

School Puts Kibosh on Church Party Invitations

Fall out from the war on Christmas 2010 is still working its way through the courts—and the elementary schools.

Barrett Elementary Center banned a fifth-grade student from handing out Christmas party invitations to her schoolyard friends last Christmas. The party was held at the student's church, and the Pocono Mountain School District took exception. The district's policies that prohibit any speech promoting Christianity on campus as a reason to put a stop to the student's good cheer.

Attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) filed a lawsuit against Pocono Mountain School District officials Friday on behalf of the student.

"Christian students and churches shouldn't be discriminated against, censored, and excluded in public schools because of their beliefs," says ADF Senior Counsel David Cortman. "Disallowing a fifth-grade student's invitation to a Christmas party just because it takes place at a church is simply unconstitutional, especially when Halloween parties and promotional events for businesses and other community groups indiscriminately receive a free pass."

The student wasn't passing notes in class. To the contrary, the fifth-grader was distributing the invitations to classmates before the bell rang. There was nothing overtly promoting Christianity on the invitation, which offered kindergarteners through sixth-graders read: "Admission and all activities are free! Face Painting, Ping Pong, Foosball, Cup-Stacking, Games, Prizes, Puppets, Music, Snacks, and more!"