

TO: The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
FROM: The Rev. Mario Bergner, Redeemed Lives, Inc. USA
REGARDING: Mutual Respect Denied to Christians Because Preferential Treatment is Given to LGBT Views.
DATE: 3 October 2012

Working Session 14: Tolerance and non-discrimination II: Review of the implementation of commitments on promotion of mutual respect and understanding.

***Central Recommendation:* Participating States of the OSCE please acknowledge that mutual respect is not only denied to some Christians, but preferential treatment is given to the views of the LGBT community.**

Christians are being treated in an intolerant manner for holding to the moral worldview of their faith traditions when specifically applied to LGBT issues. I would draw your attention to one such example and conclude with one significant application. Ms. Chai Feldblum, of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the USA has said, "A belief derived from a religious faith should be accorded no more weight—and no less weight—than a belief derived from a non-religious source." Yet mutual respect and understanding is not afforded to Christians when their views are not congruent with the popular LGBT views. The views of LGBT people are given more weight than the views of Christians. I offer one example.

In July 2010, Jennifer Keeton, a graduate psychology student at Augusta State University in Augusta, Georgia, was told that her Christian beliefs are incompatible with the prevailing views of her counseling professions about LGBT issues. Therefore, in order to remain as a student at the University, she was ordered to undergo a reeducation plan, which included diversity sensitivity training and documenting how the 'remediation' assignments influenced her beliefs so that faculty can decide the appropriateness of her continuation in the counseling program. When she refused to undergo the reeducation plan, she was expelled from the university and in July 2012 lost a second appeal to remain a student. Ms. Keeton is a victim of discrimination against Christians, which results in a lack of mutual respect for our moral worldview and, moreover, shows that there is preferential treatment given to the LGBT viewpoints.

I am not arguing that the rights of LGBT people be taken away, or that they should not be allowed to express their conscience. Rather, I am arguing that the rights of LGBT people in the USA now results in a lack of mutual respect for the convictions of Christians as exemplified in the discrimination shown to Jennifer Keeton.

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