

THE LEGAL ALERT

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CHRISTIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

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Giving Thanks

FINDING GRATITUDE IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE

Although our attitude is invisible, it makes all the difference. There is a tremendous difference between feeling privileged to perform a task and feeling obligated to do it. Gratitude is the secret that flips the switch from "I have to" to "I get to."

I Thessalonians 5:18 gives the perfect explanation: "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." As Christians, we are commanded to give thanks in every circumstance of life. We can do that because we know the promise of Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Gratitude transforms ministry. Larissa was a busy mother who volunteered to teach a Sunday school class for fourth-grade girls. When she considered all the work she had to do, including the many demands of tending to her own children, preparing another Sunday school lesson seemed overwhelming. But when she stopped to thank the Lord for the opportunity to share His Word with impressionable young girls, what had felt like one more obligation became an opportunity for ministry. A grateful spirit changed everything.

In our ministry of legal helps, the attorneys of the Christian Law Association often marvel at the faithfulness of God despite increasing and never-ending opposition. With His help, CLA has developed a record of victories for religious liberty that can only be attributed to the blessing of the Lord. When we consider His faithfulness through more than five decades of ministry, we cannot help but be filled with gratitude.

Every Christian goes through times of trial—seasons that are especially difficult. Yet every honest Christian can look back and see that God has remained faithful, even when our own faithfulness to Him has sometimes wavered. When we recognize His goodness in times of abundance as well as times of great difficulty, the only appropriate response is a grateful heart.

The gratitude of the Apostle Paul is seen in the opening verses of Philippians. Though writing from prison, he said, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" (Philippians 1:3). Paul was not thankful because his circumstances were easy; he was thankful because he knew God was with him in the difficult circumstances.

Jonah also prayed with thanksgiving from a place we can hardly imagine—the belly of the great fish. He prayed, "But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9).

When we consider Paul's gratitude from prison and Jonah's thanksgiving from the fish's belly, we are reminded that gratitude is not dependent upon perfect circumstances. We, too, can be known as thankful people when we yield our spirit to the Lord and trust Him to lead us moment by moment.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Because You Gave

A MINISTRY PROTECTED

Recently, the Christian Law Association was called upon to stand with a ministry facing a serious legal challenge that threatened its ability to continue serving the Lord freely. CLA attorneys were able to step in, provide legal counsel, and help protect the ministry's Biblical mission—all without charge.

Cases like this remind us why we are so thankful for you. When a pastor, church, Christian school, or family calls CLA in a moment of uncertainty, we are able to say, "We are here to help." Your prayers and faithful support make that possible.

Because you gave, they did not have to stand alone.

Thinking Through Thanksgiving Activities

Many churches plan fall festivals, Thanksgiving meals, and other seasonal activities that provide wonderful fellowship for members and opportunities for outreach in the community. These activities have great potential for ministry, but it is wise to think through the legal and safety considerations before the event begins.

If your church plans to use inflatables, games, or other physical activities, consider whether an appropriately drafted liability release is advisable under the law of your state and the circumstances of the event. Any release should accurately identify the activities involved and the event for which it is being used. Because the enforceability and requirements of releases can vary, churches should seek appropriate legal guidance when needed.

If volunteers will be delivering meals or transporting people, confirm that drivers are properly licensed and that the church has discussed the activity with its insurance carrier. Even when volunteers use their own vehicles, an accident may create potential exposure for the church, so it is important to understand what coverage applies before the ministry begins.

A little planning beforehand can help protect the church and allow everyone to concentrate on what matters most—serving people and sharing the love of Christ.

A Thanksgiving Word from Dr. David Gibbs

Dear Friends,

As I look back over more than five decades of the Christian Law Association, I am overwhelmed by two things: the faithfulness of God and the faithfulness of His people.

Through the years, the Lord has allowed us to stand beside pastors, churches, Christian schools, ministries, and families during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. We have watched God open doors that appeared firmly closed, provide answers when we could not see a way forward, and protect liberties that many believed were already lost.

But the Lord has also used people like you.

Some of you have prayed for this ministry for decades. Some churches have faithfully supported CLA year after year. Some of you have given sacrificially, even when no one but the Lord knew what that gift cost you. Others have written notes, shared prayer requests, encouraged our attorneys, or simply reminded us that we are not standing alone.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you” (Philippians 1:3). Those words express my heart this Thanksgiving.

You may never sit in one of our legal meetings. You may never meet the pastor whose church was helped, the family whose burden was lifted, or the Christian school that was able to continue its ministry. But you are part of every one of those victories because you prayed and because you gave.

When our family gathers around the Thanksgiving table this year, you will be among the blessings for which I thank God.

From my heart, thank you for standing with us. Thank you for believing in this ministry. And most of all, thank you for helping us continue the work the Lord placed in our hands so many years ago.

Happy Thanksgiving, and may God richly bless you and your family.



Your friend in Christ,

David C. Gibbs, Jr.
Founder and President
Christian Law Association

Is Your Family Protected for Tomorrow?

At Thanksgiving, many of us will gather around a table with some of God's greatest earthly gifts—our families. One important way we can care for those we love is by making thoughtful preparations for the future.

A properly prepared will can make an already difficult time much easier for your family. Without a will, state law will determine many important questions concerning your estate. Parents of minor children should also carefully consider whom they would want to serve as guardians and make sure their estate-planning documents address that concern in accordance with applicable state law.

It is also wise to consider medical powers of attorney and advance directives. When serious medical decisions must be made, family members can experience tremendous stress if they do not know a loved one's wishes. Thoughtful planning can provide guidance to medical professionals and relieve family members of some of the uncertainty during an already emotional time.

Estate-planning requirements vary from state to state, so documents should be prepared or reviewed with applicable state law in mind.

If you have questions about wills, medical powers of attorney, advance directives, or other legal resources for your family, the Christian Law Association would be glad to help provide appropriate direction and resources. Please contact our office for additional information.

A Word of Encouragement

We recently received this touching note from a woman who remembers, as a child, the battles that were fought for the religious freedoms many families enjoy today. We share excerpts from her letter as an encouragement to remain faithful in defending those freedoms for the next generation.

"One of my most vivid childhood memories is standing in a courthouse as our family and church leaders joined other parents defending our right to attend Christian schools and be homeschooled. I remember my late father speaking of Dr. Gibbs with such high regard, and even as a young person, it impressed upon me how much one faithful person could accomplish.

"The freedom so many families now take for granted exists because men like you were willing to stand in courtrooms and statehouses decades ago and fight for us when that freedom was anything but guaranteed.

"Throughout my adult life, I've walked through some very dark and difficult seasons, and I can trace the anchor that held me through those times to the faith I was raised in during my Christian school years. What was planted in me then became something I could stand on later, when I needed it most.

"As I look around our world today, things often look bleak and dark, and it can feel like the enemy of our souls is winning. But what you did back then inspires me today and reminds me that the fight is always worth it, because God is greater than every force of darkness.

"When even one person chooses to obey and serve Him, God can do amazing things. My prayer is that God will spare our country and raise up a new generation of courageous warriors for the Gospel.

"Although we never met, I want you to know that you and the Christian Law Association made a real difference in my life and in the lives of my children. For that, I am deeply thankful."

What a reminder that we may never fully know on this side of eternity how God uses a faithful stand for truth. The battles fought for Christian liberty today are not merely about the case before us—they can affect children, families, churches, and generations yet to come.

That is why the Christian Law Association remains committed to standing for Biblical truth and defending the religious liberties God has entrusted to us.

The Christian Law Association Provides the Following:

- Free legal defense of those facing difficulties for the Biblical faith
- Free legal counsel to churches and Christians for their ministries
- Free legal help to homeschooling families
- Publication of ***The Legal Alert***, a monthly newsletter
- Legal books and other resources to inform Christians of their rights
- Preaching in churches across the country
- Intercessory prayer ministry for requests sent to the ministry offices
- Free legal consulting to local, state, and federal officials and legislators to provide maximum religious liberty
- Prayer initiative for our national leadership and government
- Legal seminars for ministries to help prevent lawsuits
- Weekday radio program broadcast, ***The Legal Alert***, on 1,600 outlets around the world



Prayer Requests from Across America

ALABAMA — Please pray for a pastor seeking counsel after a difficult disagreement developed within his church leadership. Pray for wisdom, unity, and that every decision will be made Biblically and in accordance with the church's governing documents.

ALASKA — Please pray for a small church with limited resources that is working through questions concerning the use of its property. Pray that the matter can be resolved without distracting the congregation from its ministry.

ARIZONA — A Christian employee is struggling with a workplace requirement that conflicts with sincerely held religious beliefs. Pray for favor as an accommodation is requested and for wisdom concerning each step that should be taken.

ARKANSAS — Please pray for a church reviewing its policies for children's ministries and volunteers. Pray that its leaders will put appropriate safeguards in place while continuing to reach children and families with the Gospel.

CALIFORNIA — A ministry is navigating a complicated employment matter involving its Biblical standards. Please pray for wisdom for its leadership and for the attorneys assisting them as they seek to protect the ministry's religious mission.

COLORADO — Please pray for a Christian business owner facing difficult questions about how to operate consistently with Biblical convictions while complying with applicable law.

CONNECTICUT — A Christian family is seeking guidance concerning educational decisions for their children. Pray that the parents will have wisdom and that their rights and responsibilities will be clearly understood.

DELAWARE — Please pray for a pastor dealing with a sensitive personnel matter within his church. Ask the Lord to give him wisdom, compassion, and courage to make the right decisions.

FLORIDA — A church has contacted CLA with questions about improving its safety and security procedures. Pray for wisdom as church leaders seek to protect their congregation without allowing fear to interfere with ministry.

GEORGIA — Please pray for a homeschooling family seeking guidance concerning requirements affecting the education of their children. Pray for clarity, wisdom, and a peaceful resolution.

KENTUCKY — A young Christian considering law as a career has asked for guidance from Christian attorneys. Pray that God will direct his future and raise up another generation of attorneys committed to defending religious liberty.

MARYLAND — A Christian employee needs a scheduling accommodation because work requirements conflict with sincerely held religious observances. Pray that the employer will respond reasonably and that the matter can be resolved without litigation.

MISSISSIPPI — A church has requested assistance reviewing its employee handbook. Pray that its policies will protect the church legally while clearly preserving its Biblical identity and standards.

OHIO — CLA attorneys are assisting churches and Christians with numerous legal questions and active matters. Please pray for wisdom for the attorneys handling these cases, discernment in giving counsel, and strength for the staff members supporting this work.

TENNESSEE — A church-related school is seeking guidance concerning state requirements that may affect its operations. Pray for clarity concerning the law and wisdom for the school's leadership as they determine how to proceed.

TEXAS — A church is working through an important leadership matter and wants to ensure that every step complies with its bylaws. Pray for unity within the congregation and wisdom for those providing legal counsel.

WASHINGTON — A church preparing for a pastoral transition is carefully reviewing its bylaws and voting procedures amid some disagreement within the ministry. Pray that the transition will be handled properly, peacefully, and in a way that protects the church.

HAWAII — Please pray for a church seeking guidance concerning the use of its facilities by outside groups. Pray that church leaders will have wisdom to protect the ministry's biblical convictions while continuing to use their property effectively for the Lord.

Please pray for the entire team of attorneys and staff at the Christian Law Association. Every day, calls and emails come to our office from pastors, churches, Christian schools, ministries, families, and individual believers facing legal questions and, at times, very serious threats to their religious liberty.

Our attorneys carry a tremendous responsibility. They must carefully evaluate each situation, research changing laws, counsel ministry leaders, respond to governmental agencies, negotiate difficult disputes, prepare legal documents, and, when necessary, defend Christians and ministries facing litigation. Behind them is a dedicated staff helping with intake, research, correspondence, case management, administration, and the countless details necessary to provide this legal help without charge to those we serve.

Please pray that God will give each of our attorneys wisdom and discernment for every matter placed in their hands. Pray for stamina when the workload is heavy, clarity when legal issues are complicated, and courage when the stakes are high.

Please also pray for our entire CLA staff. Ask the Lord to protect their families, strengthen them spiritually, and help each person remember that whether answering a telephone, preparing a document, researching an issue, corresponding with a frightened pastor, or working on a major religious-liberty case, every part of the work matters.

Finally, please pray that the Lord will continue to provide the financial resources necessary for CLA to offer this assistance without charge. We are profoundly thankful for the churches, families, and individuals whose prayers and gifts make this ministry possible.

LEGAL QUESTIONS, PRAYER REQUESTS, OR DONATIONS: CALL **888-252-1969** OR VISIT **WWW.CHRISTIANLAW.ORG**

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IDAHO — Praise the Lord for parents who are taking seriously their responsibility to direct the education and spiritual training of their children. Pray for a family seeking guidance as they work through questions involving their educational rights.

ILLINOIS — A church is reviewing its governing documents after questions arose concerning leadership authority and decision-making. Please pray that potential problems can be addressed now, before they develop into a serious church conflict.

INDIANA — Please pray for a Christian school dealing with a sensitive student matter involving both its Biblical standards and legal responsibilities. Ask God to give administrators wisdom, compassion, and courage as they determine the proper response.

IOWA — A pastor of a smaller church contacted CLA with a legal question that had become a significant burden to him. Praise the Lord that many matters can be addressed before they develop into costly legal disputes. Pray that pastors will seek counsel early when problems arise.

KANSAS — Please pray for a church updating bylaws that have not been carefully reviewed for many years. Pray that its leaders will recognize areas that need clarification and put strong governing documents in place for future generations.

LOUISIANA — A church wants to help an individual or family experiencing a serious need but has questions about potential liability and the proper way to provide assistance. Pray for wisdom so that legal concerns do not unnecessarily prevent compassionate ministry.

MAINE — Please pray for a Bible-believing congregation facing increasing cultural pressure because of its Biblical positions. Ask God to give the pastor and congregation courage to remain faithful while demonstrating the love and grace of Christ.

MASSACHUSETTS — Praise the Lord for a church that faithfully remembers CLA in prayer. We are especially thankful for congregations that treat this ministry as a missionary work and regularly pray for our attorneys, staff, and the Christians we serve.

MICHIGAN — A Christian ministry is reviewing its employment practices to make certain that its policies clearly reflect its religious beliefs and mission. Pray for wisdom as leaders work to protect the ministry's ability to employ individuals who support its Biblical purpose.

MINNESOTA — Please pray for a family walking through a difficult situation in which legal, personal, and spiritual concerns have become intertwined. Pray that they will receive wise counsel and that the Lord will give them peace while important decisions are being made.

MISSOURI — Praise the Lord for faithful Christians who have served ministries quietly behind the scenes for decades. We thank God for those whose work may never receive public recognition but whose faithfulness has helped Gospel ministries accomplish their work.

MONTANA — A small church with limited financial resources has encountered a legal question that its leaders did not know how to address. Pray that the church will receive the guidance it needs and be able to remain focused on reaching its community for Christ.

NEBRASKA — Please pray for a Christian husband who wants to become more intentional about praying specifically for his wife and family. Praise the Lord for men who are seeking to become stronger spiritual leaders in their homes.

NEVADA — A Christian employee is concerned that workplace expectations may require participation in something that conflicts with sincerely held religious convictions. Pray for wisdom in communicating those convictions and for a reasonable accommodation from the employer.

NEW HAMPSHIRE — A church has discovered that portions of its governing documents are unclear and may not accurately reflect how the church currently operates. Pray for unity as leaders consider appropriate revisions and for wisdom to avoid future disputes.

NEW JERSEY — Please pray for a ministry dealing with questions involving the use of its property and local governmental requirements. Ask the Lord to give ministry leaders wisdom and favor with the officials involved.

NEW MEXICO — A pastor is attempting to help a hurting family while also recognizing that some of the problems they face require professional and legal assistance beyond pastoral counseling. Pray for wisdom to know how best to help and where to direct them.

NEW YORK — Please pray for a Christian whose Biblical convictions have created difficulty in the workplace. Ask God to provide courage, wisdom, and favor as the individual seeks to practice sincerely held faith without losing employment.

NORTH CAROLINA — Praise the Lord for believers who have given sacrificially to support CLA's ministry of legal helps. Some gifts come from individuals who simply want to make certain that another pastor, church, or Christian family can receive legal assistance without charge. We thank God for every one of them.

NORTH DAKOTA — Please pray for a rural church whose pastor carries many responsibilities with very little staff assistance. Ask the Lord to give him wisdom as he handles both ministry responsibilities and important administrative matters.

OKLAHOMA — Praise the Lord for a generous supporter who gave while expressing gratitude for CLA's service to Christians. Pray that God will bless those who sacrificially provide the resources that allow our attorneys to continue serving without charging those who call for help.

OREGON — A Christian organization is reviewing policies that affect employees and volunteers because of concerns that secular legal requirements may conflict with the ministry's Biblical standards. Pray for wisdom in preserving both legal protection and Biblical faithfulness.

PENNSYLVANIA — Please pray for a longtime supporter who continues to faithfully stand with Christian ministry after the loss of a beloved spouse. Praise the Lord for believers whose decades of prayer, friendship, and generosity have helped sustain ministries such as CLA.

RHODE ISLAND — A small Bible-believing church is seeking to remain faithful to Scripture in a community where some of its convictions are increasingly unpopular. Pray that its leaders will have both courage and a gracious Christian testimony.

SOUTH CAROLINA — Please pray for a church reviewing its procedures for children's workers, volunteers, and ministry safety. Ask God to help its leaders establish safeguards that protect children, workers, and the testimony of the church.

SOUTH DAKOTA — Praise the Lord for grandparents and parents who are intentionally passing Biblical truth to the next generation. Pray for families facing cultural pressures that make this responsibility increasingly difficult.

UTAH — Please pray for a Gospel-preaching church laboring in a community where Biblical Christianity represents a small minority. Ask the Lord to strengthen the pastor, provide opportunities to share the Gospel, and bring people to saving faith in Christ.

VERMONT — A pastor has expressed discouragement over the spiritual climate in which his church ministers. Pray that God will remind him that success is measured by faithfulness and give the congregation renewed opportunities to reach its community.

VIRGINIA — A ministry is reviewing policies and procedures after a legal question revealed an area that needed greater clarity. Praise the Lord when potential problems are identified early enough to be corrected before they become litigation.

WEST VIRGINIA — Please pray for a church ministering to a family experiencing a serious personal crisis. Ask the Lord to give the pastor wisdom, protect the family, and provide the appropriate spiritual, practical, and legal resources they need.

WYOMING — Please pray for a pastor serving a geographically isolated congregation with limited access to professional resources. Ask the Lord to encourage him and remind him that help is available when difficult legal or ministry questions arise.

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