

- Gwinnett Interfaith Alliance

- Gwinnett County – Metro Atlanta
- Formed At Tree of Life Memorial
- Members with Diverse Faiths
- Dedicated to Promoting Respect and Inclusion.
- Contacts:
 - Email – gwinnettinterfaithalliance@gmail.com
 - Web Site - gwinnettinterfaithalliance.org

Gwinnett



Interfaith

Alliance



What We Do

- Support Each Other in Times of Need
 - After acts of hate – Tree of Life, New Zealand, El Paso, Memorial for Sikh Police Officer
- Learn From Each Other
 - Interfaith Discussion Events
 - Explore Common Values
- Community Engagement
 - Zoning Issues
 - Equal Justice – Confederate Memorial , Lynching Memorial



Inclusive Public Spaces.

- Inclusive Invocations Before Public Meetings
 - Developed Guidelines
 - Petitioning County Board of Commissioners.
- Engage with Schools to Promote Respect for Culture of Diverse Religions.
- Inclusive After School Clubs
 - Expression of Religious Tolerance thru Arts
 - Alternative to “Good News Clubs”



Good News Clubs

- Children Evangelism Fellowship (CEF)
 - National org dedicated to spreading their faith to children
 - Target Ages 4 – 14
 - On public school grounds right after school hours.
- Programming focused on spreading faith to children via games
- Stark Warning to Young Children about Eternal Damnation
- Encouraged to Spread the Word to other Children
- Not supported by many Christian leaders including Baptist.



Supreme Court Ruling

- Court held in 2001 on Free Speech Grounds that a school could not exclude them as after school activity.
- Establishment Clause Not Violated. Not religion but free speech.
- Where does this logic lead ?
 - Do political parties have the same rights ?
- School district must allow clubs even if not wanted.
- CEF has large legal team that will dispute any denials.
- More rights than band, athletic activities.



Leads to Confused Children

- Young Children Do Not Make Distinctions for After School Clubs
 - In their minds viewpoints of these clubs is sanctioned by school
- Parent's permission required but:
 - Not fully informed
 - Posters , Tee Shirts and Treats Used as Enticements
 - Peer Pressure
- School yard incidence
 - Club member told other children they are going to Hell.
 - Teacher intervened and explained there are different views.
 - Member child become very confused.



Widespread

- Many elementary schools in Gwinnett have these clubs.
- Over 4000 nationwide.
- Not just in Bible Belt.
 - Problems documented on West Coast and NYC.



What Can Be Done?

- Provide clubs with alternate programming.
 - Promote religious diversity and acceptance
 - Approach taken by Gwinnett Interfaith Alliance
- Ask School District to Add Child Protection Provisions to Guidelines for facility.
 - Anti-Bullying
 - Confusion with school values.
- Shine the light.
- Dialog with churches sponsoring local clubs.



Resources

- Web Site – goodnewsclubs.info
 - Documentaries
 - Legal Issues
 - Child Protection Provisions
- “The Good News Club: The Christian Right’s Assault on America’s Children” - Katherine Stewart