

Charlie Brown, Snoopy Offered Legal Defense After Atheist Attack

Liberty Counsel has offered pro bono legal counsel and, if needed, legal defense to the Little Rock superintendent of schools and Agape Church to defend the right of students to attend the *Merry Christmas Charlie Brown* play at a local church.

After teachers planned a field trip for Terry Elementary School students to attend a stage performance of the play based on *A Charlie Brown Christmas* at Agape Church in Little Rock, Ark., a local atheist group complained because “it’s got [sic] religious content and it’s being performed in a religious venue.”

The advent of the **Christmas season** predictably sees atheists making outrageous assertions regarding the proper role of schools and the recognition of Christmas. The United States Supreme Court has held that the Constitution requires accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions and forbids hostility toward any religion. In the Christmas context, the court upheld the constitutionality of a publicly sponsored Christmas display.

The fact that the play is being held at a local church with parental consent is of no constitutional import. Cultural activities that happen to occur at a religious or nonsecular venue are permissible in the educational context. If the district would have accepted an invitation from a local theater to observe a **Christmas play**, it is permissible for it to accept the invitation of a church for the same thing.

“Neither the school nor the church should back down. There is no constitutional violation when the Charlie Brown Christmas

play is held off campus with parental consent. 'Good grief,' as Lucy would say. These atheists are 'blockheads,'" said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel.

Liberty Counsel stands ready to provide counsel and defend the Little Rock School District from any unwarranted attack over student attendance at *Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown*.