

## HOW TO SERVE IN A LEGAL WORLD:

### What We Can Expect in Ministry in Light of the Unfriendly Attitude Toward Christians and the Secular Plea for Tolerance

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#### INTRO:

#### I. Expect Opposition:

##### A. Opposite Roads

##### B. Spiritual Battle

1. Ephes 6: Very powerful forces of spiritual evil are busy opposing good, especially the spread of the Gospel
- The Bible says you should expect persecution:
  - Matthew 10:16a, 17-18, 22a “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves....beware of men for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake,....And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.”
  - II Timothy 3:12: (“all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”)

##### C. The Secular View of “Tolerance”

1. The secularists essentially say, believe and act in conformance with what we believe or we will run over you legally
2. Christian organizations should not be belligerent or unkind:
  - II Timothy 2:24-25 (“and the servant of the Lord must strive (not be quarrelsome); but be gentle unto all man, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”)

- I Peter 2:12: Live an honest/honorable life before unbelievers; if unbelievers speak ill of you make sure your righteous life points them to God
- Your momma told you that you get more flies with honey than vinegar
- Obey the law (Romans 13) unless God's Word compels conscientious objection (Acts 5:29)

D. Expect the Legal Opposition to Get Worse

II. Knowing the Law and Using It Wisely:

A. Be Wise:

- Matthew 10:16: "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves....beware of men for they will deliver you up to the councils and they will scourge you in their synagogues...."

B. Follow The Apostle Paul Example (insisting on our rights when religious freedom is unlawfully infringed)  
(Acts 22:24-29; cf Acts 16:35-40)

- Apostle Paul was willing to politely insist that public officials follow the law – if it gave breathing room for the Gospel

C. Follow The Daniel Example (Daniel) (Daniel 1)  
(Wise gracious confrontation)

D. The Secular Media Silence: Why You Hear Very Little About Laws/Cases That Protect Religious Freedom

III. Remember the Good News of Religious Freedom:

A. Broad Legal Protections for Religion

1. First Amendment to U.S. Constitution

- a. Free Exercise of Religion
- b. Establishment Clause protection
- c. Free Speech Clause  
(Note: State constitutional protection too)

2. Statutory Protections
- B. Broad Protection for Evangelism
1. Door-to-Door Evangelism
    - Watchtower Bible and Tract Society v. Village of Stratton, 536 US 150 (2002) (door to door religious literature distribution without permit protected)
  2. Public Square Evangelism
    - Broad legal protection for evangelism, especially in traditional public fora: parks, sidewalks, etc.
  3. Consider Electronic Evangelistic Opportunities (amazing technological firepower)
- C. Equal Access Legal Protection
1. Equal Access to Public Facilities
    - a. Public School
      1. Student religious groups
        - Widmar, 454 US 263 (US, 1981) (college students)
        - Mergens 496 US 226 (1990) (high school students)
      2. Religious Community Groups (for after-hours use)
        - a. Lamb's Chapel, 508 US 384 (1993)
        - b. Good News Club, 121 US Ct 2093 (2001) (Liberty Counsel case)
    - b. Other Public Facilities
      - e.g., His Healing Hands Church v. Lansing Housing Commission, 160 F.Supp.3d 1014 (W.D., Mich, 2016) (public housing development community rooms)
  2. Equal Access for Literature Distribution
    - a. Public School Distribution of Community Group Literature

- b. Student to Student Evangelism
    - D. Released Time Classes
      - 1. Legal Approval
        - Constitutional: Zorach, 343 US 306 (US, 1952)
        - Often expressly permitted by state law
          - See my religious freedom book (online) ([www.ChristiansAndTheLaw.com](http://www.ChristiansAndTheLaw.com))
        - Some “must allow” states (e.g., Michigan)
    - E. Be Good Stewards of the Great Religious Freedom You Have Been Given
      - Luke 12:48 (“to whom much is given, much is required”)
- IV. Take Reasonable Precautions In Light of an Increasingly Anti-Christian Legal Environment in Some Areas:
  - A. Storm Clouds Now and On the Horizon
    - 1. Anti-discrimination and public accommodations laws
    - 2. Risk to tax exemption status
      - Risk to Christian colleges (a significant fountain for your future missionaries)
  - B. Embrace and Highlight the Religious Nature of Your Organization (remember who you are and write it down)
    - Clear written statement of faith
    - Clarify the religious nature of job descriptions
    - Adopt clear religiously based standards of conduct
    - Require employees to confirm agreement with statement of faith and standards of conduct
    - Create facilities use policies
  - C. Keep the Legal Risk in Perspective
  - D. Pray That the Doors of the Gospel Stay Open
    - I Tim 2:1-4
  - E. Diligently Spread the Gospel While These Doors Are Open

## Conclusion

### Other Christian Attorney Resources:

[www.ChristiansAndTheLaw.com](http://www.ChristiansAndTheLaw.com) (my firm website)  
(free book “Religious Freedom 101: A Christian Civil Rights Handbook”) (great summary of laws protecting our religious freedom)

Alliance Defending Freedom (home office and affiliated attorneys)  
(800) 835-5233

Liberty Counsel  
(407) 875-1776

Christian Legal Society (referral attorneys too)  
(703) 642-1070

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