

Amicus Union News Release

Friday 27th October 2006

Amicus welcomes recognition of Employment Rights for Ministers of Religion

After twelve years of campaigning for employment rights for Ministers of Religion, Amicus is celebrating today's announcement by an Employment Appeals Tribunal that Ministers now have the legal right to claim unfair dismissal.

Amicus say that through cases it has brought on behalf of its clergy members, the law has gradually crept towards granting this basic human right to Ministers of Religion. These include the Helen Percy case brought last year for Sex Discrimination and now the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) case taken by Barrister Daniel Barnett on behalf of the Reverend Sylvester Stewart of the New Testament Church of God.

Amicus National Officer, Rachael Maskell says: ***"The courts have recognised Amicus' position that the time has come for Ministers of Religion to be treated with the same human and employment rights as all other workers, so no longer can they be removed from office for no unjustifiable reason, and have nowhere to go to appeal against such injustices."***

Each year Amicus represents over a hundred Ministers across all denominations, only to be frustrated by the legal restrictions which prevent independent resolutions of their cases.

Chair of Amicus Faith Workers Branch, Reverend Dr. Gerry Barlow says: ***"The announcement by the EAT today means that a new level of fairness has been given to all Ministers which we have been demanding for many years. As a result of this we will use our expertise to help all churches and other faith bodies to develop their policies. Amicus will also continue to promote reconciliation between the parties."***

"From today, I would say to every Minister of Religion, from any denomination or faith, that now is the time to join Amicus Faith Workers, as a professional trade union that can ensure that your interests are now looked after in this new arena of employment rights."

Amicus represents 2,500 faith workers across all denominations and faiths.

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