

Good Ol' Rocky Top

Let's be clear about this: I have never been, nor will I ever be a fan of athletics at the University of Tennessee. As an Alabama Crimson Tide fan, it simply would be sacrilegious.

Besides, that gaudy orange is just not my color.

Having said that, the image of the university itself went up a few notches in my book this past week when it took a stand not normally seen in this day and age of Christian persecution and hatred of Jesus. UT officials ignored a complaint and demand by the Freedom From Religion Foundation to ban **prayer** by Christian clergy prior to the Volunteers' home football games at Neyland Stadium.

The Wisconsin-based FFRF tried to pull a fast one in a letter to Tennessee Chancellor Jimmy Cheek, stating that the practice is unconstitutional. Cheek had none of it, sending out a release saying he had spoken with the school's counsel and was advised that "non-sectarian prayer at public university events does not violate the First Amendment."

Cheek also went as far as to say in the release that, "The university will continue to allow prayers before university events." Good for UT—very good for UT.

The organization even posted a story on its website that boasted the headline, "Christian Prayers Dropped at UTK After FFRF Complaint." Talk about jumping the gun. But then the FFRF doesn't have to set any standards for journalism.

Chalk one up for the good guys. The pre-game prayer will be said over the public address system Saturday night when the Volunteers host the University of Akron.

The organization, with only 18,500 members nationwide, boasts on its website that the "FFRF has halted illegal prayer at

many public schools in Tennessee, at high school graduations, sporting events and even in kindergarten.”

Really, kindergarten?

The website also posted a story sporting the headline, “Texas School Halts Football Bible Banners.” The link to the story is now broken on their site after a Texas judge temporarily blocked a Houston school district from banning cheerleaders from using religious-themed banners at their football games, as reported by the *USA Today*. However, you can find the story with a Google search.

One of the banners displayed Philippians 4:13, which says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Glory to God!

Unfortunately, the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga did not show the same fortitude that the University of Tennessee-Knoxville did. Last week, after receiving a similar letter from the FFRF, UTC decided to **ban prayer** prior to Mocs home games, instead observing a moment of silence for the protection of the players’ safety and the protection of U.S. servicemen and women at home and abroad.

It’s amazing how one little letter from a secular group can throw a scare into a public university. Where’s the courage?

And, speaking of courage, kudos to all of you who have gone out to see the film *Last Ounce of Courage* since its release last week. The movie addresses how secular-American society is attempting to take away the basic freedoms provided its citizens by the **Constitution**, which includes prayer at college football games and the right to display a manager scene during Christmas.

Unfortunately, some reviewers of the movie don’t share the same opinion. According to Barbara Vandenburg of , the

America that is portrayed in *Last Ounce* is an “America on the brink of slipping into a humanist dystopia, where special-interest groups have stripped the country of all its candy canes and Nativity scenes. I don’t know the America depicted in *Last Ounce of Courage*. Presumably, it’s the very same America I call home, only so twisted by paranoia and fear-mongering as to render it unrecognizable.”

Barbara, have you heard of the **Freedom From Religion Foundation** and what they’re attempting to do? And believe me, the FFRF is not the only group of its kind.

You can bet that the FRFF won’t take this lying down. But for now, may the Lord bless the University of Tennessee for taking its Godly stand.

Just don’t bless the Volunteers when they host Alabama on Oct. 20. Roll Tide!

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