

JUDGE DROPS ALL **CHARGES** **AGAINST PHILLY** **CHRISTIANS**

Adults who evangelized at homosexual event vindicated, teen girl likely off hook tomorrow

Posted: February 17, 2005
12:33 p.m. Eastern

© 2005 WorldNetDaily.com

Note from Pastor Kevin: We have been following this story for many weeks and it appears the rule of law has finally prevailed. What is amazing is how long it took considering how clearly the law was for these Christians and against the Prosecutor. These Christian men and women were not only obeying God's commandment to be salt and light, but were doing so with rights that were wisely given to us by our Founding Fathers. Increasingly, some Americans are making it clear they can't stand to hear the truth of God's Word, and in this case they didn't mind breaking the law and violating the Constitution in their attempt to silence believers in Jesus.

2 Tim 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. (NKJ)

2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth [for example - homosexuality is a sin], and be turned aside to fables [homosexuals are born that way]. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

2 Tim 3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 -----despisers of good, 4 ----- lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 -----And from such people turn away! (NKJ)

In what is being hailed as a victory for free speech, a judge in Philadelphia today dismissed all criminal charges against four Christians who were arrested for evangelizing at an outdoor homosexual event.

Judge Pamela Dembe of the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas dismissed the charges, saying that she found no basis whatsoever for any of them.

"We are one of the very few countries that protects unpopular speech," Dembe said after viewing a videotape (www.afa.net/clp/videos/philly11.wmv) of the arrests. "And that means that Nazis can March in Skokie, Ill. ... That means that the Ku Klux Klan can march where they wish to. We cannot stifle speech because we don't want to hear it, or we don't want to hear it now."

As WorldNetDaily reported, on Oct. 10, a group of 11 Christians was "preaching God's Word" to a crowd of people attending the Philadelphia "OutFest" event and displaying banners with biblical messages.

After a confrontation with a group called the Pink Angels, described by protesters as "a militant mob of homosexuals," the Christians were arrested and spent a night in jail.

Eight charges were filed: criminal conspiracy, possession of instruments of crime, reckless endangerment of another person, ethnic intimidation, riot, failure to disperse, disorderly conduct and obstructing highways.

None of the Pink Angels was cited or arrested.

After a preliminary hearing in December, Judge William Austin Meehan ordered four of the Christians to stand trial on three felony and five misdemeanor charges. If convicted, each could have

received a maximum of 47 years in prison. One female teenage protester faces charges in the juvenile justice system, but those charges likely will be dropped tomorrow.

"The judge saw this case for what it is," Joe Infranco, senior counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, said in a statement. "This was the right response to an outrageous abuse of power to silence speech that some people didn't like.

"What took place here was a government crackdown on disfavored speech. The OutFest participants staged a national coming-out day on a public street using public funds, and then they tried to say it's a private event. That didn't make any sense, and neither did the actions of the police. ..."

Bruce Fahling is senior trial attorney for the American Family Association Center for Law & Policy and has worked on behalf of the Christians in the federal courts.

"We are pleased and relieved for our clients that justice has finally been done in the criminal system, and though it is apparently slow and rusty, the system still works," Fahling said in a statement.

"This ends only the first chapter in the 'Philadelphia 11' saga. The next chapter is federal action against the officers and city of Philadelphia. We are still calling for the Department of Justice to investigate the corruption and profound abuse of power that we have seen in Philadelphia."

Dembe is the judge who last month removed the bail requirement that the defendants stay at least 100 feet away from any homosexual gathering.