

**OUR WORK ISN'T DONE...
PRAY FOR AMERICA!**

THE **LEGAL
ALERT**

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2025



Vice President-elect JD Vance with CLA Attorney Seth Kraus and his son, Sawyer



SO MUCH TO DO... **AMERICA NEEDS YOU!**

As a nation, we ought to be extremely grateful for this unique window of opportunity with the House and the Senate that God has gifted to an underserving nation. However, the battle is not over. Please pray daily and fervently for our new administration. Many who would oppose their objectives remain in places of authority; pray that their machinations will be thwarted. The next four years will pass very quickly, and we need God's mercy more than ever in the coming days to help our elected leaders reverse some of the terrible policies currently in place in America. Christians, please pray!



WITH JOY



In a way, January marks the end of a busy season. The election season is over, Thanksgiving has come and gone, and the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season has become a memory to be treasured. In January, the air is crisp, and we have high hopes for the New Year!

Here at the Christian Law Association, we are filled with energy and excitement as we face the challenges of a new year, but we are also diligently working through cases that are winding their way through the system.

When the political landscape changes in America, it can make it easier or harder to defend the religious liberty of God's people.

But regardless of what happens in the political world, there is always a large group of people who try to hinder the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by filing baseless lawsuits against churches and Christian organizations, people who knowingly push for policies that are clearly illegal, just because they think they can get away with it.

We are eager and excited to continue our pursuit of religious liberty for Bible-preaching churches, religious liberty in the workplace for Christians who face discrimination based solely on their faith, and religious liberty for Christian students who do not forfeit their First Amendment rights when they enter a classroom.

Yet we know our labor is in vain without the blessing of our Lord. We ask that you keep us in your prayers. Whether the nation turns more towards the political right or towards the political left, we still battle in courtrooms in front of judges with lifetime appointments; and these judges represent a wide variety of worldviews. We are in need of constant wisdom as we defend the religious liberty of God's people.

We wish you are very happy New Year. May 2025 be outstanding in every way for you and yours. And do remember the cases in your prayers. Many of God's finest servants have heavy hearts as their cases drag through the legal system. It is our goal to pursue legal victory for these people—but we also want to keep them encouraged so they can faithfully serve our Lord during times of trial.



Dr. Gibbs, Jr., Steve Kluth, and Attorney Mike Geisman traveling to a court meeting.

NEW YEAR: 2025

RECORDS ARE IMPERATIVE

With the start of a new year, many churches need to begin the process of organizing important legal documents, while other churches need to ensure that systems they have set up in the past are still working well. Here are some practical reminders.

Obtain a heavy-duty locking file cabinet, preferably fireproof. CLA has received many calls from ministries which have lost all their important documents to fire. Insurance policies, mortgages, tax records, tithing records, and attendance records—many of them irreplaceable—have all literally gone up in smoke. Fireproof storage, though a little more expensive, will save the time and expense of replacing records on which a ministry depends.

It is also important that the file cabinet have a good lock. Store at least one key (or a lock combination) off-site in a secure location. Many records, such as counseling and tithing records, are private and should be protected from one who unintentionally opens the wrong file drawer in search of another document which may not be as private.

Make sure important documents are filed clearly. Ministries can have a wide array of important documents, so the list that follows is designed not to be all-encompassing but to bring to mind what your ministry might need to file in an easily accessible and safe location.

- Contracts for alarm systems
- Contracts for maintenance
- Incident reports for the church and the Christian school
- Insurance documents, including pastor's life insurance, property insurance, and vehicle insurance

Having legally significant documents is great—but it doesn't help you if you can't find them! Due to staff turnover, your filing system should be written down somewhere.

January is a great time to make certain that your filing system is organized—and to be sure there is a written record explaining where things can be found. Tasks like this may seem insignificant, but if you are ever involved in a case, it is unbelievably helpful to have these seemingly small details in order.

Make sure your computer files are securely backed up. You do not want to lose countless documents due to a computer crash! It would be wise to invest in secure cloud backups as well as purchasing sufficient external hard drives to hold complete copies of all data. Be sure the cloud service is backing up regularly, and set a schedule for updating the physical hard drives. Keep one physical hard drive in a fireproof filing cabinet; store the other at a secure off-site location.

Many churches have never taken the time to organize their documents and data as described above, but it is impossible to overstate the importance of having these systems in place and also of regularly updating the information. If a staff member has been assigned this task, the beginning of a new year would be a great time to say something like, "Today, I'd like to set up a time for us to review the church document filing system." This is an easy way for church leaders to have a current picture of where materials are stored, whether physical or digital. If a staff member becomes overwhelmed with tasks, keeping track of church documents is something that might not be appropriately prioritized.

If you have any questions about your church documents and what the legal requirements for document retention are, please contact our offices. The Christian Law Association is privileged to stand with Bible-preaching churches and Christian ministries. We are happy to do everything possible to keep your ministry legally safe.



Steve Kluth is pictured here representing CLA at a conference. If we can assist your ministry in this way, please contact our office.



Our office received an unsettling phone call from a lady who works for a very large health care provider. In that company, she had an administrative role, and her supervisors were requiring her to attend a startling ceremony.

In this ceremony, alcoholic libations were presented, and then the names of the employees' ancestors were spoken aloud. The employees were asked to participate in chants to call the spirits of these dead ancestors into the room.

Obviously, this Christian lady felt extremely uncomfortable in this environment. She felt that her boss was requiring her to participate in the doctrine of devils, but she wasn't sure exactly what she could and could not do in response.

In another situation, a man worked at a large business, and it was his custom to say things like, "God

bless you" and "You know Jesus loves you" during the course of his daily work. Apparently, some of his co-workers found this speech to be very offensive, and they took their complaints to the human resources department.

This man was soon approached by a supervisor who told him that he needed to discontinue any kind of religious speech, or he could lose his job. Knowing everything that his co-workers talked about at his workplace, he was surprised to be singled out with such a restriction.

In the Southeast, a restaurant expanded its hours to open for Sunday brunch, and the employer told the employees that no one could attend church anymore, at least not if they wanted to keep their jobs. One of the employees had gone to church faithfully for her entire life, and it didn't seem right to her that her boss could make this kind of a rule.

While each one of these situations is completely different, all involve the matter of religious liberty in the workplace—which is complex. It is impossible to give one answer that applies to every situation. Nonetheless, the Christian Law Association is committed to doing all we can to support God's people in the workplace.

If you find yourself in a situation at work where you suspect your religious liberties are being violated, please contact our office. Our experienced attorneys know the details of the law, and they will be happy to advise you about how to proceed in your particular situation.

WITNESSING IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Your right to witness in a public university or college varies depending on whether you are a student or not. If you are not a student but wish to witness on campus, it is probably legal for the school to regulate when and where you can speak, as long as this regulation is viewpoint neutral. In other words, a university cannot have one set of rules for people who want to talk about any other religion, but a different set of rules for people who want to talk about Christianity.

While the Supreme Court has noted that a college or university does not have to "make all of its facilities equally available to students and nonstudents alike," a court would more than likely find a total ban on nonstudent speech to be unreasonable.

In many cases, public colleges and universities frequently designate a particular campus location as a free speech area, where students and nonstudents alike may communicate with students and other passersby.

It is definitely to your advantage to do a little research about the college or university where you want to witness. If you need clarification about your specific religious right to witness on a public college campus, contact the Christian Law Association.





Steve Kluth, Pastor John Herdman, Dr. Gibbs, Jr., and Michael Adams

THE TWO-EDGED SWORD OF



It has become increasingly common for students to enroll in college classes while they are still in high school. In some cases, high school students attend local community colleges to enroll in math, English, history, and science courses for dual credit. However, this can sometimes be a double-edged sword. Parents are sometimes surprised to learn about the graphic nature of college-level courses in their own community. For example, when many parents think of an English class, they think of spelling, grammar, writing, and reading literature like Shakespeare. But in many English classes, students are assigned shockingly graphic material to read and discuss.

In dual credit situations, the students are usually still minors, but they are in courses designed for people who are legally adults. Even though Christians do not approve of inappropriate materials for people of any age, it is especially troubling to think of high school students reading such material.

If you are unclear about your legal rights in an educational environment like this, please contact our office. Our attorneys can explain the specific rights your student has in your state.



A MINISTRY OF LEGAL HELPS

Since 1969, CLA has been providing free legal assistance to Bible-believing churches and Christians who are experiencing difficulty in practicing their religious faith because of governmental regulation, intrusion, or prohibition in one form or another. The Christian Law Association serves in the following ways...

- Free legal defense of those facing difficulties for the Biblical faith
- Free legal counsel to churches and Christians for their ministries
- Free legal help to homeschooling families
- Publication of The Legal Alert, a monthly newsletter
- Legal books and other resources to inform Christians of their rights
- Intercessory prayer ministry for requests sent to the ministry offices
- Free legal consulting to local, state, and federal officials and legislators to provide maximum religious liberty
- Prayer initiative for our national leadership and government
- Legal seminars for ministries to help prevent lawsuits
- Weekday radio program broadcast, The Legal Alert, on 1,600 outlets around the world
- Preaching in churches across the country



CLA employees, Seth and Lauren Haught, and their children (L to R), Spencer, Blaire, and Graham



CHRISTIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

We have a new address for our Main Office! Have a question or prayer request? We would be honored to help!

PO BOX 669 • West Chester, • OH 45071-0669

PRAYER CHECKLIST

We covet your prayers for these requests and hundreds of others we receive regularly.

FLORIDA: Pray for a pastor who called our office for direction as he works with their insurance company about paying for damages caused by the hurricanes last year.

TENNESSEE: Pray for a Christian who contacted CLA for help after being served with a cease and desist letter by the city against her nonprofit that helps underserved people with a terminal prognosis by providing a safe environment where they can live during their final days.

NORTH CAROLINA: Pray for a pastor seeking our attorneys' advice about how to handle a disgruntled community member who is spreading falsehoods about the church and Christian school as well as their employees.

OHIO: Pray for a pastor who asked for CLA's assistance after the local school denied his church the opportunity to have a booth about his church's deaf ministry at a school event designed to allow parents to learn more about community resources.

LOUISIANA: Pray for a pastor who sought our attorneys' input regarding how to proceed in dealing with concerns about fraudulent transactions on a church account.

OHIO: Pray for a pastor who called the CLA office with questions about co-signatures and liability as he explores purchasing more property for the church.

TEXAS: Pray for a pastor seeking legal advice from our attorneys as he considers going to Germany to be a witness to the local Muslim community.

OHIO: Pray for a church's financial secretary who contacted our office to request guidance on proper offering distribution. If your church has similar concerns, you can access the CLA publication "From Offering Plate to Disbursement," which can be found on our website at christianlaw.org.

PENNSYLVANIA: Pray for a pastor who sought CLA guidance about permissible use of different church funds as his church prepares to buy a neighboring property at auction.

TEXAS: Pray for a pastor who reached out to our attorneys as he navigates dealing with church staff members who are making it difficult to have access to the church's financial information and bank accounts.

ILLINOIS: Pray for a Christian who asked for CLA's help after being asked to participate in events at her workplace that go against her religious beliefs. Our attorneys provided direction for requesting a religious exemption.

FLORIDA: Pray for a pastor who called our office for direction as he works with their insurance company about paying for damages caused by the hurricanes last year.

MICHIGAN: Pray for a Christian who sought our attorneys' guidance as he prepares for a meeting with his boss regarding Bible verses he posted in the work team chat.

OHIO: Pray for a church board member who reached out for help as he makes sure the church is being operated lawfully. CLA attorneys are always ready to help with any questions churches have about being in full compliance with the law.

MINNESOTA: Pray for a pastor who requested CLA's assistance after receiving constant pushback from the city regarding a new front entrance to the church.

UTAH: Pray for a Christian business owner who contacted our office for advice about setting up protections that allow her to decline requests that violate her religious beliefs.

ILLINOIS: Pray for a Christian who called CLA for direction in understanding her right to wear religious apparel as a Christian in the workplace.

ALASKA: Pray for a Christian woman who sought our attorneys' legal counsel after being turned down for employment, suspecting she was rejected because she is a Christian. Our attorneys assisted her, outlining the steps she should take in response.

OHIO: Pray for a Christian who reached out to CLA after being told by coworkers he might get written up if he continued to talk about the Bible. Our attorneys discussed an appropriate response should that occur; please pray that it won't be an issue.

NORTH CAROLINA: Pray for a group of Christian healthcare workers who contacted our attorneys for information on requesting religious exemptions at their workplace.

GEORGIA: Pray for a Christian who called our office for advice after talking to someone at her workplace about using the Lord's name in vain. We were happy to assist with directions for how she should proceed should it become an issue with her employer.

MISSOURI: Pray for a Christian homeschooler who reached out to us for guidance about how to approach the school board after being refused speech therapy assistance for one of his children at the local school.

