



County Sheriff Stands Up to Threat Over Bible Verse Displayed in Sheriff Department's Building

Columbus County (North Carolina) Sheriff Jody Greene has had a Bible verse displayed on a wall in the sheriff department's building for years. No one complained, until three weeks before Christmas that is, [when he received a complaint letter](#).

The verse: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13,"

The complaint letter was from Chris Line, an attorney with the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), an advocacy group for atheists, agnostics, and non-theists. the letter stated;



Columbus County Sheriff's Department/Facebook

The Supreme Court has said time and again that the "First Amendment mandates government neutrality between religion and religion, and between religion and nonreligion."

And:

The court has also ruled "the Establishment Clause, at the very least, prohibits government from appearing to take a position on questions of religious belief."... [T]his Bible verse display promoting Christianity in a sheriff's office building is correctly viewed by a reasonable observer as an endorsement of religion, and is therefore unconstitutional."

Sheriff Greene ignored the letter and kept the Bible verse on the wall.

When the FFRF didn't get a response from him, on December 14 FFRF's co-president Annie Laurie Gaylor issued a public statement: "The Columbus County Sheriff's Office must serve all citizens equally, whether Christian or non-Christian. A blatantly Christian message in a law enforcement division sends a message of exclusion."

Still Sheriff Greene remained silent. And then a local TV station learned about the complaint letter and ran a story about it. Only then did he decide to respond, via his Facebook page:

Good afternoon, Columbus County citizens. I would like to address the recent news article WECT TV6 ran on me concerning a Bible verse that is posted on the wall at the Sheriff's Office. The verse is "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13"

First, the Bible verse was placed on the wall after I took office. It was paid for with private funds, not with county funding. The verse is one of my favorite Bible verses, and it seemed fitting for all the adversity I have had to endure. It is very motivational to me and my staff.



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 30, 2021

Here at the Sheriff's Office we work hard in everything that we do. Before we execute a search warrant, or any service that puts our people in immediate harm's way, we ALWAYS go to the Lord with a group prayer. ALWAYS!

The complaint was politically motivated, said Greene:

I have taken many pictures with that Bible verse in the back[ground] with not a single issue, but now that we are going into an election year, it is an issue.

He said nothing about removing the verse. Instead, he doubled down:

Currently, in Columbus County, we are at 180 [drug] overdoses. Drugs and violence are killing our youth.

We need more Jesus and less politics.

He then challenged FFRF to bring it on:

It is time, past time, to stand up. So let me be clear: I will not waiver on my stance and Christian beliefs.

Merry Christmas and God bless you ALL!

As of this writing the FFRF remains silent in face of his challenge. But his Facebook page lit up. Within hours he had 45 responses, and all but three were supportive:

- "Stay strong, Sheriff. You and your staff are appreciated."
- "Thank you Sheriff Greene. Prayers for you & all your staff as they protect us."
- "Thank you Sheriff Greene and the entire department for all you do. Merry Christmas."
- "I am inspired by your bold courage in standing for Christian values."
- "You have my full support to keep Christian beliefs and standards in our sheriff's office. We must take a stand and defend our rights. Thank you for taking a stand."

And so on.

Even Franklin Graham, of Samaritan's Purse, went to his own Facebook page to support Greene:

I'm thankful this Sheriff knows where the true solution to life's problems and challenges comes from, and he is standing his ground.

Will you pray for Sheriff Greene and his staff? And leave an encouraging note?

More support for the sheriff poured in:

- "God bless you Sheriff and your department!!!! We are praying for all of you."
- "STAND FIRM!! You have our support 100%."
- "Christianity is not a religion ... it is a relationship with Christ!"



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- “STAND! Sheriff, I’m glad to know the leader of our law enforcement has heart, faith & a backbone. You don’t stand alone.”
- “You’re doing a great job! Please don’t take it down. Christians must stand for their faith and for each other. You have my support!”

And so on.

If the atheist FFRF (which claims that it has 800 members in North Carolina, a state with more than 10 million residents) decides to take on Sheriff Greene in a court of law, there is no doubt that pro-bono law firms such as the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) or Jay Sekulow of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) would relish the opportunity to defend him.



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