

Atheists Boiling Mad Over Football Field Baptisms

Asking a Baptist preacher to baptize is like asking Colonel Sanders if he wants a bucket of chicken. Somebody's going to get dunked.

So when a football coach in Villa Rica, Georgia asked to be baptized on the high school football field—the local First Baptist Church obliged.

At the end of the school day somebody hauled out an old feeding trough, plopped it in the end zone near the field house and filled it with water.

A crowd of about 75 folks, black and white, young and old, gathered in the sweltering August heat to watch the coach take the Baptist plunge.

It's an outward symbol of being washed anew.

Perhaps inspired by their coach's public display of his faith, some of the players also asked to be baptized. One by one the teenage boys stepped into the trough—as onlookers prayed and rejoiced and applauded.

Oh, it was quite a moment in Villa Rica—all captured on video by a staff member of the First Baptist Church. Little did anyone know a rite of Christian passage would soon spark national outrage.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), a group of perpetually offended atheists and free-thinkers from Wisconsin, saw the video and fired off a nasty letter to the Carroll County School superintendent.

"It is illegal for coaches to participate in religious activities with students, including prayer and baptisms,"

attorney Elizabeth Cavell wrote. "Nor can coaches allow religious leaders to gain unique access to students during school-sponsored activities."

They called the full emersion baptisms an "egregious constitutional violation."

The godless bullies demanded the school district launch an immediate investigation "and take full action to ensure there will be no further illegal religious events, including team baptisms and prayer, during school-sponsored activities."

Kevin Williams, the pastor of First Baptist Church, told me the football field baptisms were held after school and were completely voluntary.

"We never meant to cause any problems for the school and we never thought we would get this much media attention for baptizing kids," the pastor said.

First Baptist Church has a long history of ministering to the community—including the football team. Just this past summer they provided financial assistance so the team could attend a football camp.

And the church recently held a football themed worship service called "Gridiron Day." It was at that event one of the coaches asked if he could be baptized on the football field. Several players, who had recently converted to Christianity, also asked to be baptized.

"It was their choice to do that," Pastor Williams told me. "We live in a free nation. People choose what they want. These people that got baptized—freely chose at a church service to accept Christ and this was a follow up to that."

Times have been tough in Villa Rica—especially for young people. Over the past few years several teenagers have committed suicide.

"We're trying our best as a community to reach out to these kids and love on them and show them there's a better way—there's hope," Pastor Williams said. "That's what we are providing through Jesus Christ to these kids."

The question is whether the atheist carpetbaggers will bully the school district into silencing people of faith.

"I believe we live in a free country," the pastor said. "These people that are trying to say you can't do that—well—they're taking away freedom. When did it become illegal to bow your head and pray? When did it become illegal to say I'm a Christian?"

You need to watch the video to truly understand and to truly appreciate what happened on the football field that warm Southern afternoon—the day a group of young black men and young white men decided to take a public stand for our Lord.

They emerged from the waters no longer just teammates, but rather, brothers.

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