Written by **Dave Bohon** on February 7, 2011

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Rules in Favor of Christian Hiring Policies

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that World Vision, a Christian humanitarian relief organization based in Seattle, can hire employees — as well as terminate them — based on the organization's statement of faith.

In a case that goes back to 2007, three long-time World Vision employees sued the humanitarian ministry after they were fired from their jobs when it was determined they were not in full agreement with the group's statement of Christian faith.

The case has been closely monitored by religious non-profit groups that use faith-based hiring guidelines but are also the recipients of federal funding.

While Title VII of the Civil Rights Act normally prohibits an organization that receives federal funding from discriminating on the basis of religious beliefs, the court ruled 2-1 that World Vision qualified for an exemption to the law as "a religious corporation" with the need to hire individuals embracing its unique tenets in order to effectively execute the organization's mission.

Dean Owen, a spokesman for World Vision called the ruling "a victory for any Christian organization in the United States that … prefers to hire only people of the same faith. [F]or Christian organizations who indeed have that hiring policy, this is indeed very, very good news. This goes far beyond World Vision."

In a statement on its website, World Vision said that its Christian faith "has been the foundation of our work since the organization was established in 1950, and our hiring policy is vital to the integrity of our mission to serve the poor as followers of Jesus Christ."

The organization emphasized the importance of staffing its work with individuals who are in full agreement with the tenets of the gospel of Jesus Christ. "We hire Christians, imperfect and flawed," World Vision explained, "not because we think they are superior, but because we believe that any real success will come only through the presence of Christ in each employee's heart and His power through prayer in each staff member's mind and hands."

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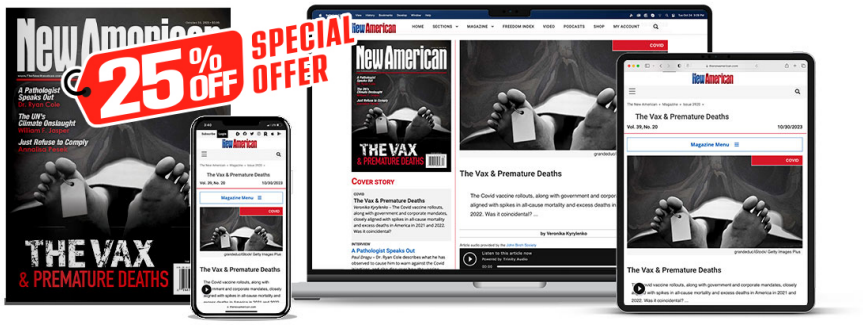

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