



Latin America, February 12, 2008

PUBLIC STATEMENT IN DEFENSE OF REVEREND ÅKE GREEN'S FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION

The Latin American Christian Lawyers Network (RLAAC), a regional association of national nonprofit organizations of lawyers in all of Latin America, respectfully addresses Swedish public opinion to express their genuine concern with respect to the recent separation of a Swedish citizen from a civil organization, due to his religious convictions.

As it is well known, Sweden is considered a model country to Latin America mainly because of the high development of her democratic system and for her consistent role in the defense of human rights worldwide. In 2005, our regional association and each of our member organizations in 20 Latin American countries were pleased at the new example of complete respect to civil liberties that the Swedish Supreme Court gave to the world with its Åke Green Sentence, establishing jurisprudence that confirmed once again that in a democratic nation, all persons have the right to think differently and to publicly express their religious views without violence.

We are very disappointed to know that despite having Rev. Åke Green's freedom of thought and expression been upheld by the highest Swedish justice authority, the IOGT – NTO has decided to separate him from the organization precisely because of his biblical views on homosexuality.

We question the decision taking into consideration that the IOGT - NTO is not a religious organization but one dedicated to help people recuperate from alcoholism. We interpret this separation constitutes an unjustifiable act of discrimination against a citizen based on his religion. Especially because of the organization's important goals, we think the organization should strive to bring people from varying backgrounds together in pursuit of those certain goals, regardless of members' views on other unrelated topics.

We call on the IOGT-NTO Board of Directors to reconsider the decision they made concerning Rev. Green and, applying the high principles of the Swedish Constitution, the European Convention for Human Rights and the International Pact for Civil and Political Rights, reinstate him in his position as member of this organization.

Respectfully submitted,

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Red Latinoamericana de Abogados Cristianos www.rlaac.net

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RLAAC Member Organizations and Representatives:

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