

Pastor Finally Allowed Career Day Appearance

Career Day usually features the likes of dentists, lawyers, and chefs. A Larose, La. elementary school just hosted a man of God at its annual event—but not without a legal confrontation.

Larose Lower Elementary School had a ban on inviting clergy to Career Day. So when Pastor Gary Hanberry, the grandfather of one of the students, wanted to offer a presentation on the volunteer work he does in a Kenyan orphanage, he was shunned.

It seems the Larose Lower Elementary School claimed that Hanberry could only make his presentation if every religion was invited to make presentations at Career Day.

That's when the Liberty Counsel got involved.

"I am astounded that the school district attempted to screen out a career day message on helping orphans solely because the speaker was a pastor," says Mathew Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel and Dean of Liberty University School of Law. "A public school cannot censor speakers solely because of their Christian faith."

Larose Lower Elementary School was relying on the Establishment Clause, but the clause does not require the district to eliminate any and all messages with religious overtones or subject matter, even if the district was completely responsible for selecting the material.

In fact, Liberty Counsel points out, there is no constitutional violation when public schools and their teachers include symbols, music, art, drama or literature with overtly religious themes within the mix of curriculum or assemblies—so long as the primary purpose for including the

religious element is secular, not religious. Hanberry's Career Day presentation fit that mold.

In fact, Liberty Counsel notes, it would have been a violation of Hanberry's rights of religious expression protected in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution if the school upheld its ban on Hanberry's presentation solely because it is religious. In the end, the man of God offered his presentation with the school's blessing.