



"... let us run with endurance the race God has set before us." — Hebrews 12:1



THE FARMERS' STORY: Persevering in the face of injustice

For seven years, Country Mill Farms set up a booth at the East Lansing Farmer's Market to sell their produce, offering the only stand with organic apples. The market was a significant and growing part of their business.

But then, without warning, Country Mill was not invited back.

Trouble started for the Tennes family when someone posted on Country Mill's Facebook page, asking about the family's beliefs about marriage. The Tennes family gave an honest answer.

As Catholics, they believe what the Bible says about marriage: It is

a sacred union between one man and one woman. The Tennes family stated their beliefs.

Upon seeing the Tennes' comment on Facebook, the City of East Lansing decided to ban Country Mill from its Farmer's Market. The city created a new market policy and then claimed that by communicating their religious beliefs, the Tennes family was in violation of that new policy.

But the truth is that the Constitution protects the Tennes family's right to speak about their religious beliefs, without fear of government punishment — and certainly without fear of being targeted by a government 22 miles from their farm.

They defended freedom for all ... now their freedom is threatened

Steve and Bridget Tennes are both U.S. military veterans, where they served to protect freedom for all Americans. Ironically, now they are finding their own freedom under attack — in the United States.

They strive to live their lives in a way that reflects Christ's love and raise their five children according to their beliefs. Their faith guides the way that they operate their farm. It is central to their life.

“Our family farm here is very personal to us,” says Steve. He was born the day after one of the apple orchards was planted. “One of the things we really enjoy about our family farm here is because we are able to raise our five children here at the farm in accordance with our faith.”

The Tennes family has a mission for their farm that demonstrates how they live out their faith in their business: “To glorify God by facilitating family fun on the farm, and feeding families.”

Opportunities for family fun peak in the fall harvest season with activities like hay rides, a pumpkin patch, and a corn maze, just to name a few.

When they were punished, the Tennes family did not give up

The right to live out our faith and communicate our beliefs without fear of punishment should be a freedom that our government actively works to preserve, even if it disagrees.

That's why the City of East Lansing kicking Country Mill out of its

farmer's market is so outrageous, and why Alliance Defending Freedom took quick legal action on behalf of the Tennes family.

Just two days after hearing their request, a federal judge issued an order that allows Country Mill to return to the farmer's market while their civil liberties lawsuit against East Lansing proceeds.

This is great news for the Tennes family. The East Lansing Farmer's Market had been a significant part of their business.

This case is not over yet

If city officials can take away a veteran's license to do business in the market simply because he dared express his religious beliefs on Facebook, then is any American — including you — truly free?

Our government should be protecting our rights, not punishing us for exercising our freedom. And the government certainly should not be reaching outside its jurisdiction just to advance its political agenda.

The political winds of the government change every time we elect new representatives. The government may be punishing the Tennes family now for speaking about their biblical view of marriage, but it could punish any one of us for speaking a message it doesn't like in the future.

Thankfully, a judge issued a ruling that provided Country Mills with a temporary reprieve, but their case is still in the court system. Will you stand with the Tennes family, and with others across America who are being punished for their faith, to provide the strong legal defense they need? When you do, you're defending your freedom, too.

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