

RADIO SPOT #5

EQUAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC FACILITIES

This is Attorney Timothy Denney for “Christians and the Law.”

Imagine you are a local church group. You need a large facility to hold one of your meetings so you contact a local village hall and you are told that the village does rent the hall to community groups but there is a hitch. The village won't rent to church groups because they fear it might violate the constitution. Is the village right? The answer is “no.” In 1993, the US Supreme Court ruled that once a government entity makes its facilities available to community groups, it cannot exclude groups just because they have a religious message. The village could legally refuse to rent the hall to all community groups - but it cannot selectively exclude groups based on the religious content of their message. This applies to almost all public facilities. The bottom line is this - religious groups are entitled to equal access to public facilities. That's not only fair, it's the law. If you have comments or questions please call me, Timothy Denney, toll-free at (877) 256-1758.