



Christian Citizenship

“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.

From the Editor: Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito said, “I assume that those who cling to old beliefs will be able to whisper their thoughts in the recesses of their homes, but if they repeat those views in public, they will risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by governments, employers, and schools.” (Dissenting opinion in Obergefell v. Hodges) The following stories of people like you and me are true. When the time comes, may we also respond: “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Barronelle Stutzman

For decades, Barronelle Stutzman has been delighting the people of Richland, WA., with her floral creations. Not everyone appreciates such creativity, but Barronelle’s friend, Rob Ingersoll, did. He wasn’t just one of her best customers. He truly appreciated how much Barronelle poured into her floral designs. Whenever he made a request for a special occasion or event, Barronelle crafted beautiful bouquets for him.

That’s why it broke her heart the day he asked her to come up with something original for the most important occasion of all—the one occasion she could not, in good conscience, help him celebrate. Rob said he was marrying another man, and Barronelle’s Christian faith is grounded in Scripture that teaches marriage as the union of one man and one woman. She broke it to him as gently as she could, and he said he understood, even hugging her as she told him. His partner, though, did not. The outrage he shared on Facebook drew attention from those attempting to push same-sex “marriage” on Americans... including the state’s new attorney general, Bob Ferguson. Ferguson was determined to make an example of Barronelle. He filed a consumer protection lawsuit against her,

charging her with illegally discriminating against Rob on the basis of his sexual orientation. Neither Rob nor his partner had filed a formal complaint, but taking Ferguson’s lead, later filed one of their own. In the months to follow, Barronelle received hate mail from people unaware of her friendship with Rob, but eventually that mail was replaced by cards, letters, and emails of support from people all over the world who admired her courage.

In February 2017, the Washington Supreme Court concluded that the government can force her—and, by extension, other Washingtonians—to create artistic expression and participate in events with which they disagree. Barronelle says she will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse this decision.

Blaine Adamson

With great personal investment, Blaine Adamson suits people to a “tee”—or, more specifically, to a t-shirt. He helps others convey messages on shirts, hats, bags, blankets, bottles, cups, and mugs for Hands On Originals, one of the most successful promotional printing companies in Lexington, KY. Understandably, Adamson sometimes has to tell people that the slogan they want on a shirt or mug is not one that his company will print or design. When he does this, he always refers the potential customer to another local business.

When the Gay and Lesbian Services Organization (GLSO) asked him to print shirts promoting its upcoming “Pride Festival,” Adamson respectfully declined. GLSO filed a complaint with the city’s Human Rights Commission, alleging that the company engaged in illegal discrimination based on sexual orientation. But there is nothing to support this charge. Adamson has regularly printed materials for customers who identify as gay or lesbian. He has hired—and developed good relationships with—a number of employees who identify as gay or lesbian. After the GLSO filed its complaint, its members widely publicized their version of the situation, and a campaign began

encouraging people to boycott Adamson's business. That smear campaign resulted in the loss of business.

In 2014, the commission ruled that Adamson had to print messages that violate his conscience. But Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys representing Adamson appealed that ruling to the Fayette County Court, which in April 2015 reversed the commission's decision. The court said, "Hands on Originals and its owners have a constitutional right to refrain from speaking, just as much as they enjoy the constitutional right to speak freely. It is their constitutional right to ... not be compelled to be part of the advocacy of messages opposed to their sincerely held Christian beliefs."

Houston Pastors

In June 2014, the City of Houston's leaders implemented a sexual orientation/gender identity law which, among other things, prohibits discrimination on the basis of "gender identity" in places like public restrooms. 82 percent of Houstonians opposed the decree. Petitions rapidly circulated throughout the city signed by citizens demanding that the new law be repealed, or placed on a ballot for the voters to decide. Some of the city's pastors openly discussed the law and its implications from the pulpit—a right the First Amendment protects. The citizens of Houston supplied more than three times the required number of signatures to place the law on the ballot and the city secretary legally certified the petitions (meaning that the City Council either had to repeal the law or it had to be put to a vote of the people). Yet the mayor and the city attorney unlawfully refused the certification.

In response, a group of citizens filed a lawsuit pressing the city to comply with the law and honor the petitions. Instead, in the course of preparing for trial, the city's attorneys served subpoenas against five local pastors, demanding 17 categories of information—including copies of their sermons "related to ... the Petition, Mayor Annise Parker, homosexuality, or gender identity prepared by, delivered by, revised by, or approved by you or in your possession," as well as any personal communications they might have had with church members or others about the bathroom law, homosexuality, or gender identity.

ADF attorneys filed a motion in a Texas court to block that subpoena, recognizing an aggressive bid by the city to control—through explicit legal action or implicit political pressure—what preachers preach, and what Christians believe about social issues. This was a "clear and present danger" to religious freedom. This was a critical "trial balloon" being floated in the culture. Fortunately, the public outcry in this instance was so great that the mayor and the city attorney eventually withdrew the subpoenas from the five Houston pastors.

The Huguenins & Giffords

Jon and Elaine Huguenin could not violate their Christian convictions and so, when asked if they would ever photograph a same-sex wedding, they answered "no, but thanks for checking out our site." A complaint was filed, the Huguenin's were forced to pay \$7000 in attorney fees, they have suffered great criticism, and been forced to discontinue wedding photography.

Robert and Cynthia Gifford open their property from time to time to the public for pumpkin picking, corn mazes, and an occasion wedding on the ground floor of the barn that also serves as their home. When a lesbian couple wanted to reserve the barn for their upcoming wedding, the Giffords explained that, as Christians, they believe in God's design for marriage which is the union of one man and one woman; therefore, they could not host a same-sex wedding. A complaint was filed with the New York Division of Human Rights. The judge, disregarding that the Giffords have hired homosexuals and hosted parties for homosexuals, found the Giffords guilty of discrimination, fined them \$13,000 with the promise to keep on fining them if they ever say "no" to a same-sex ceremony, and ordered the family and employees to undergo "anti-discrimination" training.

Please pray for Barronelle, Blaine, pastors across the country, the Huguenins, Giffords, and all Christians who remain true to their faith, challenge unjust law, and obey God rather than men ... in Jesus' name.

Note: All of the Christian citizens above are being represented by Alliance Defending Freedom. The stories are gratefully excerpted from *Protecting Your Ministry*, a legal guide for churches, Christian schools, and Christian Ministries. Please request a copy from www.adflegal.org