

SINCLAIR v SINCLAIR was a 1969 Kansas Supreme Court decision. Limited details only. Robert Sinclair and Hazel Sinclair had been married for approximately twenty years, when Robert Sinclair was granted a divorce in February 1968. Custody of their two children, Gary and David, ages 18 and 13, was granted to Robert Sinclair. The trial court granted the divorce to Robert Sinclair on the grounds of gross neglect of duty and extreme cruelty, resulting from Hazel Sinclair's recent obsession with her new Jehovah's Witnesses religion. WatchTower doctrines noted in the trial record included prohibition against blood transfusions, and the belief that Armageddon would occur in 1975. Hazel Sinclair appealed.

The Supreme Court of Kansas affirmed, holding:

"2. The religious zeal of a spouse may be carried to such lengths that domestic harmony is completely disrupted and the legitimate ends of matrimony destroyed, with the result that the life of the complaining spouse is rendered intolerable. Such conduct characterizes behavior amounting to extreme cruelty and also may constitute gross neglect of duty within the purview of our divorce statute

...

"4. The paramount consideration of the court in custody cases between parents is the welfare and best interests of the children. In the absence of abuse of sound judicial discretion the trial court's determination of custody will be upheld on appeal.

"5. The record is examined in a divorce action where the wife became so obsessed with her religious beliefs and activities as a Jehovah's Witness that her conduct completely disrupted family life and she neglected her duties as a wife and mother, and it is held, the trial court did not err in (1) granting the husband a divorce on the grounds of extreme cruelty and gross neglect of duty; (2) the division of property and alimony award; and (3) awarding custody of the minor children to the husband."