

Atheists: Stop Feeding Starving Children or Else!

Stop feeding starving children, or else!

The American Humanist Association (AHA) sent that message to a school in Robbinsdale, Minn., accusing them of violating the U.S. Constitution by allowing students to participate in a community service project at a church that involved preparing meals for impoverished children in Haiti.

The humanists got their britches in a bunch after the family of a student at the School of Engineering and Arts objected to the project being held at Calvary Lutheran Church.

“The school has clearly violated the Establishment Clause,” AHA attorney Monica Miller wrote in a threatening letter to the school and district officials. “By sending public school children under your authority to a religious environment—to work with a religious organization that is on a religious mission—is a violating of the First Amendment principle of church-state separation.”

The humanists took special offense to biblical terminology used to describe the mission to feed starving children.

“The packages involved were called ‘manna’ packages, after the edible substances that, according to the Bible, God provided for the Israelites,” attorney Miller wrote.

She was also dutifully offended that Calvary Lutheran Church looked like a church, noting the “venue involved included extensive religious imagery and symbolism.”

To illustrate her point, the letter to school officials featured damning photograph evidence, including images of a choir clad in robes, stained-glass windows and (brace

yourself) a steeple. Oh, the horror!

How the atheists must have trembled at the sight of the cross as they tried to avert their eyes, lest they soil themselves and spontaneously combust.

I called Latisha Gray, the spokesperson for the school district—a very nice lady who seemed rather perplexed by the controversy and said they don't believe they violated the U.S. Constitution.

"We believe that this activity was a service learning activity," she told me. "There was absolutely no evangelizing or religious activity in the event."

The service project was sponsored by Feed My Starving Children. First-, second- and third-grade students at the school joined hundreds of others in the community to help prepackage meals that will eventually be given to children in Haiti.

Gray said the project was held during school hours as part of a community service project. It's the second year the school has partnered with Feed My Starving Children.

"This has been an overwhelmingly positive event for our students and families," she said. "The students learn that there are people in the world who are not as fortunate of them. They believe they are being a part of the solution."

Gray said the school is aware that a parent had complained about the event.

"We do take any parent concern very seriously," she said. "We want to make sure that the activity we are doing is beneficial and doesn't cause a lot of backlash or unrest in the community."

The AHA said the parent also complained about the event last year.

“Thus, it is even more egregious that, after the parental complaint was made last year, you did nothing to remedy the problem, but instead suggested that the parent was misguided for complaining,” Miller wrote.

AHA said they don’t have a problem feeding hungry children. They just have a problem doing it inside a “theologically-charged environment.”

“We are not opposed to educating children about poverty around the world, nor do we object to their participating in a nonreligious program to provide assistance,” Miller wrote.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a law firm specializing in religious liberty cases, offered to defend the school district free of charge.

“Public schools should encourage students to participate in as many community service opportunities as possible,” says ADF attorney Matt Sharp. “The Constitution does not prohibit students from cooperating with a religious organization to help starving families, which is not any sort of government endorsement of religion. Neutrality toward religion does not permit schools to discriminate against beneficial programs simply because they are run by Christians. That is not neutrality but the very hostility toward religion that the First Amendment forbids.”

This is a new low even for humanists. It takes a special kind of godless thuggery to take food out of the mouths of starving children.

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