

Legal Defence Fund

What we've done, and how we can help

“Blessed are they who maintain justice”

Psalm 106:3





Legal
Defence
Fund

Foreword



Religious liberty is of vital importance. We have a rich heritage of freedom in our nation, hard won down the ages. We enjoy freedom to worship, freedom to share the gospel and freedom to live out a faithful Christian life in public. Many Christians elsewhere in the world do not share those blessings, so we owe it to them to guard our freedoms well.

Over the years I have seen those freedoms challenged in our increasingly secular society. I believe Christian individuals, organisations and churches will increasingly need sound legal advice and representation. We must not compromise on professionalism or excellence, for there is too much at stake. A lot of wisdom is also required to back the right cases – the cases of national significance to religious liberty.

A passion for liberty, a commitment to professionalism and excellence, and a desire for wisdom lie at the heart of The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund – a financial resource to support the right cases in the right way.

Having previously worked as a litigation lawyer at a leading international law firm, it has been my privilege since joining The Christian Institute in 2008 to manage the Legal Defence Fund's crucial role in defending religious liberty.



Sam Webster

Solicitor Advocate, The Christian Institute



Legal
Defence
Fund

Defending religious freedom in the 21st century



In centuries past, Christians in our nation have enjoyed remarkable freedoms, but that is no guarantee that we will continue to enjoy them into the future. History shows us that freedoms can be swept away very quickly. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

At The Christian Institute we detect increasing threats to the religious liberty of Christians and churches. What kind of liberty will our children and grandchildren enjoy? Will they have the same freedom to share the gospel; to live out their faith publicly; to gather together with like-minded believers?

We believe it is incumbent upon us to do what we can in our day to make sure those same freedoms we have enjoyed are passed on to the next generation. The Legal Defence Fund isn't just there to protect our own freedoms, it exists to protect the freedoms of future believers.

Think of all those brave men and women in centuries past who gave up so much – even their own lives – to secure religious liberty in Britain. Now, in our own generation, let us do what we can to pass on the torch of gospel freedom to future generations.



Legal
Defence
Fund

The best legal expertise



Our Legal Defence Fund supports cases of national significance for the religious liberty of Christians in the UK. To that end, we make best use of the financial resources that God has given us through generous donations from Christians and churches.

We are not irresponsible or reckless with our financial support. We are selective in the cases we back, and we are discerning in the lawyers that are employed. But we will use the best legal minds that our resources can afford. This type of work can be expensive, but you cannot put a price on freedom.

We use the country's leading lawyers on charity law, human rights law, employment law, and discrimination law. We use top lawyers because the cases we run could set important precedents for generations to come.

We ourselves have developed considerable knowledge of the law on religious liberty. Because of this, we are able to give informal help and advice to the many Christians and churches that contact us about questions they may have. This grassroots work is very much part of the Legal Defence Fund, and resolves many problems before they develop.



Legal
Defence
Fund

Sensible media management



In many cases, our Legal Defence Fund can help people resolve difficulties without the need to go to court. But in some circumstances, issuing legal proceedings is the best way forward. Court cases are public events and the media inevitably takes an interest.

At The Christian Institute, we recognise that legal cases take place not only in a court of law but also in the court of public opinion. Our Legal Defence Fund includes professional media support, to help people deal with any media attention that arises and to seek to ensure there is balanced and accurate reporting of the issues.

There are strict rules on what can and cannot be reported in the media about ongoing legal proceedings. We operate within those rules, and help the media to understand what issues are at stake. We also act to protect clients from unwanted media attention.

Sometimes a religious liberty case may not succeed in court, but may succeed in the hearts and minds of the public at large. In the long term this can be as effective as a positive court ruling. Our Legal Defence Fund makes sure every base is covered, offering mature and experienced media management.



Legal
Defence
Fund

Pastoral support in tough times



Our Legal Defence Fund doesn't just provide the finance and the associated legal and media support. We also get alongside the Christian individuals who are at the heart of the case, offering friendship, prayer and pastoral support.

Some of the people we have helped have spent a night in police cells, or lost their jobs, or had their business damaged. These are deeply upsetting experiences, and we do not take these matters lightly.

Churches, family and friends are often a good source of comfort – but sometimes we can offer special understanding because we have helped others who have gone through similar hardship. We can also put people in touch with others who have been in their shoes.

Because of our wider contacts, we can encourage Christians throughout the country to pray for individuals who are going through a difficult legal situation. That has been very reassuring to many of the people helped by our Legal Defence Fund.

**Religious liberty
in the workplace**

A guide for Christian employees

Mark Jones



**Marginalising
Christians**

Instances of Christian
sidelined in modern
workplaces

Legal
Defence
Fund

Religious liberty
in the workplace

Producing helpful publications



Marginalising Christians

This book catalogued cases of discrimination against Christians in the UK, and it identified the areas where religious liberty was under most pressure.



Religious liberty in the workplace

This booklet was first published in 2008. It will soon be updated to reflect the latest legal developments. It was written by employment law specialist and solicitor, Mark Jones.



Giving out free Christian literature in public places

Many local councils are unaware of the religious liberty laws which protect the distribution of free Christian literature in public places. This leaflet sets the record straight.



The law relating to street evangelism

This document sets out the law on public preaching and other forms of street evangelism. It also gives advice on how to minimise difficulties with the authorities, and what to do if your liberty is unjustly challenged.



Legal
Defence
Fund

Taking on the big cases

Lillian Ladele

Lillian Ladele was a marriage registrar at Islington Borough Council. She was forced out of her job because of her Christian beliefs about marriage and her conscientious objection to same-sex civil partnerships. The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund supported her legal claim of discrimination in the workplace. She won her original employment tribunal case, making national headlines. Her victory was overturned by higher courts in Britain. The case ended up at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Although she didn't win her appeal, her case – together with others – did secure important changes which improve the way British courts deal with religious liberty issues.

“*The financial support from The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund was vital in ensuring Lillian could be represented through the legal process. Lillian's case divided judges and ultimately was not upheld. However, Lillian's courage and The Christian Institute's financial support has meant that her shameful treatment has publicly informed and positively influenced the debate, and persuaded a number of judges and influential legal commentators of the harm of the blinkered approach to human rights for Christians that the case demonstrates.*”



Mark Jones, Lillian's solicitor



Legal
Defence
Fund

Google

When The Christian Institute tried to place a pro-life advert about abortion with internet giant, Google, it was blocked simply because we are a 'religious' organisation. This is unlawful under UK law. When Google refused to back down, we issued legal proceedings. The case was settled before it reached court, with Google agreeing to change its policy worldwide with immediate effect. It means Christian groups across the globe can place factual and campaigning ads on the issue of abortion with Google.

“Normally we are assisting others, but on this occasion we ourselves were the victims of discrimination. Although Google's initial response was to deny any wrongdoing, they altered their position after we commenced legal action. We are glad that we were able to achieve a positive settlement with Google which had a global impact for good.”



Mike Judge, The Christian Institute, 2013



Legal
Defence
Fund

Pilgrim Homes

A care home for elderly Christians was threatened with having public funding withdrawn because it would not send a sexual orientation questionnaire to its elderly residents every three months. Pilgrim Homes owns a centre in Brighton, which cares for elderly Christians including former church ministers and missionaries. The local council decided to cut public funding from the home because of the refusal to issue the quarterly questionnaire. The Christian Institute helped Pilgrim Homes take legal action, and the local council eventually reversed its decision and restored the funding.

“*The questionnaire was intrusive, ran contrary to our ethos, and would have upset our residents. The Christian Institute’s Legal Defence Fund was instrumental in helping us to achieve a common sense outcome with the local council.*”



Phil Wainwright, Director of Human Resources,
Pilgrim Homes



Legal
Defence
Fund

Adrian Smith

Adrian worked as a housing manager at Trafford Housing Trust (THT) in Manchester. He said gay weddings in churches would be “an equality too far”. He made the remark outside work time using his own computer on his personal Facebook page, which was not accessible to the general public. Yet managers saw fit to demote him and slash his salary by 40 per cent. Even gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell said it was a massive overreaction, but THT refused to back down. Our Legal Defence Fund helped Adrian to take a legal action for breach of contract. The High Court ruled in favour of Adrian Smith, and THT apologised for their actions.

“*It was a victory for freedom of speech, and it shows that an individual can make a difference if he is willing to take a stand. Without The Christian Institute supporting me, this case would not have happened. To have the backing of an organisation like that, together with the prayers of thousands of Christians, was a tremendous encouragement.*”

Adrian Smith



Legal
Defence
Fund

Ben & Sharon Vogelenzang

The Vogelenzangs were put on trial in a criminal court because they criticised Islam during a discussion about religion with a Muslim lady. The five minute conversation, which was calm and polite, took place in a hotel in Liverpool owned by Ben and Sharon. It included discussion over whether Jesus is the Son of God or a prophet of Islam. The Muslim lady later complained to the police and the couple were shocked when they were arrested and charged. They were put on trial at Liverpool Magistrates Court, but after a two-day hearing, the judge dismissed the case and criticised the police for their handling of the incident.

“ Without *The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund* we would have been totally devastated, lost and destroyed. It's vitally important that Christians support them. They carried us right the way through. From the minute *The Christian Institute* came into our lives we felt we were on safe ground. They took a lot of weight off us. If anyone is experiencing difficulties for their faith, we would urge you to get in touch with them sooner rather than later. ”

Ben and Sharon Vogelenzang

IT'S
THEIR
HOME

christian.org.uk

IT'S
THEIR
HOME

christi

Legal
Defence
Fund

Peter & Hazelmary Bull

A same-sex couple sued Mr and Mrs Bull because the Bulls' B&B only allowed married couples to share a double bed. The Bulls based the policy upon their Christian beliefs about marriage and applied it equally to heterosexuals and homosexuals. The County Court ruled against the Bulls and ordered them to pay damages of £3,600. Appeals to the Court of Appeal and the UK Supreme Court were unsuccessful. Peter and Hazelmary have been left with a very uncertain future financially, but they have won support from Christians across the world because of their consistent and principled stand.

“*The Christian Institute have been fantastic, not just with all the financial and legal support, but with their prayers and personal support. They are our friends, not just our funders. There's been a lot of media attention on our case, so their advice with that has been invaluable. We don't know what we'd have done without them.*”

Peter and Hazelmary Bull

Helping away from the limelight



Nick Williamson

“When I refused to print a gay magazine with explicit images, The Christian Institute was more than helpful. They gave me help, support, and legal advice. They were there for me, and that meant absolutely everything. I have been so thankful and blessed by that.”



Dr Brian Abraham

“I had a query about whether I needed a licence from the local council for my street evangelism project. I needed quick, wise and accurate legal advice. That is what The Christian Institute delivered.”



Kilmallie Free Church of Scotland

“When we faced problems over a public funding application, we got in touch with The Christian Institute. After they got involved and provided professional legal advice, the application was successful. We really appreciated the help we received.”



Paul Smith

“My job interview was cut short when I said I would not work on Sundays. The Christian Institute stepped in to offer financial support for my case. That was so helpful in being able to reach a positive settlement, I am so grateful they are there to help people like me.”



Open-Air Mission

“The Christian Institute has helped us numerous times, whether it's giving sound legal advice or assisting a street preacher who has been unfairly challenged by a police officer or local officials. They've never let us down.”



Heddwyn Williams

“They helped me and my wife when social workers thought our lives were ‘too overtly Christian’ to be foster carers. They helped us successfully appeal against the decision, and we can't thank them enough.”



Martin Leech

Director, European Missionary Fellowship

“*The Christian Institute helped us with the legal details for our staff handbook. Christian organisations need to be wise about these things, and The Christian Institute is a trusted resource for which we are very grateful.*”



Brian Dee

“*When a local council banned me from distributing gospel tracts in the market place, The Christian Institute was instrumental in getting the council to back down. Their work means gospel work can carry on unhindered, it's that simple.*”



Mr & Mrs X

“*Social services were putting up roadblocks to our adoption application because of our Christian beliefs. But as soon as they knew we had taken advice from The Christian Institute, our application went smoothly. Thanks to the Institute, a lovely child has a happy family home.*”

Please support the fund



Defending religious liberty in the courts is expensive, but gospel freedom is priceless. A single case can cost hundreds of thousands of pounds if it goes to the highest level. We are very careful in our use of resources, and we only run cases which are of national significance for religious liberty. Most of our cases are resolved positively at an early stage, but there are some cases of vital importance which take years to resolve.

The fund relies upon the kind giving of Christians and churches. Please consider making a generous donation today. You can make a single donation or set up a regular donation using the form overleaf.

Please continue to pray for our work, and for the brave Christians who have made a stand for religious liberty.

Please return the Donation Form to:

Freepost RRHG-ZBKL-EFFB, The Christian Institute,
Wilberforce House, 4 Park Road, Gosforth Business Park,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8DG. (You do **not** need a stamp.)

Legal Defence Fund Donation Form

LDF012

Your contact details

*delete as appropriate

Title *Mr / Mrs / Miss / Revd / Dr / Prof.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

I would not like to receive updates by post and email

One-off donation *(please tick)*

I would like to make a **one-off** donation to The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund

► Please make cheques payable to:
'The Christian Institute'

► Please fill in the Gift Aid Declaration[†] below

Regular donation *(please tick)*

I would like to make a **regular** donation to The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund

► Please fill in the Gift Aid Declaration[†] and Standing Order Mandate below

[†]taxpayers only

Gift Aid Declaration **If you pay tax, signing here allows the Institute to increase the value of your gift at no extra cost to you.**

giftaid it

I would like The Christian Institute to treat all donations I have made for this tax year and the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. I understand that I must have paid enough Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) to cover the amount of tax that all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as Council tax and VAT do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signature _____

Date _____

NB Please notify The Christian Institute if you: 1) Want to cancel this declaration; 2) Change your name or home address; 3) No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Standing Order Mandate

Date of signing _____

To the Manager *(name of your bank)* _____

Bank Address _____

Bank Postcode _____

Please pay on the *(e.g. first)* _____ day of the month of *(e.g. January)* _____ 20 *(year)*

the sum of *(in words)* _____ (£ _____)

to the Bank of Scotland, 33 Old Broad Street, London BX2 1LB (12-09-19) for the credit of 'The Christian Institute' (Account No. 00186102) and thereafter make like payments ***monthly / quarterly / annually** until this order is cancelled.

*delete as appropriate

My account number _____

Signature _____

Name *(in capitals)* _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

For Office Use. Please quote on all transfers:

To detach form, fold and tear along dotted line

Get in touch if you need help



The Legal Defence Fund exists to fund the costs of legal action and the associated campaign work in cases of national importance for religious liberty. We also want to use the fund to intervene in strategic court cases where precedents could be set which may affect Christian religious liberty.

If you believe you have suffered an injustice because of your Christian faith, please contact us. We cannot guarantee to fund any particular case, but we will give you a fair hearing and make a determination based on the evidence. We may be able to help you in ways other than full financial assistance for legal action.

Telephone us

0191 281 5664

Or email us

LDF@christian.org.uk



CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN A SECULAR WORLD

Copyright © The Christian Institute 2014

Published by The Christian Institute
Wilberforce House, 4 Park Road, Gosforth Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8DG

All rights reserved

The Christian Institute is a Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in England as a charity.
Company No. 263 4440; Charity No. 100 4774.
A charity registered in Scotland. Charity No. SC039220.