

Prayer in Jesus' Name Sees Victory on Campus

Praying in the **name of Jesus** may offend some, but a federal court nevertheless ruled that the Good News Club can **intercede** according to its religious convictions.

Minneapolis Special School District No. 1 must reinstate the GNC in its after-school program, ruled the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

The federal appeals court determined that the school district engaged in viewpoint discrimination when it ousted CEF, the sponsor of Good News Club, for offering "enrichment programming from a religious perspective."

"We are extremely grateful for this decision and look forward to the opportunity of serving interested students at the Jenny Lind Elementary School," says Tom Levanos, executive director of operations for CEF.

Here's the backstory: Minneapolis Special School District No. 1 removed the GNC from its after-school program in 2009 based on the concerns of a newly-hired site coordinator who overheard a **prayer** and reference to Jesus Christ during a Good News Club meeting.

The Good News Club had been meeting at the school, after school hours, using the same activities of **prayer**, Bible lessons and games, without objection since 2000. As a result of the school district decision, the attendance at the popular GNC plummeted from 47 students to 5 by 2010.

This week's ruling overturned the decision by a lower court which misinterpreted the 2001 Supreme Court decision in Good News Club v. Milford Central School. The Supreme Court decision actually upheld the **free speech** rights of the Good

News Club.

According to the Court, “there is no logical difference in kind between the invocation of Christianity by the Club and the invocation of teamwork, loyalty, or patriotism by other associations to provide the foundations for their lessons.”

“The only rationale for discrimination against Good News Clubs is ignorance of the law or animosity toward the Christian message,” says Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel, who argued the case on appeal.

“The law is crystal clear. Christian viewpoints are constitutionally protected. Public schools must provide equal access for Christian viewpoints and Christian clubs. The federal appeals court nailed every point of this case exactly right.”