

# Legal help for you

What we've done,  
and how we can assist

*“Blessed are they who  
maintain justice”*

**PSALM 106:3**





# 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 we have seen those freedoms challenged in our increasingly secular society. More and more Christian individuals, organisations and churches have needed sound legal advice and representation. A lot of wisdom is also required to back the right cases – the cases of national significance to religious liberty.

At the heart of The Christian Institute's legal work lies a passion for liberty, an uncompromising commitment to excellence and the financial resources to support the right cases in the right way.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sam'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

**SAM WEBSTER**

Solicitor Advocate, The Christian Institute

Sam has led The Christian Institute's legal work since 2008. He previously worked as a litigation lawyer at a leading international law firm.





# Defending religious freedom



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 ever-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.

In its first 15 years, our Legal Defence Fund helped 2,475 people – that's more than 160 a year. But it isn't just there to protect our own freedoms; it exists to protect the freedoms of future believers.





# The best legal expertise



We support 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 always use the best legal minds that our resources can afford. This can be expensive, but you cannot put a price on freedom.

We use the country's leading lawyers on public 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. Indeed, three of our cases alone have been cited in dozens of other court judgments.

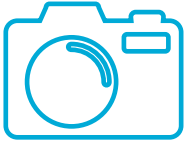
We ourselves have developed considerable knowledge of the law on religious liberty. Because of this, we are able to give informal help and advice to the many Christians and churches that contact us about questions they may have. This grassroots work is very much part of what we do, and resolves many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







# Sensible media management



In many cases, we 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. We provide professional media support, offering mature and experienced media management. This helps people deal with any media attention that arises, and seeks to ensure there is balanced and accurate reporting of the issues.

There are rules on what can and cannot be reported in the media about ongoing legal proceedings. Always operating within those rules, we 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.



# Pastoral support in tough times



Our Legal Defence Fund doesn't stop at just finance and associated legal and media help. 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, lost their job or had their businesses damaged. These are deeply upsetting experiences. 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. This has been very reassuring to many of the people we have helped.





# Taking on the big cases

## Ashers Baking Company

Ashers is owned and run by the McArthur family. They were pursued through the courts by the taxpayer-funded Equality Commission for Northern Ireland when they turned down an order for a same-sex marriage campaign cake because it conflicted with their Christian belief that marriage is between a man and a woman.

Lower courts said it had broken the law by declining to decorate the cake with a pro-gay marriage campaign slogan. But on 10 October 2018 Ashers Baking Co won its case at the Supreme Court. The ruling from five judges unanimously vindicated the bakery.

The case made headlines around the world. As well as providing legal expertise, the Institute was able to help the family to deal with being in the global media spotlight.



“If you are a Christian and you are taking a stand for religious freedom, it's The Christian Institute you want standing with you.”

**DANIEL MCARTHUR, GENERAL MANAGER  
ASHERS BAKING COMPANY**





# Named Person scheme

The Scottish Parliament legislated for every child in Scotland to have a 'named person' – a state official tasked with looking after their wellbeing. It required the named person to record and share confidential information about children and their parents.

The Christian Institute spearheaded a judicial review against the scheme, arguing that it contravened human rights.

After a lengthy legal battle, the UK Supreme Court struck down the central provisions of the scheme, saying that they broke human rights law. It also ruled that it had to be made clear that any advice offered by a named person is entirely optional.

As a result, in 2019 the Scottish Government announced that the Named Person legislation will be repealed.



Lady Hale,  
former  
President, UKSC

“ *The first thing that a totalitarian regime tries to do is to get at the children, to distance them from the subversive, varied influences of their families, and indoctrinate them in their rulers' view of the world.* ”

**PARAGRAPH 73, UK SUPREME COURT RULING IN THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE & OTHERS V THE LORD ADVOCATE (SCOTLAND) [2016]**



# 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.

We helped Adrian to take legal action for breach of contract. The High Court ruled in his favour and THT apologised for its actions. It has become our most cited case.

“ *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**



Google



# CI v 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.



“ Usually the Institute is busy helping others, but this time we were the victims of discrimination.

Although Google initially denied any wrongdoing, it changed its position after we took legal action. The settlement we achieved has had a global impact for good.”

**SIMON CALVERT**





# Cornerstone Fostering and Adoption

Cornerstone Fostering and Adoption agency has repeatedly come under pressure over its long-standing policy of only placing children with committed Christian foster carers.

In 2008 it was investigated by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. In 2011, it was questioned by the Charity Commission. With the help of the Institute, in both cases Cornerstone was able to successfully defend its stance.

Then in 2019 Ofsted accused Cornerstone of unlawful discrimination for only recruiting evangelical Christian carers and requiring them to live consistently with its Christian beliefs about marriage. The regulator demanded that Cornerstone abandon its religious ethos.

Once again, the Institute stepped in to help and in July 2020 the High Court ruled that Ofsted was wrong to try to force Cornerstone to work with non-evangelical Christian carers. The freedom of Christian organisations to provide activities in line with their statement of faith was confirmed. This was upheld on appeal in September 2021. But Cornerstone's freedom to define "evangelical" is still at risk from these rulings. It is seeking leave to appeal to the Supreme Court.



“Without the involvement of The Christian Institute, their legal team and their support financially our doors would have closed.”

**PAM BIRTLE,**  
CORNERSTONE CEO





# 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 Christian Institute's financial support was vital in ensuring Lillian could be represented through the legal process.*

*Her courage in the face of 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**





# Kenneth Ferguson

The Institute helped Kenneth Ferguson, Stirling Free Church and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) to bring successful discrimination claims against The Robertson Trust – Scotland’s largest grant-making trust.

Kenneth is an elder at Stirling Free Church, which believes that marriage is between one man and one woman. An Employment Tribunal found that whilst CEO of the Trust, he had been subjected to religious discrimination and unfairly dismissed because of his association with the church and its beliefs. It awarded him almost £42,000 in May 2022.

The Trust separately settled claims brought by the church and the BGEA after it cancelled bookings to use Trust property because they were for religious events. In the agreed settlement the Trust admitted it “acted unlawfully” and apologised to both organisations. It has also paid a substantial contribution towards legal costs.

“*The Christian Institute have been fantastic in terms of supporting me during this battle.*”

**KENNETH FERGUSON**

“*Christians have the same legal rights as everyone else and the outcome of this case affirms that.*”

**IAIN MACASKILL,  
MINISTER, STIRLING FREE CHURCH**





Warwickshire Direct

Warwickshire County Council

Post Office

Warwickshire  
County Council  
Welcome to  
Shire Hall

Warwickshire  
County Council  
Welcome to  
Shire Hall



# Warwickshire County Council

In 2020, Warwickshire County Council dropped an explicit and error-strewn sex education policy following our legal pressure. The policy failed to apply equality, human rights and education law correctly, placing schools at risk of breaching their legal obligations.

Having axed the policy it subsequently withdrew its 'Trans Toolkit for Schools' which advised schools to allow boys to use girls' changing rooms and dormitories if they wished. Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Kent and a number of other councils dropped similar materials in the weeks that followed.

“ We received a lot of help and guidance from The Christian Institute. They were a huge help in explaining what the law was, and how to go about engaging with the school in an appropriate way.”

**PARENTS OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY THE POLICY**





# 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 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 was instrumental in helping us to achieve a common sense outcome with the local council.*”

**PHIL WAINWRIGHT, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, PILGRIM HOMES**





# 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.

“ Without *The Christian Institute* 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

christian



# 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 both 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, but they won support across the world with 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**



“*Whilst the appellants' beliefs about sexual practice may not find the acceptance that once they did, nevertheless a democratic society must ensure that their espousal and expression remain open to those who hold them.*”

**LADY JUSTICE RAFFERTY**





UNION JACK

Torington Okhampton A 386  
Appledore A 386  
Barnstaple A 389  
Dode A 329  
Ward Ho B 329  
Holworthy  
Town centre Northam  
Tourist Information



# Bideford Council

The National Secular Society (NSS) and a local atheist ex-councillor sued Bideford Town Council in Devon over its practice of praying at the start of council meetings.

They claimed the prayers discriminated against atheist councillors and were a breach of human rights laws. The High Court rejected these arguments.

It did rule local councils have no lawful power to hold prayers during official business. But within days the Government introduced new laws restoring the right of councils in England to hold prayers.



“*The High Court ruled against the NSS on their central argument that council prayers discriminated against atheists and breached their human rights.*”

*It established the principle that public bodies do not need to be secular in order to comply with equality and human rights law.”*

**SAM WEBSTER**





# Dale Mcalpine

Dale has been a street preacher for more than 15 years. In that time he has been arrested twice by Cumbria Police.

With the Institute's help he received financial settlements totalling £11,000 plus costs after pursuing claims for unlawful arrest and false imprisonment.

Dale was also one of a group of street preachers in Bath unlawfully dispersed by Avon and Somerset Police in 2018. Following intervention from the CI, the force apologised and promised to ensure all staff "understand the importance of freedom of expression".

“ I'm extremely grateful to The Christian Institute for helping me take a stand. I couldn't have done it without them. It's important we have them to defend our religious liberties.”

## DALE MCALPINE

Many other street preachers have been similarly helped over the years. John and Tony are just two of them.



John Craven

John received a payout of £13,000.



Tony Rollins

Tony received a payout of £4,250.



# Sexual Orientation Regulations

Christians throughout the UK were given more protections from 'gay rights' regulations because of a ruling given at Belfast High Court in September 2007.

In a significant victory for religious liberty, Mr Justice Weatherup narrowed aspects of Northern Ireland's Sexual Orientation Regulations – with some direct implications for Christians in the rest of the UK.

The case was brought to the High Court by The Christian Institute and a group of evangelical denominations in Northern Ireland.

The ruling made a number of key changes, including removing threats to free speech and establishing that orthodox Christianity believes the practice of homosexuality is sinful.

“ *the orthodox Christian belief that the practice of homosexuality is sinful... is a long established part of the belief system of the world's major religions. This is not a belief that is unworthy of recognition.*”

**PARAGRAPH 50, HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (NI) RULING IN CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE & OTHERS, RE JUDICIAL REVIEW [2007]**

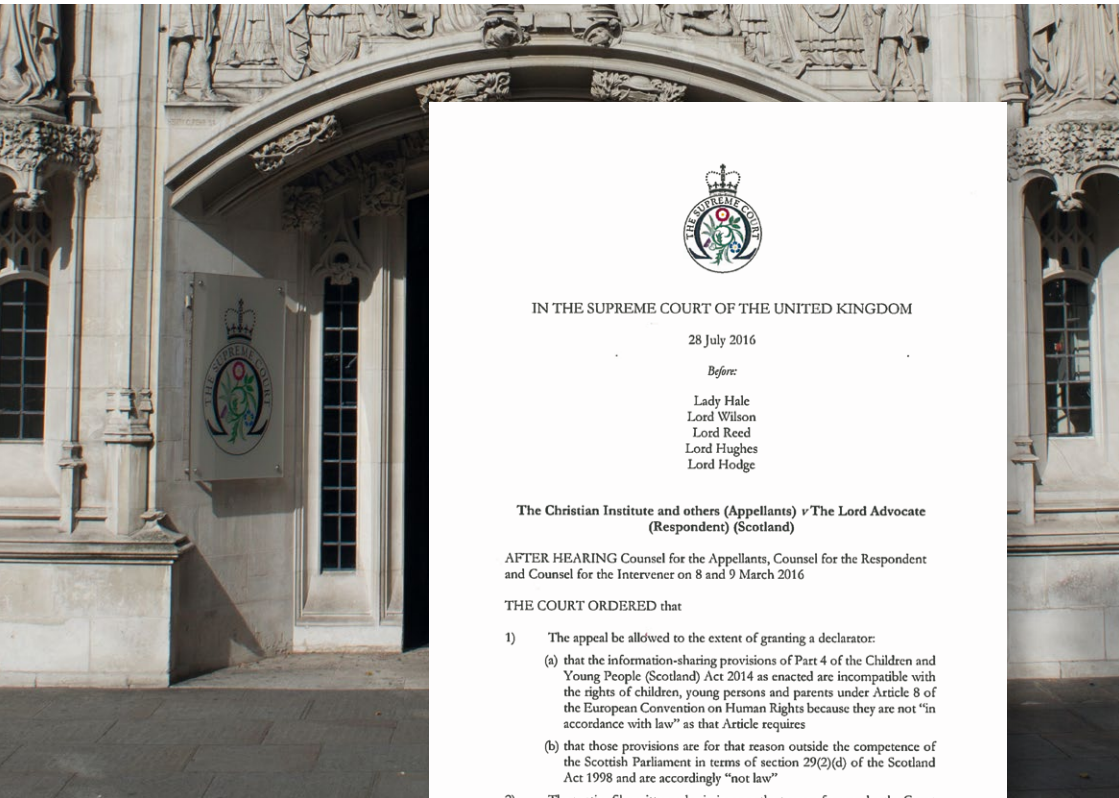


# Setting legal precedents



“ We are very careful in our use of resources, and so we always have an eye to seeking to develop national precedents for religious liberty. Most of our cases are resolved positively at an early stage, but there are some of vital importance which take years to resolve.”

**SAM WEBSTER**



IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

28 July 2016

*Before:*

Lady Hale  
Lord Wilson  
Lord Reed  
Lord Hughes  
Lord Hodge

**The Christian Institute and others (Appellants) v The Lord Advocate (Respondent) (Scotland)**

AFTER HEARING Counsel for the Appellants, Counsel for the Respondent and Counsel for the Intervener on 8 and 9 March 2016

THE COURT ORDERED that

- 1) The appeal be allowed to the extent of granting a declarator:
  - (a) that the information-sharing provisions of Part 4 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 as enacted are incompatible with the rights of children, young persons and parents under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights because they are not “in accordance with law” as that Article requires
  - (b) that those provisions are for that reason outside the competence of the Scottish Parliament in terms of section 29(2)(d) of the Scotland Act 1998 and are accordingly “not law”

# Helping away from the limelight



## HARRY COULTER

“ We were doing a series of meetings in favour of traditional marriage in a hotel. But we got kicked out. After the Institute stepped in, we received an apology and a refund. To anyone who finds themselves in challenging circumstances with regards to marriage or any other moral matter, make sure to be in contact with The Christian Institute.”



## 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.”



## NIGEL WILLIAMS

“ If you're a Christian going through difficulties because of your faith, I encourage you to contact The Christian Institute.”



## 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.”



## 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.”





## 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.”



## JUDITH ROGERS

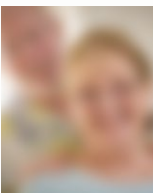
CEO, Bible Centred Ministries International NI

“Having someone advise us on how to uphold biblical standards, while being cognisant of the legal implications of our policies, was extremely helpful.”



## 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.”



## 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 our legal work



On average our legal work costs more than £300,000 per year, but we have faced bills exceeding half a million pounds. Defending religious liberty in the courts is expensive, but gospel freedom is priceless.

We are very careful in our use of resources, and so we always have an eye to seeking to develop national precedents for religious liberty. Most of our cases are resolved positively at an early stage, but there are some 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 Plus RRHG-ZBKL-EKKB, 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

LDFP22

## YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

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

Name

Address

Postcode

Email

**Keep me informed** (I would like to join the free mailing list)

## 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<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>1</sup> and Standing Order Mandate below

We hold and process your data in line with our privacy policy. We will not sell or trade your data. You can unsubscribe at any time.

## GIFT AID DECLARATION Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

To Gift Aid your donations you must make sure your full name and home address are above and you have signed and dated the boxes to the right:

*giftaid it*

Gift Aid is reclaimed by The Christian Institute from the tax you pay for the current tax year.

I want to Gift Aid any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to The Christian Institute. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

**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.

Signature

Date

## STANDING ORDER MANDATE

Date of signing

To the manager (name of your bank)

Bank address

Bank postcode

Please *cancel* my present standing order to pay £ \_\_\_\_\_ for the credit of 'The Christian Institute'.

Please pay on the: 1st  8th  15th  22nd  28th  day of the month of (e.g. May) 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.

My account number is \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name (in capitals) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

For Office Use. Please quote on all transfers:

*\*delete as appropriate <sup>1</sup>taxpayers only*





# Get in touch if you need help



Our 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 use it 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 get in touch. 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](mailto:ldf@christian.org.uk)**





# Legal Defence Fund



THE CHRISTIAN  
INSTITUTE

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