



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Attempts to Suppress Any Religious Expression Continue

Mall security guards at the Mall of America in Minnesota, ordered a man to remove his "Jesus Saves" T-shirt or leave the mall. A video of the incident that took place on Jan. 7, 2023, shows the guard telling Paul Shoro to remove his shirt because "Jesus is associated with religion and it's offending people." ⁽¹⁾

Mr. Shoro explained, "I didn't speak, I didn't say anything." The guard said, "Take your shirt off, and you can go to Macy's and do your shopping, or you can leave the mall. OK? Those are your only options right now." ⁽²⁾ The guard told Shoro that the shirt is treated as religious soliciting which isn't allowed at the privately owned mall. Fortunately, the mall later said that security subsequently allowed Shoro to remain in the mall while wearing the shirt.

The question is: why is this happening in America? Why would any American feel the need to shut down such a common declaration of faith as a message on a T-shirt? The U.S. Constitution does not prohibit religious messages on clothing because doing so would violate the First and Fourteenth Amendments, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA), and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1994. These laws and statutes protect religious freedom as well as freedom of speech and expression including the right to wear T-shirts with religious messages and images, religious jewelry, etc.

Iowa Elementary School Misunderstanding of "Separation of Church and State"

An elementary school child in Iowa was told in the fall/winter of 2022 that because of "separation of Church and state" he could not hand out religious materials to his classmates, share his faith with them, or bring religious books or items to school. His mother contacted the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) for help. It was clear to ACLJ attorneys that the school officials did not understand the law regarding the religious freedom of students and sent a legal letter detailing the legal rights of students. Upon receiving this information, the school reversed its objections, and the student has been allowed to continue his non-disruptive religious activities without any issues. ⁽³⁾

This fortunate child has a parent who took action to defend her son's religious freedom rights and now fortunate school officials are aware of the rights of students and teachers to practice their faith.

***"It's the duty of everyone to defend religious freedom and promote it for all people."
- Pope Francis***

(washingtontimes.com, 1/17/23(1); blaze media.com, 1/18/23(2); aclj.org; dailysignal.com, 1/17/23; repository.uchastings.edu, 2018; aclj.org,12/13/22(3))