

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Interfaith Legal Advisers Network

Lambeth Palace, 1 March 2010

NORMAN DOE

Centre For Law and Religion, Cardiff University

The fourth meeting of the Interfaith Legal Advisers Network (ILAN) was held on 1 March 2010 at Lambeth Palace. ILAN is an initiative of the Centre for Law and Religion at Cardiff University. The group, comprising representatives of a number of different religious groups and a representative of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, examined recent and forthcoming developments in discrimination law, sharing matters of common concern relating to religion in school and the workplace.¹

The first session explored religion and belief discrimination in the workplace. Chaired by Professor Norman Doe, the session included a paper from Russell Sandberg looking at the Court of Appeal decision in *Ladele* and other recent cases. He contended that the reasoning and tenor of the Court of Appeal's decision was of concern, portraying religious freedom so narrowly that it could easily be 'trumped' by other rights. A discussion followed as to the extent to which religious discrimination occurs and which faith practices are affected.

After lunch, Russell Sandberg chaired the second session, which looked at exceptions afforded to religious groups. Norman Doe presented a paper on the current law and the changes included in the Equality Bill. Given that most of the contentious provisions in the Equality Bill had been rejected by Parliament, the current exceptions gained much support from group members. There was a discussion, however, as to whether the law should deal with such matters as 'rights' rather than 'exceptions', since the practice of giving 'exceptions' was seen as automatically putting faith communities on the back foot.

Norman Doe chaired the third session, which focused on discrimination in schools. Frank Cranmer gave a paper on the recent Supreme Court decision in the JFS case. The merits of the judgment were discussed together with the

1 For more information about the Network including selected papers presented at meetings see: <www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/ilan.html>, accessed 23 July 2010.

effect that the ruling would have on other faith communities. Group members concluded that since Judaism and Sikhism alone are regarded as both races and religions as a matter of law, then the decision would affect their faith schools the most. However, it was not clear how other religious groups would be affected.

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Law and Religion Scholars Network

Cardiff Law School, 11 May 2010

RUSSELL SANDBERG

Centre for Law and Religion, Cardiff University

The 2010 Law and Religion Scholars Network (LARSN) Conference was attended by over 50 delegates and saw over 20 academic papers presented. These covered topics as diverse as religious symbols in schools, the employment status of ministers of religion, the Anglican Ordinariate, the new Public Sector Equality Duty and religious order charities.

The day concluded with a meeting, chaired by Russell Sandberg, which assessed the progress of LARSN to date and planned for the future of the Network. Successes in the last year include an increase in membership and the development of the Case Database featuring judgments delivered by domestic courts, the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights concerning law and religion.² Plans for the next year include the second LARSN doctoral students' conference, which will take place in December at Oxford Brookes, and a further LARSN conference in Cardiff in May 2011.

LARSN was established in May 2008 as a national initiative led by the Centre for Law and Religion at Cardiff University.³ It seeks to bring together for the first time academics who are interested in all areas of law and religion: national and international law affecting religion and religious law. Further information on the ongoing work of the network may be obtained from Russell Sandberg (SandbergR@cf.ac.uk).

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2 See <www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/lrsncd.html>, accessed 23 July 2010.

3 For more information, see <www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/lrsn.html>, accessed 23 July 2010.