

Gay Couple Sues Church That Won't Host Same-Sex Weddings

Wealthy gay dad Barrie Drewitt-Barlow says he and his civil partner, Tony, will go to court to force churches to host gay weddings. He told the *Essex Chronicle* that he will take legal action because, he says, "I am still not getting what I want."

A government bill legalizing **gay marriage** passed Parliament in the U.K. recently, but it included measures to protect churches from being forced to perform same-sex weddings.

"The only way forward for us now is to make a challenge in the courts against the church. It is a shame that we are forced to take Christians into a court to get them to recognize us," says Drewitt-Barlow. "It upsets me because I want it so much—a big, lavish ceremony, the whole works. I just don't think it is going to happen straight away. As much as people are saying this is a good thing, I am still not getting what I want."

The gay couple shot to fame in 1999 when they became the first British same-sex couple to be named on their children's birth certificates. They entered a civil partnership in 2006, and Barrie Drewitt-Barlow has reportedly donated around £500,000 to groups lobbying for **same-sex marriage**.

Last year, the Church of England warned that the government's plans to redefine marriage could trigger legal problems and end the 500-year link between church and state. In January this year, a leading lawyer cautioned that the plans left the Church of England open to legal challenge.

The prime minister was sent a copy of the legal opinion by Lord Carey, a former archbishop of Canterbury. In June 2012, Crispin Blunt, who was then a justice minister, admitted the government's plans could lead to legal issues. He said the government is "seeking to protect, indeed, proscribe religious

organisations from offering gay marriage,” but he continued:
“That may be problematic legally.”