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Standing firm in the faith

Whatever it is right to pray for, it is also right to work for. Thousands of Christians have mobilised in recent months to address major issues of concern.

We thank God that guidance which could have banned a Christian view of marriage in schools has been replaced by helpful protections for free speech. A rethink by the Scottish Government on its promotion of gender ideology to school children is also welcome.

However, imposing same-sex marriage and abortion

on Northern Ireland is an outrage. Politicians also ignored significant public opposition on Relationships Education and seem determined to do the same for 'no-fault' divorce.

God's word encourages Christians to engage with the big issues that will shape society for generations. It is right to do this whether we win or lose. It is right to urge our leaders to pass laws which restrain evil and promote good.

Thank you for standing with us in our work.

Institute pressure helps teachers who disagree with gay marriage

The Government has revised draft guidance which effectively banned disagreement with same-sex marriage in independent schools across England.

The changes were made after The Christian Institute threatened to take the Government to court. If it had gone ahead, state-funded schools would inevitably have followed suit.

The guidance originally stated that a school would breach the Independent School Standards if it "suggests that same-sex marriages or civil partnerships should not be recognised as being lawful unions under civil law".

But the final version allows schools to "facilitate debate" and offers a specific protection for faith schools to teach that



"marriage is only between a man and a woman".

Institute Director Colin Hart welcomed the Government's U-turn. "We told the Department for Education we were prepared to challenge the guidance in court. Crucially supporters also responded to the consultation or

wrote to their MP objecting to the wording.

"These are important gains – it means there is room to debate same-sex marriage in schools. It is still possible the guidance could be misused. But we believe this is less likely with the changes that have been made."

MPs back 'no-fault' divorce

The Government is pressing ahead with plans to make divorce dramatically easier in England and Wales.

MPs have given their initial support to the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill. Additional scrutiny will follow after the summer.

The plans are progressing despite a lack of public support. Official consultation results revealed 83 per cent of respondents – including many Institute supporters – disagreed with removing the right to contest a divorce.

Under the Bill a husband or wife can walk out on their marriage without giving any reason. A spouse being

“the most anti-family legislation since the introduction of same-sex marriage”.

Colin Hart, Director
The Christian Institute



divorced against their will can do nothing to contest the proceedings.

In 2017 around 42,600 divorces were on the basis of at least two years' separation before proceedings could start. The Bill scraps the separation options.

A further 58,700 were on the basis of a fault such as adultery. These fault grounds will also be scrapped. A victim of adultery or

domestic violence will be unable to cite their spouse's conduct as the reason for the divorce.

Alarmingly, proceedings could be pushed through in six months or less. A Government pilot scheme cut the process to just twelve weeks.

This risks exacerbating the already high levels of family breakdown because it restricts the time available for couples to reconcile.

Westminster imposes abortion and same-sex marriage on N Ireland

Same-sex marriage and abortion will be imposed on Northern Ireland after Parliament voted to change the law.

It will end the Province's excellent laws protecting marriage and the unborn unless the Assembly at Stormont is restored by 21 October.

The sensitive issues are devolved matters but the Commons and the Lords opted to amend the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Bill in both areas.

Amendments to introduce protections for religious liberty



and free speech on marriage equivalent to those in the rest of the UK were rejected. But without them future regulations will be open to legal challenge. The law must prevent church ministers being compelled to conduct same-sex weddings.

On the abortion changes, Callum Webster, the Institute's Northern Ireland Officer, noted that current protections have saved an estimated 100,000 lives. He said: "It's tragic that MPs from outside Northern Ireland actually cheered the passing of this legislation."

Thousands oppose 'inappropriate' Relationships Education plans

Thousands of parents and teachers have raised concerns over Government plans for mandatory Relationships Education in all schools from September next year.

Some 11,000 people responded to a consultation on teaching Relationships and Sex Education in England. Nearly 60 per cent said the proposed content for primary schools was not "age-appropriate". Almost two-thirds said the same about Relationships and Sex Education in secondary schools.

The Government chose to downplay the level of opposition and in late March, MPs voted overwhelmingly to pass the changes.

Schools will be under a statutory requirement to consult parents over how the changes are implemented. But young children could be taught



about a variety of relationships, including homosexuality, transsexualism and same-sex marriage once Relationships Education is introduced from September 2020.

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools and the right of withdrawal will remain for sex education. However, there will be no

automatic right to opt-out of Relationships Education. This is a fundamental shift in authority from the parent to the state.

At secondary level the longstanding right to withdraw from sex education will also be downgraded. Under the new regulations, headteachers can veto a parent's request to withdraw their child.

Would you like us to visit your church?



We visit over 300 churches a year to talk about the work of The Christian Institute.

If you would like your church to be one of them, contact us at: development@christian.org.uk

Hundreds of parents at risk from smacking ban in Wales



Hundreds of parents in Wales could be criminalised if a smacking ban comes into force, police figures reveal.

An audit by the Police Liaison Unit estimates 1,370 cases of smacking would be investigated within the first five years.

In Scotland, MSPs have voted in favour of a Bill to criminalise

parents who smack their children.

Despite warnings that it is "not fit for purpose" and will waste police time, the Bill passed by 80 votes to 29 in May. MSPs will consider amendments in the autumn. In contrast, 97 per cent of individual respondents to a Holyrood consultation said they oppose the change.

'Medical cannabis risking disaster' say health experts

The head of NHS England has warned that medical cannabis risks "normalising drug use". Simon Stevens said the Government's decision to allow some doctors to prescribe medical cannabis products risked turning out to be a "big mistake".

Other experts agree. England's Chief Medical Officer Dame Sally Davies said the change had led to patients mistakenly believing cannabis can cure multiple illnesses. Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department of Health and Social Care, warned that rushing into cannabis-based medicines risked a "disaster" like the thalidomide scandal.

Despite the dangers, police forces have been accused of turning a blind eye to the Class B drug. A Freedom of Information request revealed that on average just 22 per cent of cannabis offences in England in 2018 led to a criminal charge.

For the facts, read our new publication '*Going soft on cannabis*'.



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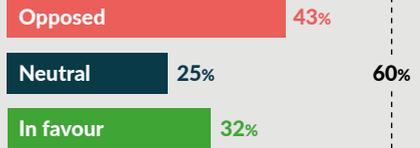
'Rigged' process ends doctors' opposition to assisted suicide

The Royal College of Physicians has ended its historic opposition to assisted suicide.

The College opted to take a 'neutral' stance despite this being the least popular option for members.

The largest group, 43.4 per cent, wanted to continue to oppose assisted suicide. A majority (55 per cent) also said they would not help a patient kill themselves. Only 25 per cent supported a neutral position.

Should the RCP support a change in the law to allow assisted suicide?



Royal College of Physicians Online survey of 6,885 members, 5 February to 1 March 2019.

However, without consultation, the College decided it would become 'neutral' unless another position received 60 per cent

of the vote. The British Medical Association and Royal College of General Practitioners plan similar polls for their members.

'Misleading' schools' transgender guidance sidelined by Scots Govt



Highly misleading guidance for schools on gender ideology has been sidelined by the Scottish Government. The Christian Institute had threatened legal action over the "glaring errors" in the document.

'Supporting Transgender Young People', produced by LGBT Youth Scotland, ignores exemptions in the Equality Act.

It advises schools not to tell parents if their daughters would have to share a room overnight with a boy who identifies as a

girl. It also tells staff and pupils to use a transgender pupil's preferred pronoun, regardless of their personal views, or risk being regarded as 'transphobic bullies'.

The guidance originally carried the Scottish Government's endorsement but it will now produce its own.

Similarly, LGBT lobby group Stonewall has been slammed by academics for presenting "anti-scientific claims" about gender as "objective fact, without the opportunity for scrutiny".

The Mystery of the Trinity



Watch the Mystery of the Trinity video series on our website: christian.org.uk This six-part series sees the late Dr R C Sproul give an overview of the issue, explain difficult concepts and explore biblical teaching on the Trinity. The series is provided courtesy of Ligonier Ministries.

Going deeper with the CI podcast



The new monthly CI podcast series covers various issues of interest for Christians in Britain's shifting culture.

So far these longer listens have explored no-fault divorce, parental rights, same-sex marriage and abortion.

Coming up we'll examine Relationships and Sex Education, some of the landmark cases the Institute has dealt with over more than 20 years, and 'The Joy of Preaching'.

🎧 Listen at the.ci/podcasts

Good news from the US



👉 Christian bakers Jack Phillips (left), and Melissa & Aaron Klein.

In the US, Christian businesses have received a boost from the courts and a wave of states have upheld laws to protect the unborn in recent months.

Jack Phillips won a US Supreme Court case over a

same-sex marriage cake last year and another legal action over a 'gender transition' cake has now been dropped.

The Court has also ordered a review of a decision against fellow Christian bakers

Melissa and Aaron Klein.

On abortion, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Mexico and North Dakota have all upheld laws which protect women and the unborn.

'We were living a gay lifestyle, but God changed us'



Sarah Sedgwick 👉

During the summer months, the Government, public bodies and the corporate world have been falling over themselves to celebrate LGBT lifestyles. In contrast, men and women who refuse to give in to same-sex attraction are often vilified or ignored.

But in an exclusive interview, Sarah Sedgwick told us how she has committed her whole life to God after realising

that the Bible is clear that homosexual practice is wrong. She encourages practising homosexuals to look at the Bible's big picture of God's "design for men and women" – from creation through to the gospels. Sarah is not alone.

To watch Sarah's story, and read of others who found freedom from homosexuality in Jesus, go to: the.ci/sarah-sedgwick

Court of Appeal ruling helps protect university free speech



The Government must revise controversial 'Prevent' guidance for countering extremism after the Court of Appeal ruled that some of the guidance violates free speech and is "unlawful".

Judges agreed that the Prevent guidelines on controversial speakers were not balanced and did not do enough to protect free speech in universities.

The Home Office said it "will consider the implications" of the decision and review the relevant section.

The Christian Institute is

opposing the Government's focus on 'non-violent extremism', arguing that it jeopardises free speech.

Prevent defines extremism as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental 'British values', including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs".

In July, the Commission for Countering Extremism reported that 75 per cent of public responses to its consultation found the definition 'unhelpful' or 'very unhelpful'.

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