



News and Current Events :: BBC to be taken to the High Court

BBC to be taken to the High Court - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/1/20 3:30

The Christian Institute issued this News Release today. The BBC had tens of thousands of complaints about this programme even before it was broadcast.

BBC to face the High Court following 'Jerry Springer opera'

The BBC is facing legal action in the High Court following its broadcast of 'Jerry Springer the Opera'. Solicitors acting on behalf of The Christian Institute have written to the BBC informing the Corporation of the Institute's intention to seek a judicial review of the BBC's decision to broadcast the show on 8 January.

The show contains hundreds of swear words and features God the Father, Jesus Christ, Mary, Adam and Eve and Satan as warring guests on a special edition of the Jerry Springer show – staged in Hell. The show includes a portrayal of Jesus as a childish, foul-mouthed woman-beater with a sexual predilection for human excrement and who declares himself to be 'a bit gay'. It also features an attempt by Eve to masturbate Jesus.

The Institute says the broadcast was deeply offensive to Christians and was a clear breach of the BBC's Royal Charter. The charter requires the BBC not to broadcast material that 'offends against good taste or decency' or is 'offensive to public feeling'. The Institute also believes the BBC has discriminated against Christians by singling out the Christian faith for the kind of abuse that no other faith would receive.

Speaking today, Colin Hart (Director of The Christian Institute) said: "I think this is the most offensive and spiteful show ever broadcast by the BBC. There may be many shows running in West End theatres that I find offensive, but I am not paying for them to be pumped into my living room. I am appalled that a publicly funded body should be so contemptuous of the people who pay for its upkeep. The BBC has a duty to respect the religious beliefs of its viewers. The BBC has special privileges as a result of how it is funded. But that means it also has special responsibilities."

"Genuine religious debate and criticism is one thing, but this show is an offensive, spiteful, systematic mockery and wilful denigration of Christian belief. It is inconceivable that the BBC would broadcast a show that abused the prophet Mohammed or Guru Nanak in the same way. Why is Christianity singled out for such gratuitous and spiteful abuse? If the BBC can broadcast such an offensive show, then what will be broadcast next? What is the point of broadcasting standards if the BBC can so easily flout them? That is why The Christian Institute is seeking a judicial review of the BBC's decision to broadcast Jerry Springer the Opera."

Note for Editors:

1. The Christian Institute has no relationship to the organisation called 'Christian Voice'. The legal action by The Christian Institute is entirely separate from any private blasphemy prosecution which we understand may be brought.
2. The Institute deplores any opposition to 'Jerry Springer - The Opera' which is conducted in an intimidating and harassing manner. We seek to make our case through democratic means.
3. Our legal action is on the grounds that the BBC has broken its own Royal Charter and, as a public body, has discriminated against Christians.