

World Vision wins employee faith case

by [Lauren Markoe](#)

October 4, 2011

WASHINGTON (RNS) The U.S. Supreme Court will not hear a case involving three employees who were fired by the Christian humanitarian agency World Vision, allowing the relief group to maintain its mandatory statement of faith for its workers.

World Vision has spent four years defending itself against three former employees who were fired because they did not believe in the deity of Jesus Christ or the Trinity.

On Monday (Oct. 3), the high court refused to reopen the case, leaving intact a ruling from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that sided with World Vision.

The court's decision "represents a major victory for the freedom of all religious organizations to hire employees who share the same faith -- whether Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian or any other religion," said Richard Stearns, the U.S. president of World Vision.

The 9th Circuit ruling found that World Vision did not violate an amendment to the 1964 Civil Rights Act in firing the employees. The court did not accept the employees' argument that the work of World Vision was humanitarian, but not religious in nature.

On Wednesday, the Supreme Court will consider a related case on the extent to which a religious organization is bound by anti-discrimination protections when hiring and firing employees who perform some religious duties.

Unlike the World Vision case, where all parties agreed the employees were fired for religious reasons, Wednesday's case presents the court with a dispute over the motivations of a Michigan Lutheran school in firing a teacher.