

Some Tips to Prevent Employment Discrimination Lawsuits: A Faith-Based Legal Guide for Manager

By David A. Robinson (2013)

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David A. Robinson states in the preface that this “book concludes that if employers and employees will follow the Bible, they will follow the law” (p. v). Throughout the book, he examines the ability of employers to reconcile being in compliance with employment laws with following the Bible and faith-based teachings. This examination does give a Christian employer hope and practical guidance on how to follow both the laws of God and man.

The book offers the reader a solid foundation and overview of federal employment laws and is full of excellent examples of how these laws apply in the workplace. Supporting this solid overview of the law, Robinson offers support from the Bible, as well as faith tenets from various denominations, to support the upholding of the law and the purposes the employment laws are seeking to accomplish.

Areas of federal employment law reviewed in this book include: race discrimination, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, religious discrimination, age discrimination, disability discrimination, and sexual orientation discrimination. The areas of employment law reviewed concentrate on the federal laws regulating employment, which as Robinson says are considered the “baseline” (p. 13). States may impose additional requirements on the employment relationship, and the author reminds the reader to become familiar with these requirements. Robinson is not afraid to address hot-button issues, such as sexual orientation discrimination, but does so in a redemptive manner while again showing how Scripture and the law can coincide and do have the same underlying goal: fair and Godly treatment of all based upon their worth as a person, not based upon one of the legally protected traits (race, age, gender, etc.) that they possess.

Not only does this book provide the reader with a greater understanding of the laws regulating employ-

ment, it also provides the reader (employer, employee) with faith-based proactive advice on how to avoid discrimination lawsuits, how to prevent discrimination from occurring in the workplace, and how to avoid becoming a victim of discrimination. An example given on how to prevent race discrimination in the workplace is to be “color blind.” By recommending that one be “color blind,” Robinson states that “you should ignore race and skin color completely,” except in two or three very narrow situations. He goes on to give examples of how this may be done and explains the limited times when race or color should be considered in the workplace. His discussion is supported by biblical and historical references, including reference to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s goal expressed in his “I Have Dream” speech of having a color blind society where his children were not “judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character” (pp. 17-18).

Further, Robinson clearly understands the economic impact that employment laws can have on employers (and, by extension, employees) as is evidenced by his discussion of the various legal expenses an employer incurs to remain in compliance with the law. The discussions on preventing discrimination from occurring emphasizes that this will allow both employers and employees to flourish by reducing the costs of compliance.

However, he does realistically remind employers that even if the employer does all they can to eliminate discrimination and comply with the law, an employee can still accuse the employer of discrimination (p. 3). Therefore, Robinson’s review of tools to use to prevent discrimination, including written policies, is very valuable. These tools can operate both as proactive measures to prevent lawsuits and as defenses if sued by an employee.

This book would be a valuable supplement to the discussion of employment laws in the business law classroom

at Christian colleges and universities who are engaged in shaping Christ-like leaders. While this book would be a good resource in a traditional classroom, I believe that its true value and worth would lie with its use in the non-traditional classroom since non-traditional students will more easily relate to the discussion and examples used by correlating them to occurrences within their own workplaces or through situations they have experienced or witnessed throughout their careers. Christian business practitioners will also be able to greatly benefit from this book.

In summary, Robinson's coverage of employment laws, biblical texts, and preventative measures available to employers works to achieve the stated purpose of the book "that if employers and employees will follow the Bible, they will follow the law" (p. v). This book pointedly reminds the reader "that discrimination is forbidden not only by law but by the Bible" (p.5).