



## Christianity in Straight Jacket of Political Correctness

**Paul Coleman, a legal councilor for Alliance Defending Freedom in Vienna, Austria, says that what we see now in Europe is political correctness overriding well understood Christian morality, which results in Christianity being bashed by the government and immigrants alike.**

We see restrictions against Christianity, against the Christian faith on the governmental level, and by that I mean by laws passed and government's restrictions. And for example in the area that I work on in Europe, we see two areas in particular – one is through the use of hate speech laws, as they are often known; and the other is through anti-discrimination legislation. Both of these things sound like they are good things. No one likes hate speech and no one likes discrimination. But what we see happening is these hate speech laws are used often to target Christian speech for example on controversial areas, on sexual morality.

For example if the Christian was to say that the Christian faith is correct and other faiths are not – what we see is Christians being even arrested and imprisoned for making those sort of statements through the use of these hate speech laws. And then the anti-discrimination legislation is really being used again to target Christians and Christian organizations who have been told that unless they fall in line with the values that the society is adopting, you know some of these areas like sexual orientation, then Christians will be sued or have their charitable organizations shut down or funding removed. And so we are seeing a rise of this sort of intolerance against what has been very traditional and well understood Christian beliefs for the last 2000 years.

*So, do I get you right that Christians are now being targeted from at least two sides – one is a society which has somehow decided to abandon its traditional Christian values; and another group is Muslim immigrants who are struggling to assert their own set of beliefs? Is my understanding correct?*

There is an increasing tension between different religious groups within Europe. Often it is not that these groups are targeting each other or discriminating against each other, often it can be police or the government interference that exacerbates the problem. And if you want an example there was the case two years ago in the UK where a Christian couple who owned a hotel got into a conversation with the Muslim guest over the breakfast. And they were talking about their different faiths, they disagreed to one another and various things were said. But it was all within the spirit of debate and it was really just a conversation over the breakfast.

This Muslim lady then made a formal complaint to the police and the police then got involved in this case, brought charges against the Christian couple, took them to court. The whole process took about a year. Eventually the court threw out the charges against them and acquitted the Christian couple completely but in the meantime their business had been destroyed.

And there we see just a little conversation over breakfast time talking about different religious beliefs leading to a criminal prosecution, a trial and ultimately, for this Christian couple, the loss of their livelihood. And that just gives you one example of how some of these tensions are being handled at the moment, being handled through the use of the criminal law, through the use of criminal restrictions. And rather than solving the problem it is actually making it far worse.



*Why do you think these things might be happening in what we tend to see as Christian countries?*

Yes, a lot of the countries of Europe would traditionally have been considered Christian and are still labeled Christian today. But to what extent that impacts on this sort of issues is not really clear because there is no way in a lot of these countries in Europe, that I work in and that my organization works in, that the so called Christian countries are often some of the most hostile, it would seem, to the Christian faith. And that could be because perhaps the Christian faith has become very institutionalized, very tied into the politically correct way to think on controversial issues. And so the Christians that are finding themselves restricted and not tolerated, there are Christians who hold to what would be considered traditional biblical beliefs, which are not anymore in line with perhaps the society's values as a whole.

*And then the same question – why do you think this happens? You said – politically correct. So, do I get you right that sometimes political correctness actually interferes with traditional moral values and religious values, Christian values?*

Yes, this political correctness is certainly one of the major problems. And I think it is because these countries on the continent really has not yet grasped how to deal with widely differing cultures, widely differing beliefs within the society. And what we would say is that in a liberal democracy there needs to be a way that people can get alongside one another in public and as smoothly as possible. And instead, what is happening is that in the name of political correctness, and we can use other phrases, we are finding that Christians are being told that you can't have those beliefs. You can have them in your head, you can have them in your mind or perhaps even in your church and home but don't speak about them in public, don't act on them publically. And so we see charitable organizations, as I said, having funding withdrawn.

One of the most famous cases is that of the adoption agency in the UK who have for many years been involved in adoption of children and placed children in homes. And what happened is when they said that they wouldn't place children with the same sex couples they were closed down, and they were closed down because of their beliefs. And that is just again another example of how political correctness is overriding well understood Christian morality.

We certainly are seeing a rising intolerance and discrimination against Christians. Where that will lead – we don't know. And I do think we can't know. Certainly I work to defend religious freedom for Christians and I believe that we can turn this around, but we will again see the societies that uphold freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly – these fundamental freedoms. I believe that that can't happen. And so I wouldn't want to say that everything is just going to continue to go downhill, I don't think we can ever know that for sure. And certainly by engaging in this work and by standing up for a religious freedom, we have seen the treats in the courts and in parliaments and I hope that we will continue to do so.

*The Muslim community has reacted to a trailer which was run on the YouTube, not even officially in the cinema theatres. So, how do you think what we need to do to protect our own rights as Christians?*

Certainly the Christians wouldn't perhaps execute any sort of protest where there is violence involved. I wouldn't want to say that people can't criticize and even in the Christian beliefs people are entitled to do so. But I do think that what Christians need to do, and often haven't been doing, is be prepared to stand up for what they believe and do so of course in a peaceful and respectful way.



For example the work that I do, I do litigation to defend Christians in a courts. And I think that is absolutely the right thing to be doing because when Christians are intolated, then it is important to stand up for Christian values and for these Christian individuals who have been discriminated against. And so I think that as long as Christians say nothing and allow further restrictions and further intolerance to take place, then we can expect things to get worse. But I think if Christians do stand up for their Christian beliefs and also importantly stand together, stand as a united voice, then it will be a powerful voice in a society.

*But definitely we should not adhere to something like Koran burning, do we?*

No, as Christians we shouldn't be looking to deliberately inflame a situation, exacerbate people and I would hope that Christians would be respectful towards people of other beliefs. And so when it comes to whether it be this Koran burning or this video, or whatever else, I think that Christians really should not be condoning that sort of behavior, and that is exactly the opposite of what we want to be doing. We want a society where freedom is cherished, and that includes freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom for all people, including Christians.

*Source:* [Voice of Russia](#)