

RADIO SPOT #8:
RELIGIOUS TOPICS IN STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

This is Timothy Denney for Christians and the Law.

Pretend for a moment that you are a public school teacher. You are in the midst of a reading promotion program and your students are encouraged to present a proposal for a drawing reflecting their favorite book. The best student drawing will be displayed in the hallway. One of the top student proposals is by a student whose favorite book is the Bible. When it comes time for the student to make her drawing, the well-meaning teacher panics, fearing a church/state controversy, she refuses to display the drawing.

This is a true story. Did the teacher have to do this? The answer is no. In 1998, the US Department of Education said this:

“Students may express their beliefs about religion in the form of homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free of discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions.”

Many Michigan schools have similar policies. There is no legal reason for teachers to censor religious themes out of student assignments.

If you have comments or questions, please call me, Timothy Denney, toll-free at (877) 256-1758.