

yer, a doctor, a retired U.S. Army officer and an investigator for the Department of Labor. The station's news director Jose Rios admitted, "We weren't expecting the professional group of people whom this attracted."

Daily Variety, 11/4/97

Video porn sales skyrocket

A nationwide survey of 4,000 video stores demonstrated that America's thirst for the perverse has never been deeper: sales and rentals of adult videos reached an all-time high in 1996-97.

The survey, which was conducted by pornography trade magazine *Adult Video News*, found that rentals and sales of video porn have doubled since 1992 to \$4.2 billion. According to the magazine, 7,800 new porn titles were released in 1996 alone.

UPI, 11/19/97

RELIGION/ANTI-CHRISTIAN

Free exercise of Christian faith endangered by court ruling

A ruling by the Massachusetts State Supreme Judicial Court in December has let stand a lower court ruling which allows the state to decide whether or not a parent's Christian faith might be harmful to the emotional and mental health of his/her own children.

In the case of *Kendall vs. Kendall*, differences over religion led to the breakdown of Jeffrey and Barbara Kendall's marriage. When they were married in 1988, the Kendalls agreed to raise the children in the Jewish faith. But tension developed in 1991 when Mr. Kendall joined the Boston Church of Christ, and the gulf between the Kendalls' religious views widened in 1994 when Ms. Kendall adopted Orthodox Judaism. Although the two were awarded joint legal custody of their three children, Ms. Kendall had obtained physical custody during divorce proceedings.

At the beginning of those proceedings, Ms. Kendall, the plaintiff, sought to have her husband's ability to share his faith with the children limited. She was upset because her husband was teaching the children that only people who put their trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God would go to heaven. Mrs. Kendall wanted him to stop.

The lower court agreed, concurring with a previous decision (*Felton vs. Felton*) which stated that "some limitation of the

liberties of one or the other of the parents" could occur in order to "serve the best interests of the children." Those "best interests," the court made clear, would be determined by the state of Massachusetts.

Specifically, the court agreed that the children were being "harmed by exposure to [Mr. Kendall's] religious beliefs" when the father implied that Ms. Kendall would go to hell if she didn't put her faith in Christ. The Court reasoned that the resulting mental strain and emotional anxiety in the children justified limiting Mr. Kendall's religious freedom.

As a result, the court ruled that Mr. Kendall "shall not take the children to his church (whether to church services or Sunday School or church education programs); nor engage them in prayer or bible study if it promotes rejection rather than acceptance, of their mother or their own Jewish self-identity.

"The [defendant] shall not share his religious beliefs with the children if those beliefs cause the children significant emotional distress or worry about their mother or themselves," the court said. Furthermore, the court ruled that if a disagreement arose between the Kendalls as to Mr. Kendall's religious activities with the children, then a court-appointed interloper would "address the inter-religious conflict."

Brian Fahling, attorney at American Family Association Law Center, said the implications of this ruling were frightening. "First, the state has taken upon itself the authority to determine when a parent can express his faith to his children and when he cannot," Fahling said. "The U.S. Constitution grants no such authority to a judge or any other governmental representative.

"Second, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has put a potentially lethal weapon into the hands of those who despise Christianity. With this precedent, a judge can rule that, if Christian teaching causes a child - and ultimately anyone - emotional discomfort, such Christian teaching can be prohibited," he said.

The consequences of such a ruling could be expanded in unlimited fashion, Fahling said. "What if mom leaves her Christian husband for another woman? Could the father tell his children that homosexuality was a sin?" he asked. "Could a divorced Christian mother tell her children that daddy's use of pornography is a sin?"

Fahling added that he has no objection to such an insidious ruling, except in Communist countries like the former Soviet Union, where parents were forbidden to teach their minor children about Christ. Communist doctrine insisted that Christianity was a mental illness, and thus dangerous to the health of a child.

League refuses Christian group

The National League of Cities (NLC) has refused to recognize a group of Christian public officials as a constituency group, spurring a charge of religious discrimination.

According to USA Today, the 1,450-member groups of the NLC, which was formed to help municipal governments perform to their full potential, includes those who represent Hispanics, Asians and homosexuals. But the Christian Public Officials caucus was refused recognition. The caucus of about 100 public officials tries to stress Christian principles and morals when formulating public policy.

Donald Borut, executive director of the NLC, said a Christian group does not belong in the league. "It's not appropriate for an organization of elected officials to have as a constituency group a religious-based organization," he said.

"Whoever thought that Christians would be a persecuted minority?" said Cynthia Davis, an alderman in O'Fallon, Missouri, and member of the Christian caucus.

Conservative social critic Martin Gross said the dispute is simply another example of the effort by liberals to marginalize religion in America's public life. "Religion is no longer fashionable, while lesbianism and dumbed-down education is," he said in USA Today. "It's the same kind of thing that has led to attacks on Christmas, Thanksgiving and St. Valentine's Day. We're concerned about the rights of everybody but the majority of Americans."

USA Today, 12/8/97

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