



The Alliance Defense Fund has been involved in hundreds of cases in defense of religious freedom, the sanctity of human life, and traditional values. The stories below are just a small sampling of the ongoing battle to protect our religious liberty, reclaim what we have lost, and shape a future where religious freedom is affirmed.

REZONED CHURCH

A church in Southern California (name withheld because of pending litigation) had existed on the same property for over twenty-five years. A few years ago, they felt led to build a Christian school on their property.

The church went through all of the proper permissions and permit processes. They even made a change to their plans that cost 1.5 million dollars in order to meet city code requirements. At no time in the process were they told that their school would not be approved. However, when the time came to obtain an occupancy permit for their new school, their **request** was **denied** by the city.

Unfortunately, it got even worse. The city (name withheld) said that the church could only not occupy their new school building, but slapped restrictions on the use of their regular church building. The city told the church that they could only have ten weddings or funerals a year, and placed severe limits on weekday and weeknight activities on the church. For example, the church was told that all weeknight meetings had to be over by 7 p.m., and that only three meetings a year could last as late as 8:30 p.m.

ADF is presently involved in the preliminary stages of this case.

THE CASE OF THE SIMPLE DISPLAY

A pro-life group at the University of Houston called the “Pro-Life Cougars” wanted to put up a display that affirmed the right to life for the unborn, infirm, and the elderly. They requested to put up their display in Butler Plaza, which had been designated by the university as a public forum and had been previously used by Planned Parenthood.

However, when they asked permission in October 2001 to set up the display, they were denied by the Assistant Vice-President of Student Development and the Dean of Students. The group was told that the display was “potentially disruptive” and they would have to set up at one of two alternate sites that were too small to house it and unlikely to be seen by many students.

ADF chief counsel Benjamin Bull, along with ADF allied attorney Jim Spencer, intervened successfully on behalf of the Pro-Life Cougars, stating that the university’s actions had infringed on the group’s First Amendment rights. While the university lost at every trial level, it continued to appeal the ruling.

Meanwhile, the Pro-Life Cougars were allowed to put up their display in Butler Plaza...and at least one life was saved as a result.

One of the Pro-Life Cougars published the following letter in the student newspaper:

“People say that nobody’s mind will change from the pictures [at the display]. I would like to share with you a story of a girl I met during the days that the [pro-life] display was here. She came to me mad. I could see that she was hurt and I kept asking questions to find out what made her mad about the display. I then found out she was 10 weeks pregnant. You see, she had an appointment at Planned Parenthood that Friday for an abortion and she felt bad. She soon fell into my arms crying. She confessed that she was being stingy and didn’t know that at 10 weeks pregnant it looks like that (as she pointed to the picture of a 10 week old fetus). I gave her my phone number and she gave me hers. She walked away thanking me for all my help. She thanked me...for what? All I did was listen and reach out a hand to a woman that needed to talk...The fact that one little baby was saved is enough reason for me to continue even though it is tough...We think that if given all the correct information, most women will make the right choice, just as that young lady that I met that day did.”

On June 11, 2003, the university finally settled and a precedent-setting and another life-saving victory for religious freedom had been won. ADF chief counsel Benjamin Bull said: “Universities are not black holes where only orthodox (left-wing) views are allowed to shine...These students had the courage to litigate for their rights. They won everything that they asked for and then some. This should be a message to other public universities that restrict pro-life speech [and the Gospel] on campuses.”

If your religious group is experiencing discrimination on a university campus, please call us at 877-TELL-ADF or go to www.adfradio.org to request “The Truth About Free Speech on University Campuses.”