

“Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.” - Proverbs 15:22

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The headlines of today foretell the challenges of tomorrow. Religious liberty in America is under attack as never before. On June 26, 2013, the United States Supreme Court struck down the provision of the Defense of Marriage Act that defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

The New Mexico Supreme Court has upheld a fine assessed against a Christian photographer who declined to photograph a commitment ceremony between members of a same-sex couple.

Atheists have sued the IRS—so far, successfully—alleging that the agency is failing adequately to curb so-called political activity by churches.

A federal judge in Massachusetts has allowed a Ugandan gay rights group to pursue a claim against a U.S. pastor for speaking in favor of the biblical position regarding homosexuality.

Las Cruces, New Mexico has an ordinance (No. 16-131) requiring churches to register, pay a fee and pass a discretionary review process before being allowed to conduct worship services or provide pastoral care.

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Windsor v. United States, 699 F.3d 169, 2012 U.S. App. LEXIS 21785 (2d Cir. N.Y., 2012)

Elane Photography, LLC v. Willock, 2013-NMSC-040, 309 P.3d 53, 2013 N.M. LEXIS 284, 2013 WL 4478229 (N.M. 2013)

Freedom from Religion Found., Inc. v. Shulman, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 117234, (W.D. Wis. 2013)

Sexual Minorities Uganda v. Lively, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 114754, 2013 WL 4130756 (D.Mass. Aug. 14, 2013)

<http://www.adventistreview.org/article/6723/archives/issue-2013-1529/29-cn-adventists-sue-over-church-registration>

How well churches anticipate these challenges will greatly impact their effectiveness in the future. Here is what Church Law Institute is doing to Protect and Defend churches:

Nehemiah Initiative: The CLI Nehemiah Initiative entails a thorough review of your church documents with the goal of helping you achieve what we refer to as Organizational Fitness. We stay abreast of legal developments to discern potential implications for churches. Then, we take a proactive and individualized approach to refining your constitution, bylaws and policies to achieve the highest degree of constitutional protection possible.

Matthew 18 Initiative: The CLI Matthew 18 Initiative emphasizes a scriptural approach to resolving internal church conflict. CLI will train your church leaders to address potentially divisive issues in ways that turn conflicts into opportunities for ministry. For matters that cannot be resolved internally, we will help you connect with Christian conciliators who are trained to bring about resolution in the context of spiritual accountability.

First Corinthians 5 Initiative: The CLI First Corinthians 5 Initiative is an effort to guide churches through the legal minefield of church discipline. We begin by helping you lay a solid foundation of clear expectations for church members. We build upon this foundation a covenantal view of church membership which emphasizes reconciliation over withdrawal of fellowship. We then help you develop a clearly defined approach to exercising discipline and we stand ready to connect you with a CLI Affiliate Attorney to guide you through the process.

Salt & Light Initiative: The CLI Salt & Light Initiative is our way of celebrating the ways in which your church serves as salt and light in its community. This is a video upload project where your church leaders can provide short testimonies to encourage other churches in their efforts to spread the Gospel.

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Membership in Church Law Institute - Church Law Institute is built around a membership model that allows each church to choose the level of service that best meets its needs. Our introductory pricing for a one-year membership is \$95.00 per month for Basic Membership, \$150 per month Full Membership and \$250 per month for Enhanced Membership. Additional services are available at all levels, with pricing determined based upon the service in question.

For more information about becoming a member, contact us through the website or at (615) 964-5202. www.ChurchLawInstitute.com