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CONTACT:

Bob Ballinger
NACL Director of Law and Policy
bob.ballinger@christianlawmakers.com
Direct: 870.350.5175

Christian Arrested for Preaching in Batesville, Arkansas

Street Preacher, delivered from the LGBTQ lifestyle, arrested for preaching a warning to those still caught in the bondage of that lifestyle.

Batesville, Arkansas, May 15, 2023. – Jeremy Anders is a man who has been delivered from much and loves much. He suffered from malicious bullying as a child and teen, and looked for support and relief in all the wrong places. By the time he became a young adult he found himself in addiction and a LGBTQ lifestyle.

Mr. Anders surrendered his life to the Lord in the Spring of 2010 and God delivered him from that lifestyle. In 2013 he surrendered to the ministry of preaching beginning in a nursing home ministry, and in 2015, with a heart towards reaching those who were still caught up in the LGBTQ lifestyle, he began posting on Facebook and street preaching. He has been faithful in this ministry since that time.

On June 5, 2022, Mr. Anders and his mother were driving through Batesville when he felt called to preach on a public sidewalk in downtown Batesville. During his preaching, a man confronted him, threatening to involve the police if he did not stop. Despite asserting his rights, Mr. Anders was approached later that evening by two officers who warned him against returning to the same sidewalk location, citing potential charges of harassment and criminal trespass. Although he continued his ministry while avoiding confrontations, Mr. Anders was unexpectedly arrested for harassment on April 20, 2023, during a routine commute to work, and spent over 24 hours in jail for preaching.

Mr. Anders' trial is scheduled for June 14th at 1:00 p.m. in the District Court in Batesville, AR. Bob Ballinger, the Director of Law and Policy for the National Association of Christian Lawmakers (NACL), has taken on Mr. Anders' case to ensure the protection of his individual rights and to safeguard the right to preach and speak on sidewalks in Arkansas for all citizens.

Ballinger, renowned for his advocacy on religious liberty and First Amendment issues during his time as a legislator, expressed his concerns over the incident: "This case represents one of the most egregious violations of the First Amendment I have witnessed in Arkansas. Our Constitution safeguards religious expression through the Free Exercise and Free Speech Clauses, and our state's religious freedom protections necessitate strict scrutiny whenever governmental actions impede religious expression."

He further emphasized, "The Supreme Court, in *Curtis Pub. Co. v. Butts*, declared that the "dissemination of the individual's opinions on matters of public interest" is an 'unalienable right that governments are instituted to secure, as articulated in the Declaration of Independence.' Governments failing to secure such rights are not fulfilling their purpose."

Former Senator Jason Rapert, Founder and President of NACL, stated "Freedom of religion, freedom of speech and the right to peacefully assemble are all in the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution for an important reason - they are critical freedoms in our constitutional republic. Our founding fathers listed them first in the Bill of Rights because they wanted those rights to be protected for every person." He went on to say, "Mr. Anders was peacefully standing on a public sidewalk exercising his freedom of religion, his freedom of speech and his to peacefully assemble in Batesville, Arkansas. He was preaching the Word of God. He should never have been arrested and I cannot believe he is being prosecuted for preaching in the state of Arkansas."

When asked to comment on his ministry, Mr. Anders stated, "to sum it up, Jesus Christ can set you free from the sin and the bondage of homosexuality, and if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." He went on to say "I am committed to my faith and my calling as a preacher." He hopes that his case will set a precedent for the protection of religious expression in public spaces for others.

About National Association of Christian Lawmakers:

The mission of the National Association of Christian Lawmakers (NACL) is to unite federal, state, and local lawmakers together in support of clear biblical principles by meeting regularly to discuss major issues, propose model statutes, ordinances, and resolutions to address major policy concerns from a biblical world view. Since its initial meeting in 2020, the NACL has members and supporters in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. NACL is the first formal national association of Christian lawmakers in American history. <https://christianlawmakers.com/>