

Case Summaries

2006-2015

Christian
Legal Centre



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Fostering & Adoption

Christian adoptive parents

Separated from children

Owen and Eunice Johns (foster carers)

Rejected as foster parents for refusing to promote homosexuality to young children

John & Colette Yallop (foster carers)

Prevented from fostering for saying children need a married mother and father

Vincent & Pauline Matherick (foster carers)

Almost stopped from fostering for refusing to sign 'equality' policy

Christianity in Academic Institutions

Exeter Christian Union

Suspended for requiring members to sign a statement of faith

Lydia Playfoot (student)

Disciplined for wearing a purity ring

Edinburgh University Christian Union

Suspended for running a course advocating sexual purity

Freedom of Expression

Mike Overd (street preacher)

Convicted of a public order offence

Rob Hughes (street preacher)

Unlawfully arrested and detained

Christian Concern

Had its marriage conference cancelled by the Law Society and Q&E Centre

Tony Miano (street preacher)

Unlawfully arrested and detained

Dominic Muir (street preacher)

Wrongfully accused of breaching byelaws

Josh Williamson (street preacher)

Unlawfully arrested and detained

Mike Overd (street preacher)

Unlawfully arrested and detained

All Nations Centre in Kennington

Issued with a noise abatement notice

Sex Trade

The Christian Legal Centre has fought against Sex Entertainment Venues in:

Lowestoft

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Maidstone

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Bedford

Oxford

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Macclesfield

Durham

Advocating for life

Nikki and Merv Kenward

Challenging DPP's decision to liberalise assisted suicide policy

Aisling Hubert (campaigner)

Launched private prosecution against doctors for illegal abortions

Andy Stephenson & Kathryn Sloane (Abort67)

Arrested for speaking up for the unborn child

Pro-Life Alliance

Challenge against suppression of abortion statistics

Comment on Reproductive Ethics & Christian Legal Centre

Challenge against animal-human hybrid licenses

Jacqueline McGinn

Refused permission to save her frozen embryos

Christianity ridiculed & mocked

Christian Legal Centre

Posting of blasphemous poem

Emily Mapfuwa

Exhibition of obscene statue

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About us

Why we exist

The Christian Legal Centre exists to protect the freedom of Christians to live out their faith in public life.

Changes in legislation have made it harder for Christians to do this, particularly in the workplace. There is now increasing pressure for Christians to “leave their faith at the door”.

We provide Christians with the legal support and expertise that they need, but which they otherwise wouldn't be able to access or afford themselves.

What we do

Since 2006, we've helped dozens of Christians and Christian organisations who have been challenged for living out their faith.

We've represented, among others:

- Christians who have been disciplined, blacklisted or dismissed from their jobs for acting in line with their Biblical convictions.
- Charities and businesses that have faced opposition for holding to a Christian ethos.
- Street preachers who have been arrested and held in custody for preaching the gospel in public places.
- University Christian Unions that have been opposed for attempting to run their groups in line with Christian principles.
- Churches that have been refused planning permission or issued with noise-abatement notices.
- Churches that have opposed Sex Entertainment Venues in their local areas.

Why it matters

Our work goes beyond supporting individual Christians and organisations. Since they highlight the current scale and intensity of challenges against Christian faith, our cases are often reported across the media. This coverage affects public opinion on the issues, as well as influencing law-makers.

Our work therefore has a level of influence beyond the courtroom — it extends into the public square, where policy decisions are debated and implemented.

Our sister organisation

Christian Concern runs alongside, and complements, the work of the Christian Legal Centre. It campaigns to protect Christian freedoms and promote the Christian faith as the best foundation for a free and flourishing society.

Christian Concern has a mailing list of over 80,000 supporters. If you'd like to join the list and receive up-to-date information about our cases and campaigns, please visit www.christianconcern.com

How we're funded

Our work is funded solely by the donations of our supporters.

Meet the team



Andrea Minichiello Williams
 Founder and CEO, Christian Concern
 & the Christian Legal Centre

Andrea is a barrister who has practised at all levels of the British judicial system. After pioneering the Student and Policy work of the Lawyers Christian Fellowship, she went on to found Christian Concern and the Christian Legal Centre, which have run some of the most high-profile Christian freedom cases and campaigns in Europe. She is a leading analyst, campaigner and spokeswoman on issues of national importance in the moral life of the nation, and a defender of Christian liberties in the parliamentary process, the justice system and the media.



Paul Diamond
 Standing Counsel to the
 Christian Legal Centre

Paul Diamond is a leading barrister in the law of religious liberty and specialises in bringing difficult cases to the attention of the British public. His case history includes defending the freedom of a British Airways worker who was refused permission to wear the cross at work, a Christian couple who were banned from fostering on account of their biblical beliefs on marriage and sexual ethics, and a nurse who was penalised for offering to pray with a patient. He has contributed to various articles in legal journals, including an academic article on European law which was endorsed by Lord Denning. Paul has appeared at all levels of the court system including the House of Lords and the European Court of Human Rights.



Libby Powell
 Case Worker,
 Christian Legal Centre

Libby has worked at the Christian Legal Centre since 2008. She is a qualified solicitor and manages new case enquiries and case progression, as well as providing guidance on a range of Christian freedom issues. Libby counts it a great privilege to be able to assist Christians who are facing difficulties because of their faith and she is always encouraged to see how God is glorified through the work of the Christian Legal Centre.



Michael Philips
Allied lawyer to the
Christian Legal Centre

Michael studied law at Nottingham University and qualified as a solicitor in 2004. He obtained High Rights of Audience two years later and was called to the Bar in 2009. As an experienced trial advocate, he regularly appears before the Crown Court, and has also successfully appeared before the High Court and Court of Appeal. Michael has supported a number of Christian Legal Centre clients who have been arrested under 'hate crime' legislation for preaching the Gospel in public places.



Rob Andrews
Allied lawyer to the
Christian Legal Centre

Rob qualified as a solicitor in 1992 and has extensive experience in dispute resolution work. As a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, he is experienced in arbitration, mediation and other forms of conflict resolution. Rob assists the Christian Legal Centre in its employment law cases and is also a Director of Andrews Ritson Solicitors LLP in Shropshire.



Philip Ross-Smith
Allied lawyer to the
Christian Legal Centre

Philip has been a partner in private legal practice for more than 25 years. He began his career in dispute resolution and litigation, and since the early 1990's, has practised as a commercial and corporate lawyer. Philip assists the Christian Legal Centre in its employment law cases.

Introduction to our cases

The Apostle Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also very well know. “If, then, I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar. Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, “You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go.”

Acts 25, 11-12

Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights provides for strong and active protection of freedom of thought, conscience and religion. These protections extend to both private and public manifestations of faith in recognition of the fact that religious belief is **intrinsic to an individual’s identity**.

Despite this, Christians in the UK are finding that their freedom to express and live in line with biblical truth in public discourse is being increasingly denied. There is growing pressure on Christians to ‘leave their faith at the door’ and many have been excluded from participation in certain areas of public life on account of their Christian convictions.

Since its inception, the Christian Legal Centre has dealt with hundreds of such cases across the UK. A number of these have been resolved before reaching the courts following the intervention of our legal team, whilst others have come before both national judges and the European Court of Human Rights, attracting widespread media coverage.

This booklet intends to provide an insight into many of the high-profile cases supported by the Christian Legal Centre. It highlights the difficulties faced by those in the UK whose Christian faith has been threatened by an increasingly secular and atheistic agenda.

Many of these cases demonstrate how, in relation to Christian belief, we now live in a ‘thought-crime’ society.

Christianity in the Workplace



Richard Page

ongoing case

Richard Page, a Christian magistrate, was disciplined by a Cabinet minister and England’s highest judge for saying that a child’s best interests lie in being raised by a mother and a father.

Richard, who has served as a magistrate in Kent for 15 years and is a well-respected member of the family court, expressed the view during a closed-door consultation with colleagues in a routine adoption case. Having heard all the evidence, Richard decided that his legal duty to act in the best interests of the child meant that he could not agree with placing the child with a same-sex couple.

Following an investigation by the local Justice of the Peace Advisory Panel, the case was referred to the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice.

Outcome

The Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice gave Richard a public rebuke, saying that his Christian views about family life were discriminatory against same-sex couples and incompatible with his duties as a magistrate. He was barred from sitting in court until he completed ‘equality training.’

Richard, who has now returned to Court, said:

“My Christian faith informs me that children flourish best in a loving home with a married mum and dad. My 20 years of experience in mental health service also leads me to the same conclusion. This is not a matter of prejudice or bigotry but is based on knowledge and evidence that I have applied when seeking the best interests for a lifetime of a vulnerable child.

“As a magistrate in the Family Court, I must conduct a case-by-case analysis, based on the facts which are before me. In this particular case, it appeared to me that there was overwhelming evidence that the situation was not in the best interests of the child.

“Since making the decision I have been put under huge pressure to conform to the conclusions that others wanted me to reach but I knew that I had to dissent, for the sake of that child. Christian faith demands setting aside ideologically convenient conclusions and fighting for the best interests of children.”



Victoria Wastenev

ongoing case

Victoria Wastenev, a senior NHS occupational therapist, was disciplined for giving a Christian book to a Muslim colleague.

Victoria has worked as an occupational therapist at the East London NHS Foundation Trust for over eight years and has an exemplary record.

As a committed Christian, she tries to take opportunities to share the gospel with those around her. Over the course of several months, she shared her faith with a Muslim colleague during consensual conversations, and also prayed for her (with her consent).

Just as her colleague was due to begin hospital treatment, Victoria gave her a book to read during her recuperation entitled 'I dared to call Him Father' – the story a Muslim woman's encounter with Christianity. Victoria also invited her to church-organised events after discovering she was interested in the community work being done by her church to combat human trafficking.

The events took place in the context of what Victoria believed to be a genuine friendship. Her colleague had never complained to her personally, had always initiated discussions about Victoria's faith and had expressly consented to being prayed for. She had also privately shared with Victoria that other colleagues were pressing her to lodge a formal complaint against her.

Victoria was therefore very shocked when her colleague made eight official complaints, accusing her of 'harassment and bullying'. She was suspended for almost nine months and eventually found guilty of three 'offences' by an internal disciplinary panel: inviting her Muslim colleague to church-organised events, praying with her (despite having permission to do so) and giving her a Christian book.

Victoria said:

"I fear I may have been entrapped by a colleague who encouraged me to discuss my faith, who willingly agreed that I could pray for her and who even accepted an invitation to a church charity event.

"She was concerned about her health and problems at home. I said to her that she had strong faith and she should draw on that faith. I said 'Pray!' She told me she could not pray, so I replied 'Maybe I can pray for you?' And she said 'OK'. I would have stopped praying immediately if I had thought I was distressing her in any way but faith was openly discussed and encouraged and welcomed by the complainant."

Outcome

An Employment Tribunal ruled that the Trust was justified in disciplining Victoria for sharing her faith with her colleague.

The Christian Legal Centre is committed to providing Victoria with comprehensive legal support and is considering next steps in the case.



Nohad Halawi

ongoing case

Nohad Halawi lost her job at Heathrow Airport after spurious ‘anti-Islam’ complaints were made against her.

Nohad worked in a duty-free shop at Heathrow’s Terminal 3 for thirteen years. She used to witness regularly to her Muslim colleagues, some of whom were open about their support for Islamist terrorism.

On one occasion, Nohad defended a Christian colleague who had been mocked by a group of Muslim workers for wearing a cross. She spoke to management about the way in which they spoke disparagingly about Jesus and was additionally concerned about comments made against Jews and Christians.

Following the events, a complaint was raised against Nohad based on false claims that she had acted in an ‘anti-Islam’ manner. Her airside security pass was withdrawn, disqualifying her from any further work at the duty-free shop and ending her livelihood. 22 of Nohad’s colleagues, some who were Muslim, signed a petition stating: “We are shocked and saddened by the recent dismissal of our colleague and friend, Nohad, as a result of malicious and unfounded allegations made against her,” but the decision was not reversed - leaving Nohad unable to work.

Nohad believes she lost her role because she spoke up for Christian freedoms and dared to stand against inappropriate conduct by some Muslim employees.

Outcome

An Employment Tribunal ruled that Nohad had no protection under employment law as she was not ‘technically employed’, despite the fact that she had worked at Heathrow for 13 years. After losing her case at the Employment Appeal Tribunal and Court of Appeal, Nohad sought permission to appeal the decision at the Supreme Court, but her application was rejected.

Describing her experience, Nohad said:

“The case has had a profound effect upon my life. I entered into a working arrangement at the request of my employer only to find myself without any legal protection. My employers were able to dismiss me without any proper disciplinary and employment procedures despite my 13 year unblemished track record. The trigger for the dismissal was their disproportionate response to conversations I had about my Christian faith and their fear of upsetting my Muslim colleagues.

“My colleagues were extremists because for two years they would tell me, on almost a daily basis that Islam is going to take over the world.”

The Christian Legal Centre is committed to providing Nohad with comprehensive legal support and is considering next steps.



Celestina Mba

ongoing case

Celestina Mba, a Christian children’s worker, was forced to resign after being put under pressure to work on Sundays.

Celestina worked at Brightwell Children’s Home in London for over three years. During her interview, she informed her employer, the London Borough of Merton, that she would be unable to work on Sundays. An initial agreement accommodated her faith, but after two years her employer sought to change the arrangement.

Celestina offered to accept less pay or work nights and Saturdays - both unpopular shifts. However, no compromise was accepted, forcing her to choose between her job and her Christian observance.

Outcome

An Employment Tribunal rejected Celestina’s case for religious discrimination, claiming that since not all Christians observe Sunday as a day of rest, it was not a ‘core component’ of Christianity (with the implication that it therefore enjoys little protection under the law).

Responding to the ruling, which was later upheld by the Employment Appeal Tribunal, Celestina said:

“It is impossible to speak with me and not know of my commitment to Jesus and that I will not work on the Sabbath day, yet the Tribunal found that my employers were not aware of this fact. They also held that repeated instructions by Merton Council to work on Sundays in violation of my faith was not a violation of my rights.

“I am amazed by this decision. I thought that this country was a Christian country and known for its welcome and hospitality to all people. I worked hard for years at my job, and to lose it because of intolerance towards my faith is shocking to me.”

Celestina took her case to the Court of Appeal, which ruled that Sunday was in fact a day of worship and rest for many Christians and so, in principle, protected in law. It found that the earlier courts had applied the wrong test, and that “there was an error of law in the Employment Tribunal’s decision, which was later repeated in the judgment of the Employment Appeal Tribunal.”

Despite this, the Appeal Court refused to order a new hearing to apply the correct test to the facts of the case, with the result that Celestina’s dismissal was upheld.

The Christian Legal Centre is committed to providing Celestina with comprehensive legal support and is considering next steps.



Sarah Mbuyi

June 2015

Sarah Mbuyi, a Christian nursery worker, was dismissed after explaining her Christian view of marriage in response to a question from a colleague.

Sarah Mbuyi began working at Newpark Childcare in London in April 2013. She became good friends with a homosexual colleague and used to have frequent conversations with her about Christianity. During one such conversation, Sarah's colleague expressly brought up the issue of her sexuality and asked whether God would approve of her civil partnership. Sarah expressed her biblical view and explained that whilst God does not condone homosexual practice, He loves her and requires her to come to Him as she is. The offended colleague then reported Sarah to her manager.

At an internal disciplinary hearing, Sarah was confronted with her colleague's allegations, including the false claim that Sarah herself had raised the issue of homosexuality on a number of occasions. The nursery directors found against Sarah and instantly dismissed her for gross misconduct for 'harassing' her colleague. Describing her experience, Sarah said:

"My disciplinary hearing was hopelessly one-sided. It seemed to me they had already made up their minds to justify dismissing me, before hearing my side of the story. It is obvious that we live in a climate where being Christ-like, following the Bible as much as we can and being open and honest about that, is a problem.

"When I said to my colleague 'No, God does not condone the practice of homosexuality, but does love you and says you should come to Him as you are', my colleague became emotional and went off to report me to my manager. I never ever condemned her or accused her, but when she asked me directly what I believed, I was open about sharing the Bible's teaching that homosexual sex is wrong. It's clear that this offended her and she was determined to get me dismissed, simply because I expressed traditional Christian beliefs."

Outcome

In a brave judgment, the Watford Employment Tribunal, chaired by Judge Broughton, found unanimously that Sarah had been directly discriminated against on the basis of her belief that homosexual practice is contrary to the Bible. The Tribunal recognised that whilst her employer was "not anti-Christian", Sarah had not been treated fairly and the decision to dismiss her may have been made on "stereotypical assumptions about her and her beliefs."

Sarah's belief was described by the Tribunal as one which is "worthy of respect in a democratic society, not incompatible with human dignity and not in conflict with the fundamental rights of others." The Tribunal also found that the employer's policy, which prohibited employees from "describing homosexuality as a sin", would have a "disparate impact on Christians holding similar views to Sarah on the biblical teachings on practising homosexuality." It explained that this is "not merely because a significantly higher proportion of Christians would hold such views but also because many evangelical Christians feel their faith compels them to share it."



Margaret Jones

August 2014

Margaret Jones, Senior Deputy Registrar at Bedford register office, was dismissed after she indicated that she would be unable to perform same-sex ‘marriages’.

Margaret was asked by her employers whether her Christian beliefs would prevent her from conducting same-sex weddings in light of the passage of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013. Margaret confirmed that, as a Christian, she believed marriage could only be between one man and one woman. In response, she was told the council’s position was that she either perform same-sex ‘marriages’ or resign.

Margaret went through an internal disciplinary process and explained that whilst she could not perform same-sex weddings, she would be willing to register same-sex ‘marriages’ and deal with administrative tasks. She explained that since every marriage ceremony requires two members of staff – one to conduct and one to register – she could simply register the marriage, with the result that no couple would be denied a service.

However, no compromise was accepted and Margaret was dismissed on the basis that her refusal to perform same-sex weddings breached ‘equality’ policies and “brought the council into disrepute.”

Outcome

Margaret’s dismissal was unanimously reversed by a panel of Central Bedfordshire Council Members after she appealed against the decision with the support of the Christian Legal Centre. The panel decided that the council had not fully investigated ways of accommodating Margaret’s beliefs and that evidence had been found that in other cases “informal custom and practice arrangements had been developed in order to accommodate individual staff situations.”

In its letter, the council informed Margaret she would be reinstated with no financial loss and that any reference to gross misconduct would be “expunged from all records.”



Gary McFarlane

January 2013

Gary McFarlane, an experienced relationships counsellor, was dismissed for gross misconduct after indicating during a training course that he might have a conscientious objection to providing sex therapy to same-sex couples.

Gary worked as a relationships counsellor with Relate Avon Ltd for over four years and had a good working relationship with his colleagues. During this time, he began training in a specific form of sex therapy known as ‘psycho-sexual therapy’ (PST). He told his supervisor that, on account of his Christian faith, he may be unable to provide such therapy to a same-sex couple. As a result, he was dismissed instantly for gross misconduct for allegedly breaching the company’s ‘equality and diversity’ policy.

Gary had not yet been asked to provide PST to a same-sex couple in practice, and had the situation ever arisen, his beliefs could have been accommodated without the risk of anyone being denied a service. A number of other employees were able (and willing) to offer the service without placing any undue financial or logistical burden on the employer. Speaking about his experience, Gary said:

“I am a practising Christian with mainstream Christian beliefs but I lost my job and livelihood just because I dared to hint that I might have a conscientious objection to giving highly intimate homosexual sex therapy. No one was ever denied a service. No one else’s rights were infringed but I have been penalised for ‘thought-crime’. The climate in the UK is changing. Society is the worse for not allowing people of conscience to be free to exercise legitimate rights.”

Outcome

National Courts: The Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal rejected Gary’s claim for religious discrimination, claiming that beliefs about marriage as between one man and one woman were not a ‘core component’ of the Christian faith and so, not protected in law. Lord Justice Laws refused to grant Gary permission to have his case heard before the Court of Appeal.

European Court of Human Rights: The ECHR said that beliefs about marriage and sexual ethics were in fact a part of Gary’s Christian identity, and so, in principle, protected.

It accepted that there had been an infringement of Gary’s rights under Article 9 of the European Convention (freedom of thought, conscience and religion). However, it ruled that the UK courts had acted within the “margin of appreciation” (discretion) given to national courts. As a result, Gary’s dismissal was upheld.



Shirley Chaplin

January 2013

Shirley Chaplin, an NHS nurse, was faced with disciplinary action after being told she was no longer permitted to wear a small cross around her neck.

Shirley had spent all her career at the Royal Devon & Exeter Trust Hospital and had never been challenged over her confirmation cross, which she had worn throughout her nearly thirty years in front-line nursing.

Then, as part of a new uniform policy, Shirley was told that unless she removed the necklace, she would not be permitted to work on hospital wards. When Shirley refused, the Trust cited ‘health and safety’ considerations relating to the risk of injury if the chain were accidentally pulled by a patient. Shirley offered to make reasonable adjustments (e.g. by fitting a magnetic clasp so that the chain would come away if tugged) but no compromise was accepted.

The Trust continued to make concessions for other faiths, including permitting Muslim staff to wear headscarves on duty. Describing her experience, Shirley said:

“I asked if I could wear the cross pinned to my lapel, but the Trust would only allow the cross to be pinned inside my pocket. Necklaces were worn by other members of staff but the Trust failed to explain why they were exempt from the health and safety policy.”

Outcome

UK Courts: Shirley’s case for religious discrimination was rejected by the Employment Tribunal, which claimed that since wearing the cross was not compulsory for Christians, it was not a protected freedom.

European Court of Human Rights: The ECHR ruled that wearing the cross is in fact an expression of the Christian faith and so, in principle, protected under the law.

It accepted that there had been an infringement of Shirley’s rights under Article 9 of the European Convention (freedom of thought, conscience and religion). However, it ruled that UK courts had acted within the “margin of appreciation” (discretion) given to national courts, thus upholding the Trust’s decision.

It decided that since European judges were not in a position to examine the application of the Trust’s health and safety policy, it had to assume that the policy was justified based on the decision of the UK courts.

However, no credible health and safety risk was ever demonstrated by the Trust.



Christina Summers

September 2012

Christina Summers, an elected Member of Brighton and Hove City Council, was dismissed from the Green Group of councillors for expressing her views on same-sex 'marriage' in a free vote.

Councillors called for Christina to be dismissed after she voted against a motion at a Full Council meeting in support of the Government's plans to introduce same-sex 'marriage'. She explained that her decision was based on her Christian convictions, stating "I'm accountable to God above any political party."

Commenting on Christina's vote, Deputy Council Leader, Phelim MacCafferty, the party spokesman on LGBT issues, said:

"Greens believe she [Christina] is entitled to hold her view but this does not reflect the position, spirit and track record of the Green Party in extending human and civil rights for all social groups irrespective of sexual orientation or on other grounds."

Outcome

Christina was dismissed from the Green Group of councillors for "bringing the party into disrepute." She appealed to the national Green Party with the support of the Christian Legal Centre, but her appeal was dismissed.

Christina decided not to pursue legal action and continues as an independent councillor.



Dr Richard Scott

June 2012

Dr Richard Scott, a GP with over 28 years' experience, was found guilty of 'malpractice' by the General Medical Council's Investigation Committee after he shared his faith with a patient.

Dr Scott worked at Bethesda Medical Centre in Kent and had an unblemished record as a medic. He witnessed regularly to patients and many testified of having their lives radically changed after coming into contact with the centre's Christian doctors.

In 2011, Dr Scott discussed the benefits of Christianity with a patient (with his consent) as he had done on many occasions over the years. Following the discussion, the patient's mother reported Dr Scott to the GMC, claiming that he had shared his faith without offering medical treatment options. Commenting on the case, Dr Scott said:

"I only discussed my faith at the end of a lengthy medical consultation after exploring the various interventions that the patient had previously tried, and after promising to follow up the patient's request appointment with other medical professionals.

"I only discussed mutual faith after obtaining the patient's permission. In our conversation, I said that personally, I had found having faith in Jesus helped me and could help the patient. At no time did the patient indicate that they were offended, or that they wanted to stop the discussion. If that had been the case, I would have immediately ended the conversation. This complaint was brought to the GMC not by the patient, who has continued to be a patient at this practice, but by the patient's mother."

Following the complaint, the GMC decided to proceed with an investigation despite the fact that the patient was not prepared to give live evidence and was very reluctant to be involved in the proceedings.

Outcome

Even though Dr Scott was acting within the GMC's own guidelines on doctors sharing their faith with patients, the GMC's Investigation Committee ruled in 2012 that his actions "did not meet the standards required of a doctor." He was issued with a warning that will remain on his record until 2017.



Colin Atkinson

August 2011

Colin Atkinson was threatened with dismissal following an anonymous complaint that a palm cross displayed inside his work van might offend people of other faiths.

Colin Atkinson had worked for Wakefield District Housing (WDH) for 15 years and had always discreetly displayed a palm cross inside his work van. However, following a complaint from a WDH tenant, Colin was put under huge pressure to remove the symbol.

WDH claimed that it was a neutral organisation and that allowing the cross would be favourable to Christianity - and potentially offensive. Other employees, however, were permitted to wear headdresses and hang Koranic verses in their work cars.

Outcome

Following intervention by the Christian Legal Centre, as well as national media coverage, disciplinary action against Colin was dropped and he was able to keep the cross in his van. However, after the media attention died away, Colin suffered continued harassment and victimisation. His employers also failed to honour their agreement to allow him to return to work.

Colin said:

“I thought common sense had triumphed when the company agreed I could go back to work. But I have found there is still a lot of hostility against me, even though I have done nothing more than defend the basic rights of Christians to express their faith in public.”



Dr Sheila Matthews

November 2010

Dr Sheila Matthews was dismissed from her local authority’s adoption panel after requesting to abstain from voting in cases where homosexual couples were being considered as potential adoptive parents.

Dr Matthews, a community paediatrician, sat on an adoption panel for Northamptonshire County Council. When the issue of same-sex adoption arose, she sought a reasonable compromise with the council, requesting that she be allowed to abstain from voting in cases involving applications by homosexual couples. She explained that since there would still be a majority vote, her absence would not prevent the rest of the panel from taking a decision.

However, the Director of Services for Children, Young People and Families advised her that she could no longer continue her role as a panel member. As a result, Dr Matthews resigned from her job.

Explaining her position, she said:

“As a professional I have done a lot of reading around the subject and am satisfied that there are research findings which support my position that a same sex partnership is not the best family setting to bring up children. As a Christian and a paediatrician I believe that children do best with a mother and father in a committed, long term relationship. Therefore, I cannot recommend a same-sex household to be in the best interest of a child, despite what politicians may have legislated for.

“As those on the panel have a legal obligation to do what is in the best interest of the child, I am not able to vote in favour of such placements.

“The gay lifestyle is one which attracts risks for many reasons and it is not appropriate to encourage children towards it.

“These risks include mental health problems including depression, suicide and substance misuse. There is increased incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and certain cancers.”

Outcome

Dr Matthews’ claim for religious discrimination was rejected by the Employment Tribunal on the basis that if any other panel member had expressed similar views, they would have been treated in the same way - regardless of their religious position.



Duke Amachree

December 2009

Duke Amachree, a homelessness prevention officer, was dismissed after he shared his faith with a terminally ill client.

Duke had worked for Wandsworth Council for 18 years and had an unblemished record.

During a housing interview, he encouraged his client not to give up hope and to put her faith in God. As a result, he was subjected to six months of investigations and then sacked for gross misconduct.

Responding to the decision, Duke said:

“I was stunned. I was speechless. It was a like a bad dream. I could not believe it. I was so stunned I could not even bring myself to tell my wife what had happened.”

“My client was in a state of absolute despair. It was out of compassion that I said to her: ‘Sometimes the doctors don’t have all of the answers’.

“I suggested she could put her faith in God. I said ‘Sometimes we read in newspapers, or see on television, instances where doctors have declared a patient’s condition incurable but they went on and recovered’.”

Duke’s client expressly said she did not want Duke to be dismissed. The council also accepted that his motivation in speaking to the client was purely one of compassion.

Outcome

Duke’s case for unfair dismissal and religious discrimination was rejected by the Employment Tribunal.



Rev'd Mahboob Masih

October 2009

Rev'd Mahboob Masih, a radio host, was dismissed after airing comments from a Christian apologist during a debate about Jesus's claims in the Gospels.

Rev'd Masih hosted a regular Saturday morning show on Awaz FM, a Glasgow-based community radio station designed to serve the Asian community.

During one such show, questions were asked by listeners on a talk given by a prominent Muslim speaker and critic of Christianity, Zakir Naik, in which the divinity of Jesus was denied. Rev'd Masih and his co-presenter sought to allow a response from a Christian perspective. Their guest, a Christian apologist, said that Zakir Naik's claim that Jesus was not the only prophet to embody "the way, the truth and the life" showed a lack of knowledge of the Bible and the Koran. Following the discussion, management accused Rev'd Masih of not being balanced enough on air and suspended him temporarily.

Rev'd Masih was ordered to apologise to attendees of Glasgow's Central Mosque who may have been 'offended' by the comments. Rev'd Masih reluctantly read out an apology but added his own words: "We live in a free country and everybody has the right to express his/her opinion..." He refused to deliver an apology in person, believing that a presenter on a community radio station should not be answerable to a mosque.

He was dismissed after sending a letter to the station's management committee criticising his treatment.

Outcome

Sadly, as Rev'd Masih was not technically employed by the station and worked as a volunteer, he could not bring a claim for religious discrimination under employment law.



Kwabena Peat

July 2009

Kwabena Peat, a Christian teacher, was dismissed after he complained that a staff training day was being used to promote homosexuality.

Kwabena worked as head of year at New Park Avenue in north London. In January 2009, he was asked to attend a compulsory training session for staff on tackling ‘homophobic’ bullying in schools. The session included a talk by Sue Sanders, a well-known homosexual activist and co-founder of the LGBT group ‘Schools Out’.

During her talk, Ms Sanders asked ‘what makes you think that being heterosexual is natural?’ She also suggested that those who did not accept homosexuality as normal had ‘issues’ to deal with. Disapproving of its content, Kwabena walked out of the session, alongside several other colleagues.

Kwabena wrote to the three organisers of the event and complained about the “aggressive” presentation of homosexual practice. He also explained that, as a Christian, he believed that sex should be kept within the context a life-long monogamous marriage between one man and one woman.

The recipients of the letter accused Kwabena of “harassment” and following an investigation, he was dismissed for gross misconduct.

Describing his experience, Kwabena said:

“I expected the training session to help us by providing good information on how to handle bullying, but Sue Sanders had another agenda. She started promoting homosexual lifestyles and suggesting those who had objections should sort out their prejudices. She clearly asked us ‘what makes you all think that to be heterosexual is natural?’

“I’m not surprised by all this, but I am disappointed. I’m the one being harassed and intimidated - for expressing my religious views. As an experienced professional I am very supportive of equality and diversity programmes and have always got on well with colleagues who are well aware of my Christian beliefs.”

Outcome

Kwabena was re-instated after school’s appeal panel accepted that the accusation of ‘gross misconduct’ against him was disproportionate. He was supported throughout the process by the Christian Legal Centre.



Theresa Davies

June 2009

Theresa Davies was demoted from her role as a registrar with Islington Borough Council after she refused to preside over civil partnership ceremonies.

Theresa began working for the London Borough of Islington in 1991. She started off as a receptionist in the births, deaths and marriages department and was promoted to Deputy Superintendent Registrar in 2002.

In December 2006, Theresa informed her manager that, on account of her Christian faith, she would be unable to preside over civil partnership ceremonies. In response, Theresa was told that she would either be demoted to an entry-level job on reception or face dismissal. Believing that she had no choice, she accepted the demotion and worked as a receptionist for two years.

In January 2009, Theresa was put back on duty with a full deputy registrar role and, once again, informed management of her objection to presiding over civil partnerships. She was told that, unless she agreed, she would be removed from the marriage rota and given a new role.

Speaking about her experience, Theresa said:

“I know of other councils that have allowed Christian registrars to carry on by ensuring that colleagues are given civil partnerships – but I was told this was not Islington’s policy. I was very disappointed, very saddened and angry. It was humiliating to be back on reception, where I had started.”

Outcome

Unfortunately, Theresa’s case could not proceed to the Employment Tribunal as her case had the same facts as those in a previous case involving Christian registrar, Lillian Ladele, supported by the Christian Institute.

Lillian was told by her employer, also Islington Borough Council, that she would be dismissed unless she agreed to perform same-sex civil partnerships. The Court of Appeal ruled that the council was correct to insist that she presided over civil partnership ceremonies despite her faith-based objections, claiming that beliefs about marriage as between one man and one woman were not a core component of the Christian faith, and therefore not protected in law.

Lillian’s case was twinned with Gary McFarlane’s case (see page 18) and heard at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

The ECHR said that beliefs about marriage and sexual ethics were orthodox Christian views that were sincerely held by Lillian and so, were in principle protected. It accepted that there had been an infringement of Lillian’s rights under Article 9 of the European Convention (freedom of thought, conscience and religion), but ruled that the UK courts had acted within the “margin of appreciation” (discretion) given to national courts. As a result, Lillian’s dismissal was upheld.

David Booker

March 2009

David Booker, who worked for the English Churches Housing Group, was forced to resign after he explained his Christian view of marriage in response to a question from his colleague.

During an evening shift, David was asked privately by his colleague about the church’s teaching on homosexuality. David explained the Bible’s position that a life-long, monogamous marriage between one man and one woman was the only proper context for sexual expression. He made clear that he had homosexual friends and was not “homophobic.”

The following day, the charity informed David that he had been suspended from his job pending an investigation into claims of “gross misconduct”. It claimed that he had breached the charity’s code of conduct by “promoting your religious views which contained discriminatory comments regarding a person’s sexual orientation...”. Speaking about his experience, David said:

“I was working nights with a colleague of mine and somehow we got on to the subject of Christianity – and then our discussion moved on to homosexuality in the church. I can’t remember if I was the instigator [of the subjects] – or she was.

“The conversation moved on to my views on homosexuality. I am not a bigot. I am not homophobic. I have gay friends.

“But I did say that I didn’t agree with same-sex marriages, I didn’t believe pastors or vicars should marry same-sex partners and I didn’t agree with practising homosexuals being a pastor or a vicar.

“At one point, as we were talking, I asked her if I was offending her or boring her and she replied: ‘No, Dave, carry on.’ After our discussion, she was friendly towards me. She made me cups of tea. There was no problem at all.

“You always feel a colleague will support you and is on your side. I feel as if I have been stabbed in the back. I just wish my colleague had come to me with her concerns. Can I not have a private conversation with a colleague about my personal beliefs without getting suspended?”

Outcome

Due to the significant pressure against him, David decided to resign and not pursue his case.



Caroline Petrie

February 2009

Caroline Petrie, a community nurse from Weston-super-Mare, was suspended after she offered to pray for an elderly patient.

Caroline was employed by North Somerset Primary Care Trust and carried out home visits to sick and elderly patients. During one such visit, she asked a patient if she wanted to be prayed for. The woman, who was in her 70s, declined the offer and Caroline took the matter no further.

However, the next day, the patient mentioned the incident to another nurse who reported Caroline to her seniors. Caroline was accused of failing to “demonstrate a personal and professional commitment to equality and diversity” and suspended without pay.

The patient maintained that although she was “taken aback” by the offer of prayer, she had not been offended.

Caroline said:

“I cannot divide my faith from my nursing care.

“I have had a passion about going into nursing since I was about seven. It is all about loving and caring for each other and offering support.

“I have seen the way prayer can produce wonderful results in patients. I have led some dying patients to the Lord, prayed with them, and I know they were really grateful and uplifted.”

Outcome

Caroline was re-instated following intervention by the Christian Legal Centre and widespread media coverage.

The Trust issued a statement saying it recognised that Caroline had been acting in the “best interests of her patients” and that nurses could “continue to offer high quality care for patients while remaining committed to their beliefs.” It also accepted that, for some people, prayer is an “integral part of health care and the healing process.”



PC Graham Cogman

September 2008

PC Graham Cogman was dismissed from Norfolk Constabulary for expressing his Christian view of marriage, and posting a link to a Christian organisation offering support for individuals dealing with unwanted same-sex attraction.

PC Cogman, a constable with over 15 years' experience, became concerned when a circular email sent to officers encouraged staff to wear a pink ribbon supporting Gay History Month. His concerns were heightened when police stations were flooded with homosexual literature and posters, including those promoting gay pub quiz nights.

In response, PC Cogman emailed his colleagues with an alternative view, based on his biblical belief of marriage. He reminded them that many Christians, and other members of society whom they serve as officers, believe that homosexual acts are immoral.

As a result, he was accused of failing to be tolerant and banned from using the force's internal email system. When he objected to a similar email that was circulated to staff the following year, he was summoned to a full disciplinary hearing and fined over £1,000.

He was later investigated for adding a Christian text to his computer screen saver, and posting a link to a Christian organisation offering support for individuals struggling with same-sex attraction.

Responding to the decision, PC Cogman said:

"The news that I have lost my job is only just sinking in and I am very upset.

"The blatant support for homosexual rights in Norfolk police makes being a Christian officer extremely difficult."

Outcome

PC Cogman was dismissed following an internal hearing; he decided against taking his case to the Employment Tribunal.

Wayne Follet

April 2008

Wayne Follet, a Christian teacher, was dismissed after he shared his testimony and offered to pray with a sick child and her mother.

Wayne was employed by a County Council as a supply teacher for children unable to attend school through illness or other physical conditions.

During one session, he sought to encourage a pupil and her mother by sharing how his Christian faith had helped him in difficult situations. When he offered to pray with the family, the pupil's mother politely declined but later made an official complaint.

That afternoon, Wayne's manager informed him that his services would no longer be required.

Outcome

Wayne decided to take his case to the Employment Tribunal, but following intervention by the Christian Legal Centre, the case was settled out of court. He received a 'goodwill' payment from the council and was told that he could contact their website should he be interested in further work with their organisation.

Please note that names and dates have been changed to protect the identity of the teacher involved.



Andrew McClintock

October 2007

Andrew McClintock, a Christian Magistrate, was forced to resign after being refused permission to opt-out of cases where homosexual couples were being considered as potential adoptive parents.

Andrew McClintock served as a magistrate on the South Yorkshire Bench for 18 years. Following the passage of the Civil Partnership Act 2004, he requested to be ‘screened out’ from cases that could require him to place children in same-sex households. It was his belief, based on his Christian convictions, that placing children in the care of same-sex couples would be a violation of his duty to act in their best interests.

His request to have his faith accommodated was refused, leaving him no choice but to resign from his membership of the Family Panel. Explaining his position, Andrew said:

“I believe that the welfare of vulnerable children is at stake. Placing these children with gay couples is an experiment in social science because we do not know what kind of impact it may have on them.

“Bullying at school because they have two dads or two mothers is just one likely outcome. They are being used as guinea pigs.”

Outcome

The Employment Tribunal ruled there was no unlawful conduct of any kind by the Government, dismissing Andrew’s case for discrimination on the grounds of religious belief.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal upheld the ruling, commenting that Andrew had resigned of his own free will, and had not been encouraged to leave the Family Panel. It was not recognised that a failure to accommodate Andrew’s position meant that he was forced to choose between his job and his faith.

Both tribunals failed to properly address the question of how legislation permitting same-sex adoption was compatible with the duty of magistrates to act in the best interests of children. The Government asserted that there was “no clear evidence” to show that the welfare of children was best served by placing them in the care of a mother and father in a stable relationship. Andrew adduced leading scientific research showing that same-sex households were linked to poor outcomes for children, and that children were best raised in homes headed by a mother and father. The evidence was ignored.



Denise Hays was dismissed by Lewisham Council after posting her Christian view of homosexual practice on the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement’s (LGCM) website in a non-confrontational way.

Denise posted her comments whilst using her work computer outside of working hours, as was permitted by Lewisham Council. She believed, in good faith, that her comments were confidential to the website and was totally unaware that the e-mail account she used would be visible on the LGCM website.

Shortly after, Sharon Ferguson, a lesbian political activist and Chief Executive of the LGCM, reported Denise to Lewisham Council. The council suspended her from work immediately “for further investigation”. After six months, she was dismissed for gross misconduct.

Denise Hays

October 2007

Describing her experience, Denise said:

“I came across the LGCM website while searching for information about churches online. I didn’t know it was a lesbian and gay website at first. There was an inquiry form page that I went onto, which invites you to give opinions, so I went on to witness to them.

“It wasn’t with any malicious intent and it wasn’t with any hatred, it was out of sheer concern.”

Outcome

Denise’s case for unfair dismissal and religious discrimination was rejected by the Employment Tribunal.

Christianity in Service Provision





Core Issues Trust ongoing case

Core Issues Trust, a Christian charity which provides therapeutic support for those dealing with unwanted same-sex attraction, was banned from running adverts on London buses following intervention by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson.

In 2012, the Trust sought to run adverts on London buses which affirmed the possibility of change for those who do not wish to embrace a homosexual identity. The advert, which read 'Not Gay! Ex-Gay, Post-Gay and Proud. Get over it!', was a direct response to provocative ads being run by LGBT lobby group Stonewall: "Some people are gay. Get over it!" Following a leak to the Guardian newspaper, the Trust's adverts were banned just hours before they were due to become public, but Transport for London (TfL) continued to permit Stonewall's adverts to run on 1000 London buses. At the time, Boris Johnson took personal credit in the media for instructing the adverts to be pulled.

Notably, his intervention took place three weeks before the London Mayoral election and just two weeks before he was due to appear at a hustings event organised by Stonewall.

Outcome

In March 2013, the High Court ruled that neither the Trust nor Stonewall should have been permitted to run their advertisements on London buses. Passing the ruling, Mrs Justice Lang concluded that TfL had applied its policy "partially" and that its decision-making process was "procedurally unfair" and "in breach of its own procedures." Despite the finding, Mrs Justice Lang upheld the ban on the Trust's advert.

Following the decision, the Trust submitted a Freedom of Information request which revealed emails suggesting the Mayor had personally instructed TfL to ban its advertisements. One letter from the Mayor stated "I instructed that [the ad] be immediately stopped." Emails originating from senior

staff within the Mayor's Office and TfL read "Boris has just instructed TfL to pull the adverts", "The Mayor's intervention is coming through strongly" and "The mayor immediately put the wheels into motion to halt the campaign after being alerted to the plans by the Guardian." The Trust took the case to the Court of Appeal which sent it back to Mrs Justice Lang to consider the new email evidence which she had not seen at the first hearing.

Despite the evidence, Mrs Justice Lang ruled in July 2014 that Boris Johnson did not order the Trust's adverts to be pulled. Remarkably, Boris Johnson denied banning the adverts in a signed witness statement to the High Court, saying "I did not instruct TfL to do anything." Lawyers acting for him argued that when the Mayor had used the word "instruct" he was merely expressing a point of view. Mrs Justice Lang concluded that "the dispute at the hearing about the correct meaning of the word 'instruction' was in danger of becoming a debate about semantics."

The Trust has now been ordered to pay costs in excess of £100K and is seeking to appeal the High Court's decision.

Explaining why the case is so important, Dr Mike Davidson, Director of Core Issues Trust, said:

"The true nature of marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman is being attacked. The basis of this attack is the lie that some people are 'born gay.' Our bus adverts simply presented the reality that some people move away from a homosexual identity. If we stop speaking this truth on this issue, the next generation will believe the 'born gay' lie."



Jeff & Sue Green

May 2015

Christian guesthouse owners, Jeff and Sue Green, were accused of discriminating against same-sex couples by offering double rooms to married people only.

Jeff and Sue followed a policy of only offering double rooms to married couples at their B&B in Wales, which is also their home. They operated under the policy for several years without any complaints but then received a letter from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), warning that it was unlawful to discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation. The EHRC, which had viewed the B&B's website, said it had received a complaint about the guesthouse, but no evidence of any such complaint was ever presented.

Subsequently, Jeff and Sue changed their policy to offer only single beds in all rooms and the EHRC dropped the case. The couple then applied for their case to be heard at the European Court of Human Rights, believing they had no prospect of success in the British court system. Commenting on their decision at the time, the couple said:

"We have no recollection of ever refusing accommodation to same-sex couples and the EHRC gives no evidence of a complaint in its letter. We have asked the EHRC to identify their evidence and source of complaint. It would be a matter of deep concern if a public authority is simply scanning websites with the intention of confronting Christian businesses which want to conduct their activities in line with their beliefs.

"Unfortunately we don't have a fighting chance in the UK courts and we have to go to Europe to have even a miniscule opportunity of getting a hearing.

"The very essence of this country is being altered on a political whim. There does seem to be a liberal secular agenda that is being driven through quite forcibly, not just the homosexual agenda."

Outcome

With the support of the Christian Legal Centre, the couple sought a hearing at the European Court of Human Rights. However, the Court refused to consider their application.



Dr Mike Davidson

October 2013

Dr Mike Davidson was removed by the British Psychodrama Association (BPA) from the psychotherapists' register of trainee professional membership for supporting therapy for those dealing with unwanted same-sex attraction.

Dr Davidson heads Core Issues Trust, a non-profit Christian ministry which provides therapeutic support for individuals who do not wish to embrace a homosexual identity. The group defends the freedom of such individuals to access professional support and voluntarily seek change in sexual preference and expression.

In 2012, Dr Davidson participated in several BBC radio interviews alongside the then chairman of the UK's largest psychotherapeutic professional body, the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP). He spoke in favour of providing professional support to clients who, for whatever reason, are troubled by their same-sex attraction and wish to move away from a homosexual lifestyle. Following the comments, Dr Davidson was informed, without any hearing, that his membership and trainee status within the BPA, affiliated to the UKCP, had been revoked with immediate effect pending investigation.

The Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) of the BPA later wrote to Dr Davidson stating that his comments breached the UKCP's Ethical Principles and Codes of Professional Conduct. The chair of the BPA then informed Dr Davidson that he had been suspended because of the views he had expressed on air.

Dr Davidson, who has testified of his own personal experience of moving away from unwanted same-sex attraction and is recognised as an intelligent, empathetic and caring therapist, said:

"The UKCP's documentation, widely available on the world-wide web, provides no credible scientific evidence to support their ideological assertion that 'there is overwhelming evidence that undergoing such therapy is at considerable emotional and psychological cost.' Repeated attempts, by persons other than myself, requesting scientific justification for such statements, have been ignored and have failed. British psychotherapeutic professional bodies appear to be out of step with the World Health Organisation which affirms the client's right of therapeutic support for sexual identity conflict.

"Opponents of the freedom to change misrepresent our talking therapies as 'gay conversion' which is a complete distortion. Our counselling works for those who genuinely want to change and no coercion, aversion therapy or judgemental approach is involved."

Outcome

An appeal panel upheld the PCC's decision to suspend Dr Davidson, meaning that he can no longer practice as a UKCP-approved trainee psychotherapist.

In 2014, the Royal College of Psychiatrists issued a position statement outlining its view that sexual orientation could change during a person's life and was "determined by a combination of biological and postnatal environmental factors". It rejected the idea that sexual orientation was fixed at birth, stating that "it is not the case sexual orientation is immutable" The RCOP's full statement is available at: http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS02_2014.pdf.



Lesley Pilkington

May 2012

Lesley Pilkington was summoned before a Professional Conduct Panel for providing therapeutic support to an undercover homosexual journalist who pretended to be a Christian wishing to move away from unwanted same-sex attraction.

Lesley, a counsellor with over 20 years of experience, was approached by journalist Patrick Strudwick whilst attending a Christian conference about sexuality. Lesley accepted his request for help and they mutually agreed that the counselling would be based on Christian principles.

Throughout the two counselling sessions, Patrick repeatedly told Lesley that he wanted to leave his homosexual lifestyle, that it had become meaningless to him and that he wanted to change.

Following the sessions, he lodged a complaint with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy with the intention of getting Lesley struck off. He also secretly recorded his two sessions with Lesley, and then sold his story to a national newspaper, maligning her in the press.

Outcome

Following the complaint, Lesley lost her senior accredited status with the BACP. An appeal panel upheld the decision on the basis that she should not have assumed that Patrick wanted to proceed under the same therapeutic approach that she offered - **despite the fact they had both agreed to do so.**

Fostering & Adoption

Christian adoptive parents

ongoing case

A Christian couple, who cannot be named for legal reasons, were separated from their adopted children after being treated with suspicion over their faith.

The couple had cared for the two young brothers for over three years before they were taken into care in summer 2014. They had raised their own family and sought to provide a loving home for the two boys who had come from troubled backgrounds.

The couple felt that social workers were hostile to their Christian faith and very negative about reports that they had prayed for their boys. They were not kept properly informed about the investigation conducted by social services, or given a proper opportunity to explain their parenting methods.

A judge sitting in a Family Court refused to return the children to the couple, primarily on the basis of a psychologist's report which didn't recommend the children's return. However, the report contained fundamental errors.

Describing their experience, the couple said:

"Many of the accusations levelled against us by social services during the investigation have been simply not true or have been blown out of all proportion.

"To make it worse, on the basis of one psychologist's report, the judge has ruled that our parenting isn't appropriate."

The couple appeared before the Court of Appeal in May 2014, requesting permission for appeal and a second psychologist's report.

Outcome

In an encouraging development, the Court of Appeal ordered the case to proceed to a full hearing. Lady Justice Black said there should be a full review as to whether the Family Court Judge had taken the right factors into account when deciding the boys' future, and whether proper weight had been given to the good parenting that had been given to the children prior to their forced removal.

The Christian Legal Centre is committed to providing the couple with comprehensive legal support.



Owen and Eunice Johns

February 2011

Owen and Eunice Johns were rejected as potential foster parents by Derby Council after the couple indicated that they would be unwilling to promote the practice of homosexuality to a young child in their care.

The Johns have successfully cared for fifteen vulnerable children with an unblemished record. In January 2007, the couple decided to return to offering respite care for five- to eight-year-olds and applied to Derby City Council for approval.

During their assessment, a social worker asked the couple whether they would support a young person who was confused by his or her sexuality. The Johns responded that they would love any child in their care – regardless of his or her sexual orientation – but would not be willing to promote a homosexual lifestyle.

The couple had their fostering application withdrawn based on the claim that their views contravened the National Minimum Standards for Fostering, namely the ‘need to value people regardless of their sexual orientation, and the need to value/promote diversity.’

Their application was later reinstated following intervention by the Christian Legal Centre and extensive media coverage. However, it was never finally approved and continued to stall over the question of whether the council’s policy allowed for foster carers with Biblical views on sexual ethics. Since the process had stalled, the Johns decided to seek permission from the High Court for a judicial review of the council’s approach.

Outcome

The High Court rejected the Johns’ request for a judicial review. The tax-payer funded Equality and Human Rights Commission made submissions to the High Court against the Johns (emphasis added), arguing that adopted children were at risk of being ‘infected’ by the couple’s Christian beliefs.

The Johns, who remain unable to foster, said:

“We wanted to offer a loving home to a child in need. But because of this ruling we are unsure how we can continue the application process. We have been excluded because we have moral opinions based on our faith, and a vulnerable child has now probably missed the chance of finding a safe and caring home. We do not believe that our ordinary Christian moral views are infectious, contrary to what the Equality and Human Rights Commission believes. Being a Christian is not a crime and should not stop us from raising children. Today, it looks as though a child has missed out on a home.”

Please note that the High Court’s ruling does not impose a blanket ban on those with Christian moral beliefs on sexual ethics from fostering children, nor does it require local authorities to reject fostering applications from those who hold such views. Its analysis, however, has made it increasingly difficult for Christians to enter, or remain, in the fostering process.



John & Colette Yallop

August 2010

John Yallop and his wife Colette had their fostering application terminated on the basis of their belief that children were best raised by a married mother and father.

When the Yallops informed Lancashire County Council of their Christian faith, they were assured that they would still be welcome to submit an application for fostering.

Following an initial assessment, the Yallops were asked whether homosexual adoptive couples could visit their home for the ‘handover process’, which would usually involve a number of visits. The Yallops said they would prefer any such meetings to take place at a children’s centre, rather than in their home, because they had two young children, aged 5 and 7.

Subsequently, the couple’s application was terminated by the council, which cited concerns over their ‘ability to work with particular groups of people (in particular gay and lesbian people)’. Responding to the decision, the Yallops said:

“We are not homophobic and have worked alongside gay people, but we believe inviting gay couples into our home for the handover process might be detrimental to our family life and our young children.

“We don’t want to have to explain to our five-year-old daughter or seven-year-old son why a youngster we’ve been caring for has two mummies or daddies.

“We accept council policies on equality and diversity. Even if we disagree with the rights of gay couples to adopt because it goes against our Christian beliefs, it doesn’t make us bad foster parents.

“I suspect we’re not alone in believing children thrive where there is a mummy and a daddy, rather than two parents of the same sex. Nevertheless, this is a personal belief that doesn’t affect our ability to care for and love a foster child.

“We started the process of applying to foster newborn-to-four-year-old children in March. We had interviews and completed a three-week course. It means a lot to us to give a child a start in life and seems unfair we are now being discriminated against because of our honesty.’



Vincent and Pauline Matherick were almost stopped from continuing as foster parents after they refused to teach children in their care about same-sex relationships.

The Matherick's became foster parents in 2001 and have an unblemished record in caring for 28 vulnerable children.

In 2007, they were asked by Somerset County Council to sign an 'equality and diversity' policy following the introduction of Labour's Equality Act (Sexual Orientation Regulations). The Matherick's were informed that, under the new law, they would be required to discuss same-sex relationships with children as young as 11, and promote such relationships as an equally valid alternative to opposite-sex marriages.

When the couple objected, they had the two children in their care removed. Responding to the decision, Mr Matherick said:

Vincent & Pauline Matherick

March 2008

"I simply could not agree to do it because it is against my central beliefs. We have never discriminated against anybody but I cannot preach the benefits of homosexuality when I believe it is against the word of God."

"It's terrible that we've been forced into this corner. It just should not happen.

"There are not enough foster carers around anyway without these rules. They were saying that we had to be prepared to talk about sexuality with 11-year-olds, which I don't think is appropriate anyway, but not only that, to be prepared to explain how gay people date.

"They said we would even have to take a teenager to gay association meetings.

"How can I do that when it's totally against what I believe?"

Outcome

Represented by the Christian Legal Centre, the couple fought to have their personal convictions recognised. After negotiations with the Council, an agreement was reached and the children were returned after nine months.

Christianity in Academic Institutions

Exeter Christian Union

December 2007



Exeter University Christian Union was suspended from the Student Guild over its practice to require committee members to sign a statement of faith.

Following a university referendum, the 50-year-old Christian Union (CU) was suspended from the official list of student societies. It also had its assets frozen and lost all the privileges associated with its membership of the Guild of Students.

The president of the Guild, Jemma Percy, claimed that the CU's constitution did not conform to its 'equal opportunities policy' since "participation in the society was not open to every student." The CU's constitution permits all students to partake in its activities, but requires those leading the society to sign a declaration of faith.

The CU threatened to take legal action unless it was put back on the official list of student societies. Ben Martin, a former member of the CU Committee, said:

"Anyone is free to come to any meeting.

"This continues to be a long and hard fight for the rights of Christian students to assemble and form as a group of fellow believers under a lawful constitution.

"We support the rights of any student on campus to assemble and discuss/debate any topic with fellow students in what is a free society."

Outcome

The CU decided not to pursue legal after being re-instated with the support of the Christian Legal Centre.

Lydia Playfoot

July 2007



Lydia Playfoot was disciplined by her school for refusing to remove a purity ring, a sign of her commitment to sexual abstinence before marriage.

Millais School in Horsham, West Sussex banned Lydia and others from wearing the small silver ring on the basis that it broke the school's uniform policy. The policy prohibited all jewellery except ear studs, but permitted Muslim and Sikh students to wear hijabs and kara bracelets.

When Lydia refused to remove the band, engraved with the Bible verse 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, she was disciplined and forced to study on her own.

Outcome

Lydia's claim for religious discrimination was rejected by the High Court. Deputy Judge Michael Supperstone ruled that, since wearing the ring was not an essential part of the Christian faith, it was not a freedom protected by the law. Commenting on the ruling, Lydia said:

"I am very disappointed by the decision this morning by the High Court not to allow me to wear my purity ring to school as an expression of my Christian faith not to have sex outside of marriage. This ruling will mean that slowly, over time, people such as school governors, employers, political organisations and others will be allowed to stop Christians from publicly expressing and practising their faith.

"Over two years ago, I was concerned at the number of teenagers who were catching sexually transmitted diseases, getting pregnant and/or having abortions. The Government's sex education programme is not working, and the pressure on young people to 'give in' to sex continues to increase. This is often because of the media's focus on sex and the expectations of others."

Edinburgh University Christian Union

November 2006



Edinburgh University's Christian Union was banned from running the 'PURE' course on campus following pressure from a group of students.

The 'PURE' course affirmed the Bible's teaching that sex should be kept within a life-long, monogamous marriage between one man and one woman.

It was branded "homophobic" by the Student Representative Council which pushed for a campus-wide ban. Activists, including members of the Gay & Lesbian Society, threatened to do all they could to disrupt the course, including picketing, unless it was scrapped.

Matthew Tindale, who worked for the CU at the time, said.

"This is looking at the orthodox view on marriage, which says there should be no sex before marriage.

"If a heterosexual man came along who sleeps around, I am sure he would find it uncomfortable too.

"This is not about discriminating against homosexuals. Christian teaching shows that all sin is treated the same way, whether you are homosexual or heterosexual."

Outcome

Supported by the Christian Legal Centre, the Christian Union managed to hold negotiations with the university, but was forced to run the course off-campus.

Freedom of Expression

Mike Overd

ongoing case



Mike Overd was convicted of a public order offence for using Leviticus chapter 20 in a conversation with a man who identified as homosexual.

Mike regularly preaches the Gospel on the streets of Taunton. When a homosexual man approached him and demanded to debate the issue, Mike explained from Leviticus 20 that God does not condone homosexual practice. He was careful not to mention the death penalty and always preaches the Gospel in a loving way.

Outcome

District Judge Shamim Ahmed Qureshi told Mike that he could have used Leviticus 18 instead because Leviticus 20 mentions the death penalty elsewhere in the chapter. He ordered Mike to pay a total of £1,200 in costs and £250 compensation to the homosexual man for causing him “emotional pain.”

Responding to the judgment, Mike said:

“I am amazed that the Judge sees it as his role to dictate which parts of the Bible can and can’t be preached. I did not quote the full text of Leviticus 20 or make reference to the death penalty but the Judge is telling me that I should use other parts of the Bible. This is not free speech but censorship. The Judge is redacting the Bible.

“I have been ordered to pay compensation for causing ‘emotional pain’ to someone who approached me aggressively demanding to debate the issue. There was no harm, injury or theft, just a simple disagreement over theology which I have now been fined for.

“My motivation for preaching the gospel is my love for Jesus Christ and my deep concern for people who do not know His great love and are heading towards an eternity separated from God.”

Mike’s legal team have advised him to appeal the decision made by Judge Qureshi and is committed to providing him with comprehensive legal support

Mike was previously arrested and charged with a ‘hate crime’ but was later found ‘not guilty’ by a magistrates’ court (see page 54).

Rob Hughes

May 2015



Rob Hughes was arrested in Basildon after a confrontation with a member of the public who wrongly accused him of using “homophobic” language.

Rob Hughes was arrested whilst preaching on a high street in Basildon after false accusations were made against him by a passer-by.

Despite clear evidence to the contrary, Rob was arrested for allegedly breaching public order law and held in custody for 11 hours. During this time he was interviewed, a DNA sample was taken as well as his finger prints and a mug shot.

Rob was finally released just before midnight after police said they wouldn't press charges due to insufficient evidence.

Outcome

The Christian Legal Centre gave Rob legal support and he has now received £2,500 and a contribution towards his legal fees for wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and breach of his human rights as part of an out-of-court settlement.

Christian Concern

January 2015



Christian Concern took legal action against the Law Society and the Government-run Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre after both venues cancelled its conference discussing the proposed redefinition of marriage.

Christian Concern's event entitled 'One Man, One Woman - Making the case for marriage for the good of society' had been booked for 23 May 2012, but was cancelled by the Law Society on the basis that its content allegedly contravened its 'diversity' policy. Christian Concern subsequently booked an alternative venue – the Government-run Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. But the Centre cancelled the booking one night before the event was due to take place, also citing concerns over compatibility with its 'diversity' policy.

Outcome

Christian Concern reached an agreement with the Law Society in June 2013. The Law Society, without endorsing the views of Christian Concern, acknowledged that Christian Concern's views, based on Biblical principles, were sincerely held and that Christian Concern was entitled to hold and express those views. The Law Society said that it would welcome bookings from Christian Concern in the future.

In January 2015, an agreement was reached between Christian Concern, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. A joint public statement was released stating that the centre had no intention to discriminate against Christian Concern and that, going forward, it was happy to work closely with Christian Concern to stage a future event about marriage or other issue of interest.

Tony Miano

January 2014



Tony Miano, a former Los Angeles Deputy Sheriff, was arrested on a charge of alleged breach of peace with “homophobic” aggravation whilst preaching on Dundee High Street.

Tony was part of a street preaching team holding a week-long mission in Scotland. When he mentioned sexual sin - including adultery, promiscuity and homosexual practice - a member of the public made an official complaint.

Tony pointed to video footage proving that he had done nothing wrong and that his message was one of hope to be found in Jesus Christ. Officers refused to look at the evidence and took him to a local police station. He was detained for 24 hours and released on bail to appear before Dundee Sheriff’s Court.

Outcome

Following months of representation by the Christian Legal Centre, all charges against Tony were dropped. Responding to the ruling, Tony said:

“It took months for the prosecutors to view the footage despite our best endeavours from the very beginning to get them to do so. When the Prosecutors finally managed to get the video footage off my camera they could plainly see that the accuser had made allegations about my speech that were simply untrue.

“The Prosecutors found nothing in my preaching that constituted ‘hate speech’ and came to the conclusion that they had no case against me. Had the officers who arrested me taken a few minutes to review the video footage, they would have seen what I have maintained all along. This has been a stressful time for my family.”

Tony was previously arrested for using “homophobic” speech whilst street preaching in south west London. He had been speaking on the subject of sexual immorality and the need to abstain from it based on a passage from the Bible (1 Thessalonians 4:1-12) when a passer-by called officers to the scene. He was arrested and taken to the local police station where he was photographed, fingerprinted and had a DNA sample taken. Following intervention by the Christian Legal Centre, he was released with no further action after spending almost seven hours in custody.

Dominic Muir

November 2013



Dominic Muir had charges brought against him for preaching in an area in Battersea Park where such activities were allegedly banned under byelaws.

In August 2013, Dominic Muir was talking to passers-by and handing out gospel leaflets in Battersea Park, London. Even though people gathered to listen, and some even joined in singing Amazing Grace, police told Dominic to move on.

He was later informed by Wandsworth Council that byelaws would be used to prosecute him for preaching in the location.

Outcome

The Christian Legal Centre was able to assist Dominic and attend his first hearing at the Magistrates' Court, where he entered a not guilty plea. The council later informed Dominic that it would not be pursuing prosecution.

Josh Williamson

September 2013



Josh Williamson, pastor of Craigie Reformed Baptist Church in Perth, was arrested for alleged "breach of the peace" whilst addressing a crowd in the town's high street.

Josh regularly took to the streets in Perth to hand out Christian tracts and talk to passers-by. On one occasion, he was approached by a police officer and told that, unless he stopped preaching, he would be arrested for breaking the law. The officer pointed to Josh's MP3 recorder, even though he was not using any amplification at the time. When Josh said he would not comply because he had done nothing wrong, he was placed under arrest for "breach of the peace."

Outcome

Josh was taken to Perth Police Station, interviewed and released with a caution following intervention by the Christian Legal Centre.

Josh Williamson was arrested in Perth a few days later, again for alleged "breach of the peace." He was held in custody but later released after spending over five hours in the cells. Christian Legal Centre was able to respond quickly and give Josh legal support throughout the process.

Mike Overd

February 2012



Mike Overd was arrested for a public order offence after a same-sex couple complained about his preaching on homosexual practice.

Mike was addressing passer-by's in Taunton when he stated: "Even these dear men caught in homosexuality, if they ask for forgiveness of sin can be forgiven their sin; God loves them that much."

Civil partners, Craig Nichol and Craig Manning, claimed that Mike had singled them out as 'sinners' as they walked down Taunton High Street arm in arm. Mike denied insulting the pair, saying he had simply acknowledged them and spoken about the hope, restoration and forgiveness that can be found in Jesus Christ.

The couple complained to police who arrested and charged Mike with a 'hate crime'.

Outcome

A Magistrates' Court found in favour of Mike and passed a 'Not Guilty' verdict. Responding to the ruling, Mike said:

"This is a case that should never have been brought. Christians like me are being harassed. Thankfully the Magistrates saw the truth of what happened and is happening on a wider scale in our country.

"Something is wrong when Nick Lansley of Tesco can insult Christians by reading out an abusive poem on You Tube about homosexual acts on Christ; Abu Qatada can preach about Jihad and death to the Jews; but the police arrest me, a Christian preacher who cares deeply for Jesus Christ and the people of Taunton.

"Something has to change and I hope my case will encourage others not to be scared to speak up for Christ."

All Nations Centre in Kennington

January 2008

The All Nations Centre in Kennington was served with a noise abatement notice, preventing the church from amplifying their music or sermons on threat of prosecution.

The church had been meeting in Kennington for over 45 years without complaint. Shortly after the church began a leaflet drop in the local community, a small number of residents complained to Lambeth Council about noise levels.

A noise abatement notice was subsequently served against the church without any prior warning or discussion.

Outcome

The Christian Legal Centre supported the church, which eventually won its legal battle against Lambeth Council in a last minute out of court settlement.

Sex Trade

The bottom right corner of the page features a decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping triangular shapes. The larger triangle is a solid medium blue, and the smaller one is a lighter, semi-transparent blue, creating a layered effect.

Lowestoft

February 2015

In February 2015, Lowestoft councillors refused to grant a licence for a sex shop in the area, following intervention by the Christian Legal Centre. Many letters of objection expressed concern to the council which were taken on board, and the application was rejected.

Lowestoft

November 2014

In November 2014, Lowestoft councillors refused to grant a licence for a lap dancing club in the area, following intervention by the Christian Legal Centre. 26 letters of objection and three petitions containing nearly 200 signatures had been lodged.

Lowestoft

February 2014

In February 2014, Lowestoft councillors granted a licence for a Sexual Entertainment Venue in the town centre, despite strong opposition from members of the community. At a hearing on the issue, Jon Payne, allied lawyer to the Christian Legal Centre, represented a group of objectors who shared the concerns of many that a sex club would be a blight on the area, and would create a very uncomfortable environment for families, vulnerable young people and holiday-makers. Despite this, councillors granted a licence for 'The Candy Lounge' in the town centre.

Chairman of Lowestoft Town Pastors, Rev'd Matthew Payne, said he was unhappy that the hearing did not mention the council's 'nil policy' for sex establishments, or outline any exceptional circumstances for approving the lap dance venue. He added: "I am unhappy with other procedural aspects of the hearing as well, and I am grateful for the work that the Christian Legal Centre is doing in supporting us."

Maidstone

October 2012

In October 2012, Maidstone Borough Council threw out an application for lap dancing at a venue located seconds away from Maidstone town centre in Kent.

The Christian Legal Centre supported local residents who argued that such a venue was not suitable in an area being regenerated by the council where there are already schools, churches and shops nearby. Maidstone Borough Council received more than 100 letters of objection in advance of a hearing on the issue, and the council also heard from a member of the town's street pastor scheme.

Michael Phillips, the solicitor representing many of the objectors, argued that granting the application would be wholly inappropriate and would effectively be turning Bank Street, where the premises were located, into a sex street. His arguments persuaded the council, which rejected the application.

Not long after, Maidstone Borough Council rejected another application for a lap dancing venue near a large shopping mall in the Gabriels Hill area in Maidstone with the support of the Christian Legal Centre.

Bedford

September 2011

In September 2011, Bedford Borough Council threw out an application made on behalf of the 'Saints and Sinners' nightclub to allow lap dancing/sexual entertainment to take place on the second floor of its venue.

Local business owners and residents, supported by the Christian Legal Centre, argued that such a venue was not suitable in an area where there were schools, churches, shops and homes. More than 1000 letters of objection were received by the council in advance of a hearing on the issue.

Former Councillor, Peter Chiswell, produced plans which showed the proximity of schools and homes to the area, pointing out that many people were concerned about the location of the club given the activities that may take place inside.

Jon Payne, the solicitor representing Mr Chiswell, argued that the character of the relevant locality meant that it would be inappropriate for the council to grant the application. His arguments persuaded the council which held that the licence application would be refused.

Oxford

March 2011

In March 2011, Oxford City Council rejected a licence application for a Sexual Entertainment Venue to open just yards from St Ebbe's Church following intervention by the Christian Legal Centre.

Although a licence allowing sexual entertainment had been granted for the same venue in 2010, the licensing laws then changed meaning that a new application had to be made for the venue to continue to operate. St Ebbe's Church campaigned against the licence application on the basis that many children and young people use their church building each week, and that having such a club in close proximity would not be appropriate. The Christian Legal Centre supported the Church's challenge by providing legal assistance and advice.

Outcome

The Council decided that it would be inappropriate for a licence to be granted because of the proximity of the premises to St Ebbe's Church, the Westgate shopping complex, a school and residential areas.

Macclesfield

January 2010

Following a successful campaign by the Christian Legal Centre, and others, Cheshire East Council, covering Macclesfield, rejected an application for a lap dancing club in its town.

The application was rejected on the grounds that the club would promote public nuisance, promote crime and disorder, fail to promote public safety and fail to protect children from harm.

Durham

December 2007

Local residents in Durham, supported by the Christian Legal Centre, successfully challenged a decision to grant a licence for a lap dancing club in the city.

Residents were appealing a decision made by Durham City Council in August 2007 to grant the license on the basis that the proposed venue would fail to promote public safety, add to the already high levels of nuisance and disorder in the North Road area and harm children - both morally and psychologically.

It was argued that the licensing authority had breached its duty under the Licensing Act 2003 to promote the four licensing objectives (prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, promoting public safety and protection of children from harm).

The council's decision was overturned by the Magistrates' Court in December 2007. The club applied for permission to have the Court's decision judicially reviewed, but this was refused.

Advocating for Life

The background of the page is split diagonally from the bottom-left corner to the top-right corner. The upper-left portion is white, and the lower-right portion is a solid, bright yellow. The title text is positioned in the white area.

Nikki and Merv Kenward

ongoing case



Nikki and Merv Kenward are challenging the recent decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions to change the policy on the prosecution of medical staff who assist others in committing suicide.

The Suicide Act 1961 makes it a criminal offence to assist or encourage the suicide, or attempted suicide, of another person. The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has discretion on whether to prosecute according to the published policy.

In October 2014, the DPP amended the policy, making the prosecution of healthcare professionals in assisted suicide cases less likely.

In response, the Kenwards made an application for a Judicial Review of the DPP's changes. Nikki, who was once so paralysed she could only wink her right eye, argued against the "liberalised" guidelines.

She and her husband campaign against euthanasia and assisted suicide through the Distant Voices campaign group.

Outcome

High Court Judge, Lord Justice Bean, granted permission for a Judicial Review of the DPP's decision, saying: "We propose to grant permission to proceed with the substantive claim. We are saying nothing about the strength of the claimant's claim beyond saying it is not frivolous or vexatious."

Responding to the decision, Nikki said:

"The judge's decision today is a great relief to me and people like me. We are the ones who will suffer as a result of the change in guidance. The message from these new guidelines is that society thinks you are in the way. The best thing you can do is to agree to die.

"With the judge granting a Judicial Review we now have hope that the decision will be reversed and vulnerable people will be protected."

Aisling Hubert

ongoing case



Aisling Hubert began criminal proceedings against two doctors who offered sex-selective abortions.

In 2012, undercover reporters from the Daily Telegraph filmed two doctors agreeing to abortions simply because the babies were girls. One doctor was filmed saying "I don't ask questions, you want a termination, you want a termination," and the other said "it's like female infanticide isn't it?"

A police investigation followed and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) considered prosecution. However, the CPS concluded that, whilst there was sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of prosecution, it would 'not be in the public interest' to bring such a prosecution.

Following the CPS's decision, Aisling Hubert (21), from Brighton, instructed solicitors to launch a private prosecution.

Outcome

The CPS intervened again and informed lawyers representing Aisling that it will take over and drop the case. A letter sent by the CPS said "on the current evidence before the court, there is insufficient evidence to form a realistic prospect of conviction" and "the public interest considerations in not pursuing a prosecution outweigh those in favour".

Judge Martin QC told Aisling that she now has to pay the legal costs of one of the two doctors filmed offering sex-selection abortions.

The Christian Legal Centre is committed to providing Aisling with comprehensive legal and is considering next steps.

Andy Stephenson & Kathryn Sloane

September 2012



Andy Stephenson and Kathryn Sloane, members of pro-life group Abort67, were arrested twice whilst demonstrating silently near BPAS abortion clinic in BPAS.

As part of its public education project, Abort 67 held peaceful demonstrations outside the Brighton clinic for 5 years, displaying images showing the reality of abortion. They remained silent unless approached and invited to engage in conversation by others.

During one such demonstration in 2011, the pair were arrested and charged under section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 for allegedly causing 'harassment, alarm or distress' to the public.

Outcome

A district judge sitting at Brighton Magistrates' Court dismissed all charges against both campaigners.

Pro-Life Alliance

April 2011

The Department of Health (DoH) was challenged after it refused to release important statistics on late term abortions in 2003, stating that doing so could be a breach of the Data Protection Act 1998.

The refusal to release the statistics followed the instigation of a legal challenge by Joanna Jepson in 2001, after it was revealed that a child was aborted in the third trimester for having a cleft palate.

In 2005, the ProLife Alliance, of which the Christian Legal Centre is a member, used the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the release of full statistics on abortions for 2003. However, the DoH refused the request and sought to keep the statistics suppressed.

Outcome

After several appeals, the High Court found for the ProLife Alliance, holding that the statistics must be released.

Comment on Reproductive Ethics & Christian Legal Centre

December 2008

Comment on Reproductive Ethics (CORE) and the Christian Legal Centre (CLC) sought a Judicial Review the decision of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) in January 2008 to grant licences to permit the creation of animal-human hybrids.

CORE and the CLC argued that the Human Fertilisation and Embryology (HFE) Act 1990 does not permit the licensing of animal-human hybrid embryos, and in fact contains a prohibition on the creation of such embryos. Therefore, the HFEA could not have lawfully granted such a licence, and had acted beyond its powers.

Secondly, it was argued that even if the HFEA did have the power to grant such licences, the HFE Act 1990 provides that no licence can be granted unless (1) it appears to the HFEA that the licence for research is **necessary or desirable** for one of a number of specified purposes and (2) that the HFEA is **satisfied that any proposed use of embryos is necessary for the purposes of the research**. Core and CLC argued the licences were neither necessary nor desirable in light of recent developments involving adult stem cell research, where real progress in finding cures to serious illnesses had been made.

Outcome

Unfortunately, the High Court refused CORE and the CLC permission to judicially review the HFEA's decision.

Jacqueline McGinn

March 2008

Supported by the Christian Legal Centre, Jacqueline McGinn launched a court action to save her frozen embryos from being destroyed after they reached the five-year storage limit under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology (HFE) Act 1990.

Jacqueline and her husband, Declan Bonner, had placed four embryos in frozen storage after conceiving their first daughter through IVF. Following the breakdown of their marriage, Jacqueline wanted to prevent the NHS from destroying the embryos by donating them to an infertile couple.

When the embryos reached their five-year storage limit in 2006, the couple agreed to donate the embryos, but after some time, Declan changed his mind. Under the HFE Act 1990, both parents must consent to frozen embryos being used.

Outcome

The High Court in Belfast ruled that under the HFE Act 1990, the embryos could not be put up for adoption since Declan had refused to consent to their donation. The Court ruled that it was unlawful to keep the embryos beyond the five year legal limit. They were subsequently destroyed.

Christianity ridiculed & mocked

Christian Legal Centre 2011

Nick Lansley, Head of Research and Development at Tesco, posted a blasphemous poem about Jesus Christ called “The Love That Dares to Speak its Name” on YouTube. He had previously described Christian opponents to same-sex ‘marriage’ as “evil.”

The Christian Legal Centre reported the incident to the police as a hate crime, whilst citing how Christian street preachers had been arrested and questioned under the Public Order Act of 1986 (see ‘Freedom of Expression’ above).

Outcome

Police rejected the complaint, claiming that Mr Lansley’s activities were below the criminal threshold since the incident involved a recital of the poem on YouTube; he had not personally emailed it to anyone or recite it over the phone.

Emily Mapfuwa 2008

Emily Mapfuwa, supported by the Christian Legal Centre, commenced a case against the Baltic Flour Mills Visual Arts Trust following the exhibition of an obscene statue. The statue, which was displayed between September 2007 and January 2008, depicted Jesus with an erection.

At the time of the exhibition, several people who had viewed the statue complained to the Baltic Centre, but its response was that warning about the potential offence the display might cause.

In January 2008, lawyers working for the Christian Legal Centre reported the statue to Northumbria Police, asking for an investigation.

Outcome

Despite the complaints, Northumbria Police concluded that there was no case to answer.

The Christian Legal Centre and its sister organisation Christian Concern are based at:

**70 Wimpole Street
London, United Kingdom
W1G 8AX**

Tel: 020 3327 1120

Email: info@christianconcern.com

www.christianconcern.com

www.christianlegalcentre.com

If you would like to join our mailing list and receive up to date information about our cases and campaigns please visit: **www.christianconcern.com**