

Petition for Church regulatory body

Submitted by: SovereignPR

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Not since the time of Henry VIII has the Church been faced with direct confrontation by the Government calling into question its behaviour, its attitudes towards its ministers and its congregations, and its disregard for the law, while Parliament considers the setting up of an independent body to which those who feel aggrieved by the Church can turn for support. That, however, is exactly what a petition being presented to the House of Commons in March is proposing.

The illegal and immoral activities of key members of the Methodist Church have come to light as a result of a complaint being pursued by a training lay preacher and candidating URC Minister who was herself threatened with legal action by her local Methodist Minister.

Mrs Patricia Davies of Great Wakering, Essex, a clinical depressive harbouring extreme debilitating symptoms, including thoughts of suicide, turned to her Minister for guidance and support, but her cries for help were deliberately ignored and she was excluded from church activities, culminating in her being publicly humiliated by the Minister in front of the church congregation.

Mrs Davies first appealed direct to the Minister for reconciliation, but was threatened with legal action for so doing. She then lodged an official complaint with the Church's head office alleging mental abuse, which was ignored for months until Mrs Davies appointed a solicitor.

As a result of her persistence over the course of the following three years, regularly attempting to reach a reconciliatory settlement, first with the Minister, then the district Church superintendent, and then with the head of the Methodist Church Judiciary department, Mrs Davies was granted a hearing. However, the occasion was so constructed that there was no way she would receive a fair hearing.

The main people involved in the hearing: the accused Minister; the chair of the hearing panel; the head of the disciplinary committee; and the head of the Church, were all being elected by the central Methodist Church Council to Council committees at the very time of the hearing. The likelihood of them being prepared to publicly condemn the actions of one of their number is extremely remote.

Apart from the chair of the hearing being ineligible to hold this position given the Church's panel procedures lay down that the chair and panel members should not be known to either the complainant or the respondent, the hearing proved to be a total farce, despite Mrs Davies needing to hire and pay for legal representation.

When the hearing and subsequent appeal took place, what was later proved to be false testimony from the Minister was accepted as evidence, while Mrs Davies's true evidence was disallowed. The Church's teaching about not bearing false witness against your neighbour appears to have been lost on its leading figures in their scramble to protect one of their own from embarrassment and shame.

"All I have ever wanted throughout this ordeal is reconciliation with the Church I love and with the Minister I once considered to be a friend," says Mrs Davies, "but no one in the Church has been prepared to agree to an unbiased hearing."

“I received threats of arrest and legal action if I did not drop my complaint,” she continues.
“However, being intimidated is not something I was prepared to accept, so the whole business has evolved to this stage where the attitudes and the activities of the Church’s hierarchy must be brought into question in public.

“If an independent body to oversee the Church’s treatment of the people it purports to lead by example is set up, other people who have suffered in ways similar to myself could have their voices heard.”

In an endeavour to provide a forum for those mistreated by the Church, Mrs Davies has already set up a website (www.churchgoersupport.co.uk) which itself has been derided by Church officials and condemned as unrepresentative of public opinion. The website publishes the original correspondence showing the threats Mrs Davies received from the Minister and from the Church’s head office.

“The website provides a platform for people to exercise their fundamental right to question the attitudes and activities of any supposedly Christian Church, especially any attempts to stifle freedom of speech,” explains Mrs Davies.

It is hoped that the House of Commons will debate and accept this petition, and utilise it as the instrument via which the House formally recognises the need to protect citizens from the influence of a Church which has shown itself prepared to demonise innocent people, obstruct justice, show unfair bias, and refuse to obey the law in its quest to control the actions of those who submit themselves to its leadership and protection in the belief that it represents the path to righteousness.

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