



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.

## **THE CASE OF THE SENIOR CENTER**

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.

## **RETIRED MISSIONARIES**

Timothy Denney was the ADF trained volunteer attorney who provided the assistance to the Christian missionary campground mentioned in today's radio feature. Here is Mr. Denney's a letter he sent to ADF President, CEO, and General Counsel Alan Sears:

**RD**

**RICKARD, DENNEY & ASSOCIATES**

*An Association of Independent Professional Corporations*

February 18, 2003

**PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL**

Alan Sears  
Alliance Defense Fund  
15333 N. Pima Road, Ste. 165  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260

Re: Religious Freedom Presentation in Michigan

Dear Alan:

I am writing this letter in the hopes of encouraging other current and future ADF-affiliated attorneys. Since my teenage years, I felt God's call to become an attorney who would assist in the battle for religious freedom. After I graduated from the University of Michigan law school and spent over a decade in private practice, I found myself doing very little religious freedom work. There was one period where I handled some particularly grueling and ugly partnership dissolution litigation when I realized this was not why I went to law school. About that same time, I received an invitation to attend Alliance Defense Fund's litigation academy in Puerto Rico (you may or may not remember me but you and your wife met myself and my wife when we were out for a walk). The ADF academy helped spark my renewed interest in restructuring my practice to do more religious freedom work.

In July of 2002, \_\_\_\_\_ called me and asked if I would assist them in representing the Carson City Christian Camping Center. \_\_\_\_\_ obtained my name from ADF. As part of the Camping Center's ministry, it provides small building sites for retiring Christian workers and planned to add more sites in the future. The sites were smaller than one acre in size. After the second site was installed, the Camping Center was notified that the township had a 1-acre minimum lot size requirement and threatened enforcement action against the Camping Center. The township seemed to be unfazed by a letter that I sent them suggesting that the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act might apply and prevent them from enforcement action. (A recent finding by the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court indicated that the Act would not apply because it was not a zoning or landmark ordinance.) On February 12, 2003, I attended the township board meeting at the request of my contact from the Camping Center. He feared from the previous month's board action that enforcement action was imminent. He asked me to make a presentation to the board. As I drove to the board meeting that night after already having putting in an 8hour/100 mile day, I realized I wasn't exactly sure how far away this municipality was. As the mile markers slipped by (80 miles,

**Ronald W. Rickard, P.C.**  
331 E. First St.  
P.O. Box 176  
Imlay City, MI 48444  
Phone: (810) 724-0555  
Fax: (810) 724-0073  
Email: rwrldaw@tir.com

**Timothy W. Denney, P.C.**  
110 N. Saginaw St. Suite 1  
Lapeer, MI 48446  
Phone: (810) 664-0750  
Fax: (810) 664-7248  
Email: twdldaw@tir.com

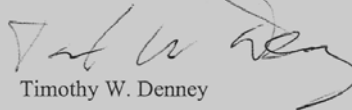
Alan Sears  
Page 2  
February 18, 2003

90 miles . . .), I began questioning in my own mind whether it was really worth it to drive this far away from home. Eventually I made it to the meeting. I gave a brief presentation on our country's history of religious liberty, the constitutional requirement for religious exemptions, the limited nature of the exemption sought, etc. After my presentation, the Board discussed the matter amongst themselves briefly and proceeded to vote unanimously to grant to the Christian Camping Center a blanket religious exemption from complying with the Township's Land Division Ordinance. After the meeting, my contact from the Camping Center gripped my hand, thanked me, and with his lip quivering said "You don't know how much this means." The smiles of a hundred paying clients could not have had a greater impact than this man's gratitude. Some day, a group of Christian workers who gave a lifetime of service in full-time Christian work will be living in these modest home sites, able to do so on the small nest egg they've been able to save during their ministry. God will be smiling knowing He has once again fulfilled His promise: "Seek first the kingdom of God in His and all these things (i.e., all your physical needs) shall be added on to you." Matthew 6:33. The 100 mile ride home did not seem nearly so long as I was reminded again that this is why Christian attorneys do what we do.

May God continue to bless you in your efforts to defend and expand religious freedom.

Sincerely,

RICKARD, DENNEY & ASSOCIATES



Timothy W. Denney

TWD/am

Because of ADF volunteer attorney Timothy Denney's tireless sacrifice to go the extra mile these dedicated Christian workers will now be able to spend their retirement years

in dignity and comfort. **Over 700 attorneys have now completed ADF's National Litigation Academy program.** These attorneys, like Timothy Denney, are now actively involved on a daily basis in the defense of religious freedom, the sanctity of human life, and traditional values.

## **THE CASE OF THE BRONX HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH**

Two young pastors had moved to the Bronx to start an inner-city church. Their church grew as they ministered to the Bronx community and they soon found themselves having to find a larger place to meet.

While the two men were raising funds to eventually purchase a new church home, they needed a temporary place to worship. A local public school, vacant on Sunday mornings, seemed to be ideal. However, when they approached the school district, their request was refused, because of the so-called "separation of church and state."

For **eight** years, with the assistance of ADF senior counsel Jordan Lorence, these pastors fought for equal access for their church. After a defeat at the United States Supreme Court, things looked bleak. In the meantime, they met in a tent on a vacant lot, in good weather and bad, while they waited for a more permanent church home.

In 2001, God did a miracle. In the ADF-funded U.S. Supreme Court victory, *Good News Clubs v. Milford Central Schools*, which opened the doors for middle schools to allow after-school Bible classes on campus, Justice Clarence Thomas stated that the Bronx case had been wrongly decided and should be reconsidered. Armed with this information, Jordan went back to court on behalf of the pastors.

In June 2003, The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit issued a **2-1** decision – on behalf of the Bronx Household of Faith, allowing worship services in the New York City public schools - just like all other community group meetings.

Jordan Lorence says about this win: ***"It pays to persevere. For a generation, the federal circuit court of appeals has constantly refused to allow worship services in New York City public school buildings while all other community groups were allowed to meet, until today. In this 2-1 decision, the Second Circuit has reversed its anti-worship holdings based other ADF-funded precedents. By building one victory after another, and setting legal precedents along the way, we have now, by God's grace, been able to knock down what seemed to be an impenetrable barrier to the Gospel in our nation's largest city. The doors of the approximately 1200 school buildings in New York City, that for decades have been closed to any form of worship service, have now been opened on equal terms with others."***

***"When Pastors Hall and Roberts left Francis Schaefer's L'Abri Fellowship in the early seventies, they asked themselves, 'What can we do to evangelize New York City?' Never in their wildest dreams would they have suspected that the Lord was going to use them to tear down this stronghold and open up almost 1200 closed doors for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their dogged persistence and prayers, along with the support of ADF's***

*ministry friends, has now set forth the healing power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to move throughout New York City.”*