

You Won't Believe Why This Christian University Is Headed to the Supreme Court

A Christian university in Canada is being told not to go ahead with creating a law school because if it does, the graduates won't be considered real attorneys due to the school's Christian standards.

Although the case sounds ridiculous to most people, it's going to Canada's Supreme Court this week.

With an enrollment of more than 4,000 students, Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia is Canada's largest and fastest-growing Christian college.

For 55 years, the school has been attracting students from all over the world. In 2012, the university decided it was time to add a law school.

But two Canadian law societies objected, arguing that the university's Christian covenant discriminates against the LGBTQ community, and therefore, the school's future law school should be denied accreditation.

University President Bob Khun says those claims are false.

"The reality is, gay students and lesbian students have been coming to Trinity. So suggesting that we're precluding people from having this experience who self-identify as same-sex attracted or gay or lesbian is just not accurate," Khun told CBN News.

"Basically, the fight comes down to this—a community covenant that students are required to sign that states they are committed to the person and work of Jesus Christ and that marriage is between one man and one woman," he explained.

The covenant also asks students to refrain from sexual activity outside of traditional marriage.

Same-sex advocacy groups claim this means LGBTQ persons, including those who are married, can never be their authentic selves while attending TWU. They say no one should be forced to renounce their dignity and self-respect in order to obtain an education.

Attorney Earl Phillips says the case pits religious freedoms against equal rights.

"I think it's a big important case and it's really about what kind of society are we going to have in Canada," said Phillips, the future executive director of the law school.

"I'm hoping that the court will say we have a society here that is open to a lot of different ideas," he said.

Some Trinity Western students call the charges of discrimination ridiculous, including Muslim student Haya Fadda of Jordan.

Fadda, 24, came to the university specifically for its highly acclaimed linguistics programs. She says she did not face discrimination over her Muslim beliefs, and when they discovered she wasn't eating the school's regular chicken, the school took action.

"The second week, they got me Halal chicken and they started cooking me Halal meals, just for me, just for one person. ... so actually they care for you. They put your needs first," Fadda told CBN News.

Phillips says the case has implications beyond the Christian community in Canada.

"If we are not allowed to have a law school because of what the community covenant says, I am concerned for everybody, whether they are of the Christian faith or no faith at all,

fundamental freedom has been reduced,” he explained.

The school’s slogan this year is “For Such a Time as This,” and many say that’s not a coincidence as the future of the university’s law school and its students are now in the hands of the Canadian Supreme Court.

The case goes to Canada’s top court on November 30.

Trinity Western’s law school was originally set to open in 2016, but that date has since been pushed back to the fall of 2018.

The university fought nearly the same exact case in 2001 when it had to fight for accreditation for its teachers’ college. The case was argued before the Supreme Court, and the school won.

However, the Ontario Court of Appeals said that ruling should not be seen as binding in the high court’s current case, and the Canadian Divisional Court said public attitudes have shifted since that time and should also be taken into account as well.

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