



The Alliance Defense Fund has been involved in hundreds of cases in defense of religious freedom, the sanctity of human life, and traditional values. The stories below are just a small sampling of the ongoing battle to protect our religious liberty, reclaim what we have lost, and shape a future where religious freedom is affirmed.

STARVING SENIORS

For twenty years, senior citizens at the Balch Springs (Texas) Senior Center have used the facility for social programs and recreational events. A group of Christian seniors had also gathered – without government interference -- at the center to sing gospel songs and hear the Word of God from a retired pastor. These seniors also quietly say a word of thanks to the Lord when they receive their meals at the center. All prayers and participation in the worship service are voluntary – no one is coerced into praying or attending.

Then things changed. In August 2003, the city of Balch Springs enacted a new policy that stated that all mealtime prayers, gospel music, and “religious messages” cease immediately. No other group was censored, only Christians.

Liberty Legal Institute, with ADF’s backing, jumped in to defend the right of these seniors to worship God at the center. Liberty Legal immediately sent a demand letter to the city – which was ignored -- to reverse its policy or face a lawsuit on the grounds that they had denied the seniors their First Amendment right to worship freely. The seniors were willing to take a stand. Some began to very peacefully picket the center to protest the actions of the city.

Then the city fired the center’s events planner and bus driver – cutting off the seniors’ access to museum outings, the state fair, and funerals of their friends. They even refused to allow the seniors to go to the drug store to get their prescriptions filled!

As promised, Liberty Legal – led by ally Kelly Shackelford -- filed a lawsuit against Balch Springs – alleging multiple violations of both the Texas and U.S. Constitutions. The city’s response? They threatened to stop the meal service to the seniors if they did not drop the lawsuit!

The situation had gotten so bad that the United States Department of Justice got involved – opening an investigation of the city’s policy.

Finally, at the federal courthouse in Dallas, Balch Springs agreed to end its discriminatory policy. In addition, the judge ruled that the seniors were to receive monetary damages from the city.

THE CASE OF THE BASKETBALL COACH

Dan Dunn ran a basketball school in Portland, Oregon. In July 1995, a parent sent his son to the school after learning about it in brochures and other advertisements.

During the basketball camp, Mr. Dunn read to the students from William Bennett's *Book of Virtues*, which has a religious and moral theme and he talked about personal values. During the five-day camp, Mr. Dunn never received any indication that there was a problem from this parent or his son.

In September 1995, Mr. Dunn was served with a lawsuit from the parent claiming that he had published misleading information and that his basketball school was a "front" for religious indoctrination. Mr. Dunn stated that this was a basketball training school where traditional morals and values were discussed, as opposed to a religious indoctrination program where basketball was discussed.

The parent sought \$250,000 in damages against Dunn and the program. The case was eventually dismissed.