



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 8, 2013

## Gay Couple Suing to Force U.K. Churches to Host Same-Sex Weddings

Britain's Parliament legalized same-sex marriage recently, and despite the inclusion of measures in the law designed to supposedly protect churches from being forced to host same-sex marriage ceremonies, a wealthy and high-profile homosexual couple has decided to mount a legal challenge to destroy those safeguards to religious freedom.

Barrie Drewitt-Barlow and his partner Tony, who made history in 1999 when they became the first homosexual couple in Britain to be named on their children's birth certificates, went through a civil ceremony in 2006, but that is not enough, insisted Drewitt-Barlow, because they cannot be married in a church. "We are happy for gay marriage to be recognized," Drewitt-Barlow told the UK's [Essex Chronicle](#). "In that sense it is a big step. But it is actually a small step because it is something we still cannot actually do. We need to convince the church that it is the right thing for our community for them to recognize as practicing Christians."

Drewitt-Barlow insisted that not only is he a Christian, but "my children have all been brought up as Christians and are part of the local parish church in Danbury. I want to go into my church and marry my husband." He added that "if I was a Sikh I could get married at the Gurdwara, liberal Jews can marry in the Synagogue — just not the Christians. 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."

Drewitt-Barlow likened the legal obstacle to a church wedding to "someone giving me a sweetie [candy] with the wrapper on and telling me to suck it.... As much as people are saying this is a good thing, I am still not getting what I want."

The U.K.'s [Christian Institute](#) recalled that while Parliament promised protections for churches that would exempt them from performing gay wedding ceremonies, during debate and discussion over the measure a leading British lawyer warned that the law would likely leave the Church of England open to legal challenges like the one being pursued by Drewitt-Barlow and his "husband."

In June 2012, MP Crispin Blunt, who was then Britain's Justice Minister, "admitted that the Government's plans could lead to legal issues," reported the Christian Institute. "He said the





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government is 'seeking to protect, indeed, proscribe religious organizations from offering gay marriage,' but he continued, 'that may be problematic legally.'"

With deep pockets and an activist mindset, Drewitt-Barlow has stepped forward to put the promised legal protections to the test. "The only way forward for us now is to make a challenge in the courts against the church," said Drewitt-Barlow. "It is a shame that we are forced to take Christians into a court to get them to recognize us." He insisted that "we don't want to force anyone into marrying us — it is supposed to be the happiest day in my life, and that would make me miserable and would spoil the whole thing."

Colin Hart of the UK's [Coalition for Marriage](#), the leading organization working to protect traditional marriage in Britain, recalled that he had warned Prime Minister David Cameron that legal challenges to the church protections would be a problem. "We told him he was making promises that he couldn't possibly keep," Hart told the U.K.'s [Daily Mail](#). "He didn't listen. He didn't care. He's the one who has created this mess. Mr Cameron's chickens are coming home to roost and it will be ordinary people with a religious belief who yet again fall victim to the totalitarian forces of political correctness."

Hart noted that the country now faces "the real prospect of churches having to choose between stopping conducting weddings, or vicars, and priests defying the law and finding themselves languishing in the dock."

As same-sex marriage laws are being passed in states across the United States, pro-family and conservative legal advocacy groups are warning clergy and churches to prepare for similar legal challenges as same-sex couples begin demanding that Bible-believing churches open their doors to same-sex wedding ceremonies. Organizations like the [Pacific Justice Institute](#) recommend that churches institute an ironclad "Marriage Policy" that may help to stave off such attacks.

Such a policy would include the stipulation that couples wishing to be married at the church in question would be required to go through Bible-based pre-marital counseling administered by a biblically qualified minister, as well as to affirm their agreement with the church's "Articles of Faith" — a document that would, of course, include a wholly scriptural definition of marriage.



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