men should not have been arrested and dismissed the charges against them."