

Beat: News

ARRESTED FOR FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Feeding the homeless becomes a crime

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USPA NEWS - Three men became criminals for following their Christian beliefs. The men had a feeding program to help the homeless. The city police arrested the men for violating the city's law concerning feeding the homeless in a public area.

On November 2nd, 2014, in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, two ministers and a Christian homeless activist were arrested for feeding the homeless in public. A pastor from Coral Springs and Sanctuary Church, Wayne Black believes very strongly that Jesus taught that we are to feed the needy. Mayor Jack Seilor, on the other hand, warned that more arrests were coming. Seilor is emphatic about enforcing the laws in Ft. Lauderdale. According to a report released by the National Coalition for the Homeless, on October 20, 2014, there are 21 cities presently criminalizing feeding the homeless, with 10 other cities following suit.

Christians are the newest "class" of persons being criminalized. Christians who put their beliefs into action, or refuse to do what their beliefs don't condone, are increasingly being sued or arrested. Christians are also being punished for feeding the needy, or failing to accommodate same-sex marriages or events. Christian speech can also lead to being arrested. There are numerous historical examples of certain classes of persons being criminalized by the federal, state and local governments. It appears that Christianity is now added to the ignominious list.

Christian business owners are facing the threat of becoming criminals also. A baker in Denver, Colorado, was ordered by Judge Robert Spencer to bake cakes for same-sex marriages or face jail time. In California, it is now required that all businesses, including religious institutions, must provide elective abortion coverage through their health insurers. Rather than force the Christian institutions or companies to directly offer abortion services, the California Department of Managed Health Care has mandated that their insurance companies provide abortion coverage.

In some countries other than the United States, laws specifically targeting the espousing of Christian beliefs in public are crimes. Canada hate speech laws include speaking or teaching against homosexuality or other sexual orientation; therefore, Bible-based preaching or teaching is now a criminal offense. And Sweden, in 2002, passed a hate speech statute explicitly including "church sermons" as being subject to the laws' restrictions.

So Christians are now standing shoulder to shoulder with other people groups that have been criminalized. In 1937, California passed a law against bringing or to assist in bringing "extremely poor" people into the state" called the "anti-okie" law. Sundown Laws throughout the United States created "Sundown Towns," with laws that banned minorities, particularly anyone of African, Chinese, or Jewish heritage, from remaining in town after sundown. The "Sundown" laws were finally prohibited due to the 1968 Civil Rights Act.

"Operation Wetback" began in 1954 in Arizona and California. The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, along with state and local police agencies, performed house-to-house searches and traffic stops to look for "Mexican-looking" persons in the United States illegally. Outrage by citizens of the United States and Mexico eventually caused the operation to cease. Race and religion weren't the only things that were criminalized. There were laws that targeted how people appeared.

Several cities had laws against being in public if you were considered unsightly, called "ugly laws," up until the 1970's. Here's one such ordinance from the Chicago Municipal Code, section 36034:

"No person who is diseased, maimed, mutilated, or in any way deformed so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object or improper person to be allowed in or on the public ways or other public places in this city, or shall therein or thereon expose himself to public view, under a penalty of not less than one dollar nor more than fifty dollars for each offense."

Most famously are the "Jim Crow" laws, which denied African-Americans basic human rights. Chinese, Japanese and Indian persons were also harshly discriminated against as well. Up until 1952, Asian people were not allowed to own land. The California

Constitution even denied Chinese the right to vote, and the law wasn't repealed until 1926. In 1909, Japanese were added to the list of persons prohibited from marrying white people, the others not allowed to marry whites were "Negros, Mullatos, or Mongols." It took decades to pass before these law were repealed.

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