

Christian Views Deemed 'Unacceptable in the Workplace'

An Employment Tribunal in the case of Sarah Mbuyi, a Christian nursery worker who expressed her opinion on marriage, has heard that Christian views on the topic should not be expressed in the workplace.

Witnesses and legal counsel for the employer made the hostile comments at Miss Mbuyi's hearing this week.

Dismissal

Last year she was unfairly dismissed from her job at Newpark Childcare in Shepherd's Bush after a colleague lodged a formal complaint against her.

The colleague had commented that she would consider Christianity only when she and her lesbian partner could get married in church, and that she thought God would approve.

Miss Mbuyi responded by sharing her belief in the biblical teaching that homosexuality is a sin.

Sarah was investigated and immediately dismissed for gross misconduct. Gross misconduct is the most serious penalty normally reserved for theft and fighting at work.

'Every Christian Should Know'

Andrea Minichiello Williams, chief executive of the Christian Legal Centre, which is supporting Miss Mbuyi, has been present at the hearing.

She commented: "What has happened in court this week is what every Christian in this country should know—the kind of things

being said in our courtrooms.”

In closing submissions to the Tribunal, Deshpal Panesar, Counsel for the employer, said: “The employer dismissed [Sarah] for expressing fundamentally discriminatory views about homosexuality, namely that it is a sin.

“[Sarah’s] views were not merely in terms of ‘my faith believes and other beliefs are valid,’ but were expressed as absolute truths.

“Those views whilst they may be held in private, are fundamentally discriminatory against homosexuals and have no place in being expressed in the workplace, or in the manner of working, particularly in a nursery.

“To suggest that homosexuality should be repented is discriminatory. Whether harassment or not, unlawful discrimination, without apology or reticence is wholly unacceptable in the work place.

“Simply put, in the eyes of the law homosexuality is not wrong ... To suggest that [it is] in the workplace is unlawfully discriminatory.”

Witnesses

Witnesses for Newpark Childcare have repeatedly expressed the view that Miss Mbuyi’s Christian beliefs should not be expressed in the workplace.

In response to the question: “Her Christian views of love breached your Equal Opportunities Policy?” one witness stated: “Yes, I think they did—or her interpretation.”

Another witness claimed that Miss Mbuyi was not able to meet contractual obligations because of her belief, saying: “She was not able to do her job, to represent the diversity of the nursery. This indicated other beliefs that would make her unable to fulfil her duties.”

At one point, Counsel for Newpark Childcare even developed a hypothetical scenario that equated Christianity with racism.

Hostile

Andrea Minichiello Williams commented further: “Sarah Mbuyi’s trial demonstrates very clearly the state of our courts and the Christian illiteracy that exists in our land.

“We need to ask ourselves: ‘Is this justice?’ We have seen a frightening lack of regard for the freedom to express Christian opinion.

“There has been no attempt to cover up blatant hostility towards and disregard of Christian views based on the Bible.”

Sarah Mbuyi said: “You know persecution [for your faith] is coming, but it feels really surreal when you realize it’s happening to you.”