

Christian Ministry's Bank Account Closed Following LGBT Pressure Campaign

Barclays, a British multinational investment bank and financial services company headquartered in London, has axed the account of a Christian ministry it accused of allegedly being engaged in "so-called gay 'conversion therapy,'" several media sources have reported.

Core Issues Trust (CIT), which says it offers "talking therapy to people who want to explore moving away from unwanted same-sex attraction and gender confusions; more specifically the organization offers 'SAFE-T' (Sexual Attraction Fluidity Exploration in Therapy," claims the move came after pressure from an LGBT social media campaign that targeted the group.

According to a CIT release, the ministry is "a nonprofit Christian ministry that supports men and women who voluntarily seek change in sexual preference and expression."

CIT CEO Mike Davidson said Barclays provided no explanation to CIT for its decision and that Barclays' decision resulted from an aggressive online campaign from opponents of the CIT ministry.

"On Friday 3 July Tweets appeared pressuring Barclays Bank to stop providing CIT with services," the release said. "On Monday 20 July, Barclays appears to have agreed to this request by informing both CIT and IFTCC that their accounts will be closing in two months, mid-September. The International Federation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice, a project supported by CIT has also received closure notice.

"Since 28 June 2020, CIT has faced a coordinated, aggressive

campaign from activists who pejoratively label their work as 'conversion therapy'. These incitements via social media have now been reported in detail to the Parliamentary Petitions Committee currently inviting evidence submissions of online abuse, and as Serious Incident Reports to the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland. Some of the abuse received has been reported to the police."

In the release, CIT says it has "received well over 300 nuisance phone calls and numerous hateful messages. Its email address has, without consent, been signed up to porn sites such as PornHub, UK Lads, Lesbian Videos and a range of fetish sites. Bogus claims using the CIT email address for information about surgical procedures continues. A large volume of emails from mailing lists purporting to have received requests from CIT were also received—with the intention of discrediting and blacklisting the address as spam."

Davidson said of the phrase "conversion therapy":

"This is a pejorative, imposed term, coined by an American gay activist, Dr. Douglas Haldeman in 1991, that names some extremes such as electro-shock and aversion techniques only ever conducted by medics, long since abandoned from the 60s, or extreme behaviors already outlawed such as 'corrective' rape for which there are no prosecutions in the U.K. Because the term speaks of talking therapies and counselling as 'pseudo-science' in association with these extremes, to be heard defending talking therapy and counselling for unwanted same-sex attractions is then taken to be a defense of the indefensible 'Conversion Therapy' label. We reject this accusatory term."

In its release over the weekend, Davidson said the social media pressure is akin to "mob rule."

"A coordinated campaign has resulted in our ministry coming

under immense pressure and key service providers cancelling their services, action which we consider to be discriminatory,” Davidson said. “The term ‘conversion therapy’ is being used as a catch-all phrase designed to discredit any help that people may provide to those with mixed sexual attractions who prefer their heterosexual side. This could include a listening ear, formal counselling or spiritual support.

“If a social media mob can cause a bank to close the account of a Christian ministry, then there is nowhere for biblically faithful Christian ministries to go. The U.K. is now becoming an intensely intolerant country. Key service providers have cancelled their services to a Christian charity because of a social media mob.”

Andrea Williams, CEO of Christian Concern, said that Barclays and other similar institutions won’t stop this trend following its actions against Core Issues Trust. More will be forthcoming in the days ahead.

“If it is CIT first, it will be churches next,” Williams said in CIT’s release. “If banks and other service providers start to placate social media campaigns by unilaterally terminating their accounts then the U.K. will be a very difficult place for biblically faithful Christian ministries.

“This kind of demonization and refusing of services to a Christian ministry is reminiscent of how Jewish businesses were treated under Nazi rule. We call on the government to put a halt to this kind of mob rule and to assert the rights of biblically faithful Christian organizations to be serviced by businesses without facing such intolerant discrimination.”
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