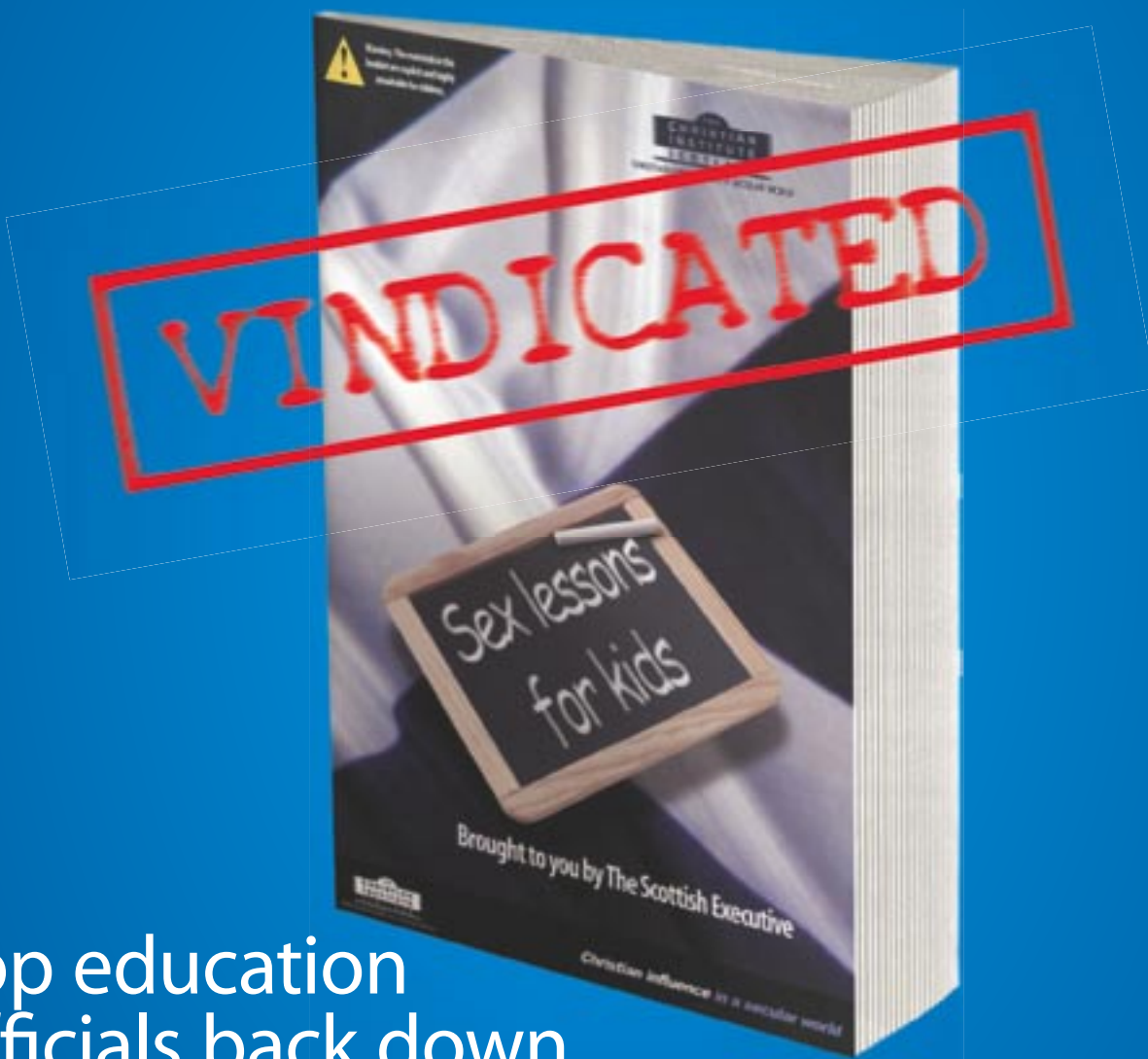


Scottish Update

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www.christianscotland.org

The newsletter of The Christian Institute (Scotland)



Top education officials back down over recommended sex lessons

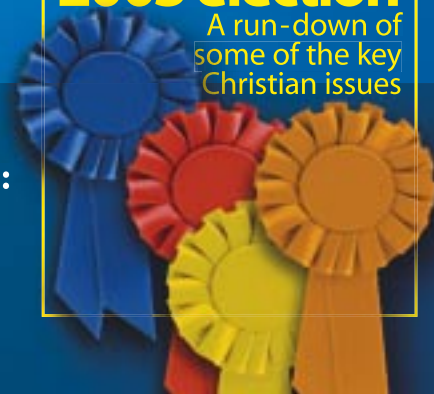
Smacking: Scottish Parliament approves complex new law.

Prostitution: MSPs reject attempt to create red light 'tolerance zones'.

School observance: Plans to introduce a multi-faith 'time of reflection'?

2003 election

A run-down of some of the key Christian issues



inside

Prostitute zones

Plans to allow 'tolerance zones' for prostitutes have been thrown out by the Scottish Parliament, **p4**

Vote 2003

A look at some of the issues of Christian concern likely to come up in the next Parliament, **p5**

Smacking law

Outlining the complex new smacking law and showing which MSPs tried to protect innocent parents, **p6, 7**

COVER STORY: Vindicated!

Education officials admit that some of the sex lessons recommended following repeal of Section 28 are inappropriate. The list will be reviewed, **p8, 9**

Secular agenda for schools?

Arguments about sectarianism and school observance mask a secular agenda, **p10**

Gay adoption

More news on whether Holyrood will follow Westminster's decision to allow gay couples to jointly adopt children, **p11**

Civil partnerships

Executive to hold a joint consultation with the Westminster Government on giving marriage rights to homosexuals, **p12**

Persistence and

Education officials have at last seen sense. They have admitted that some of the sex education resources they recommended for teachers' use are completely inappropriate. They have also promised to bring forward the review of recommendations.

It is about time. It has taken them over two years to swallow their pride and admit they made a huge error of judgement. The Executive should have dealt with this long ago. Instead, Executive Ministers – most notably Jack McConnell – refused to accept there was anything wrong with the list of recommended resources. Now the Executive has had to eat humble pie.

None of this has happened overnight. It has taken over two years of tough campaigning by The Christian Institute, Revd Iain Murdoch and a host of others. But persistence and courage is beginning to pay off.

It all began in March 2001. This was the date that the repeal of Section 28 took effect. The Executive said repeal would not open the floodgates to explicit and inappropriate sex education. They promised to put in place tough new guidance which would protect Scotland's children.

In actual fact, whilst the Executive was making a song and dance about its new "tough" guidance they had already

published a teachers' handbook. This was jointly published with Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS). The handbook recommends appalling sex and drugs lessons.

The Institute exposed the scandalous recommendations in its report, *Sex Lessons for Kids*. It was a dossier of the worst sex lessons from packs recommended by the Executive quango.

On 29 March 2001, *The Scotsman* newspaper reported it. The front-page headline read: "SADISM AND BONDAGE IN THE CLASSROOM". The newspaper said the Executive had approved a "pervert's primer". *The Scotsman*, by the way, supported the repeal of Section 28 – but even it could see how bad these lessons were. Weeks of press reports followed.

A Church of Scotland Minister, Revd Iain Murdoch, went to meet and talk to his local MSP about the recommendations. The local MSP happened to be Jack McConnell. At the time, he was the Education Minister.

The Christian Institute provided Revd Murdoch, from Wishaw, with actual copies of the recommended materials. Together with a local Roman Catholic priest, he showed the materials to Mr McConnell.

Mr McConnell listened at length to their concerns, telling them that this was the first time he had seen some of the materials. He promised to reply in writing



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**Sadism and
bondage in
classroom**

Executive approves a pervert's primer
Parents and teachers condemn sex guide

**March
2001**

**Children's sex booklet
banned by third council**

Andrew Douglas
A THIRD Scottish local authority has criticised a controversial sex education pack from its list of approved teaching materials for teachers.
North Lothian Council took the decision after receiving the parents' that the booklet was 'intended to be a guide for children'.

**Sept
2001**

City policies continue to go in different directions As Edinburgh turns a blind eye, Glasgow sees things differently

■ **By Jonathan Phillips**

Whether the issue is lap-dancing, seedy saunas or prostitution, the policies of Glasgow and Edinburgh could not be more different.

Glasgow City Council continues its courageous policy of 'zero tolerance' in marked contrast to Edinburgh's liberal 'harm reduction' approach.

Last year, Glasgow city chiefs stated that lap-dancing is morally wrong and pledged to outlaw all such clubs.¹

But in January, the courageous stand was blocked by legal advice to the council's own licensing board. The board, which is made up of councillors, ruled that under Scottish law they could not enforce a blanket ban on such clubs.

The board made the ruling when deciding whether to renew the licence of an already established club, the Truffle Club. The advice was that they could only refuse a licence on specific

legal grounds.

This led to immediate calls from the Council for tougher legislation. The Council stated, "We do not want Glasgow turning into a mini-Soho".²

There is no such opposition in Edinburgh, which already has five lap-dancing clubs.³

Edinburgh is rapidly turning into a major centre for the 'sex industry'. Sex saunas are thought to have doubled over the last decade under the council's and the police's 'blind eye' policy.⁴

During recent debates on creating 'prostitute tolerance zones' Glasgow firmly opposed the plans but Edinburgh backed the move.⁵

A prostitute zone in Edinburgh had to be closed down in 2001 after local residents protested.

Prostitute zones, licensing lap-dancing clubs and turning a blind eye to illicit saunas are all the result of a 'harm reduction' mentality.

Harm reduction ignores

mainstream morality in the hope of promoting safety. It may be well intentioned, but it is fundamentally flawed.

Public tolerance of the 'sex industry' creates an atmosphere of acceptability. This can only encourage an increase in the sex trade.

The trade in sex enslaves women, is linked to violent crime and drugs, and increases the likelihood of sexually transmitted disease.

In the end, 'harm reduction' increases the very suffering it seeks to reduce. Glasgow should be applauded for its 'zero tolerance' approach.

¹ *The Scotsman*, 15 January 2003

² *Loc cit*

³ *The Scottish Daily Mail*, 11 January 2003

⁴ *Evening News*, 7 October 2002

⁵ *The Scotsman*, 30 January 2003

Call for tighter controls on lap-dancing clubs

■ **By Chris Prest**

Following Glasgow City Council's failure to stop another lap-dancing club opening, the Council's deputy leader, Jim Coleman, says he will continue to press for stronger controls.¹

Under the current law, lap-dancing clubs need only apply for an entertainment licence and the only legal objections mostly relate to the sale of alcohol.

Glasgow City Council wants the Executive to bring lap-dancing clubs under the same legislation as sex shops.

Mr Coleman claims that these clubs are linked to sexual violence by creating sexual frustration.²

The Scottish Executive is currently reviewing licensing law.

¹ *The Herald*, 15 January 2003

² *The Scottish Daily Mail*, 11 January 2003

MSPs reject prostitute 'tolerance zones' bill but Executive hints at softening the law

■ **By Jonathan Phillips**

The Scottish Parliament has thrown out plans by one MSP to create prostitute 'tolerance zones'.

Margo MacDonald's Prostitution Tolerance Zones (Scotland) Bill was rejected by 86 votes to 11.

Her bill would have allowed local authorities to designate and to police areas within which prostitution would cease to be a criminal offence.

Although the Executive stated prostitution zones were 'not the solution', it has set up a working group to look at issues raised by the debate.¹

Earlier in the year, the Parliament's Local Government Committee also rejected the Bill but concluded, "the current legal situation is not acceptable and does not serve the interests of the women involved or the wider community"².

The Executive intends to establish a working group after the election and hinted

a possible softening of the law, saying it would be a mistake to see the solutions to prostitution purely in terms of further criminalisation.³

¹ News Release, The Scottish Executive, 27 February 2003, Sejd229/2003

² The Scottish Parliament, Committee News Release, 13 February 2003, CLG 02/2003

³ News Release, The Scottish Executive, 27 February 2003, Sejd229/2003

Election 2003: Your chance to be heard

■ By Mike Judge

It's election time. Never are politicians so eager to hear your views as they are right now. This is your opportunity to raise Christian concerns and find out what the candidates think about some of the key moral issues.

And what are some of the key moral issues? Which debates are likely to give Christians cause for concern in the next Scottish Parliament? Here's a run down of some of the issues that are likely to come up:



Up-coming issues:

Quickie Divorce

In 2000, the Executive proposed to abolish adultery and desertion as specific grounds for divorce and slash the time needed to wait for a divorce. But following the debacle over the repeal of Clause 28, the Executive put its plans on hold. The Executive was nervous about pursuing another 'anti-family' policy. But after the election, it is believed the plans will be back on the agenda.

Civil Partnerships

The Westminster Government is likely to propose a Civil Partnership scheme for England and Wales later this year. Such plans would give the rights of married couples to gay couples who register their 'civil partnership'. It is thought the Executive may introduce similar plans for Scotland.

Gay Adoption

The Executive is currently reviewing adoption law. Adoption by homosexual and cohabiting heterosexual couples was legalised in England and Wales last year. It is thought Jack McConnell is keen to make Scotland's adoption law identical to England's.

Religious Hatred

A working group of MSPs has been looking at ways of legislating against religious and sectarian hatred. It is expected to report its findings after the summer. Religious groups are worried that any new legislation could be used to restrict genuine religious debate and liberty.

Morning After Pill

Jack McConnell has spoken out against the distribution of the morning after pill in schools. But there is increasing pressure from the sex education lobby to allow it. The idea is also backed by an 'expert group' appointed by the Executive to look at sexual health.

Religious Observance

A Ministerial Review Group has been looking at changing religious observance in schools. Jack McConnell set up the group when he was Education Minister. The group was due to report to Ministers this spring. It is feared the Executive wants to replace Christian observance in schools with a multi-faith 'time of reflection'.

Top tips for quizzing candidates

To help you find out where candidates stand on some of the key issues, we have produced this list of top tips:

- Have two or three issues in your mind.
- Be prepared to give reasons for your views.
- If you speak to a canvasser, ask them to forward your views to the candidate.
- Try to get the views of as many candidates as possible.
- Remember, the very act of asking the question is – in itself – a Christian witness.
- You could write to your candidates instead of waiting for them to call at your door. This way you can be sure all candidates are aware of your views.

Examples of possible questions:

Do you think that divorce should be made easier?

Do you think that gay 'civil partnerships' should be legalised?

Do you think that homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children?

Do you think we need new laws against religious hatred?

Do you think religious observance in schools should be Christian?

Do you think the morning after pill should be distributed in schools?

www.vote2003.net

A website produced by CARE & the EA with information about the Holyrood election



Smacking: the

■ By Mike Judge

A new smacking law has been approved by the Scottish Parliament. The new law does not include the controversial proposal to ban the smacking of under-threes.

This is a major success for campaigners who argued that the proposal was unnecessary and unworkable.

The Christian Institute worked hard to resist the under-three ban and other controversial proposals. The Institute published a booklet, *Locking up Parents?*, which was used in a letter-writing campaign against the plans.

The decision to drop the under-three ban was a major climb-down for Justice Minister, Jim Wallace.

However, other controversial proposals were accepted by the Parliament. The Institute believes these new rules will plunge parents into fear and confusion.

All shaking and all blows to the head are banned. Whilst this sounds good in theory, there are serious concerns that it could catch ordinary parents for trivial incidents. The new law also bans all use of 'implements'.

The danger comes because, for these offences, the Executive has removed the discretion from the courts.



A mother reported for shaking the arm of her 14-year-old son who towers above her in size can no longer argue a parental chastisement defence. Under the new law she has automatically committed the crime of 'shaking'.

In the same way, a mother who throws a pillow at her 16-year-old son has, under the new law, used an 'implement' and therefore committed a crime.

When it comes to the new 'shaking' or 'implements' offences Procurators Fiscal and the courts are legally barred from considering whether there was actually any harm or threat of harm to the child.

A committee of MSPs raised similar concerns when it considered the Executive's smacking proposals last year. The Executive has, however, ignored these worries.

The SNP's Roseanna Cunningham made a last ditch attempt to change the proposals. She wanted to amend the bill so that only shaking involving "unreasonable force" would be illegal.

However, she was defeated by 74 votes to 35 with three abstentions.

Speaking in favour of the bill, Justice Minister Jim Wallace said that the bill would provide protection to our children, clarify the law for parents, and take steps for reducing violence in our society.¹

Bill Aitken, the Conservative's Justice spokesman, accused the Executive of not trusting Scotland's parents. He said, "The children of Scotland can in almost every case rely on their parents to behave in a reasonable manner and when their parents do not behave in a reasonable manner, the courts will intervene."²

¹ Scottish Parliament, Official Report, 19 February 2003, col. 18423

² *Ibid.*, col. 18409

How your MSPs voted...

On 19 February MSPs voted on whether to tone down the ban on shaking. This would have helped to avoid prosecution of trivial incidents by requiring courts to assess whether "unreasonable force" was used.

The amendment was put forward by Roseanna Cunningham (SNP - Perth). MSPs voted against her amendment by 74 votes to 35. There were 3 abstentions.

MSPs who voted for toning down the ban on shaking

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

new law

MSPs who voted against toning down the ban on shaking

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craige, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Grn)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)

McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McMahan, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

MSPs who were present but abstained

Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)

Top lawyer says new smacking law breaches human rights

■ By Mike Judge

A leading criminal Advocate says Scotland's new smacking law is disproportionate, arbitrary and breaches the right to family life.

In a legal opinion produced for The Christian Institute, Herbert Kerrigan QC says the new law could be open to a European human rights challenge.

He says it breaches Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which bars a state from unnecessary interference into family life.

Opponents of the new law say it is unnecessary because the former law adequately protected children and the rights of parents.

The legal opinion states: "It is noted that the Scottish Executive has been unable to state a single Scottish case where the law of assault has failed to protect children... It is the belief of those with responsibility that the present law is adequate: the Scottish Police Federation and of the Law Society of Scotland."

Colin Hart, Director of The Christian Institute, said: "The legal opinion confirms that the new law is arbitrary and unjustifiable. Parents will be plunged into fear and confusion. Innocent parents will get caught in a politically correct legal nightmare. There is now a real human rights question mark over the new law."

The full legal opinion can be downloaded from The Christian Institute's website: www.christianscotland.org/smacking



Revd Iain Murdoch, surrounded by reporters from the national media ahead of handing in his 11,500-strong petition to the Scottish Parliament. His petition and increasing public pressure led to education chiefs backing down over recommended sex lessons.

Dangerous drugs packs should also be removed from recommended list

The two packs in question are: *Taking Drugs Seriously* and *The Primary School Drugs Pack*.

■ By Chris Prest

At the moment it is not clear whether the promised review of Executive-backed health education materials (*see opposite*) will also include inappropriate drugs education materials.

The Christian Institute and others have long campaigned for the removal of two very dangerous resources from the recommended list.

The Primary School Drugs Pack tells teachers to resist "pressure to teach from an 'anti-drug' perspective"¹ and to remember that "you, and the parents of the children you teach, are probably drug users yourselves".²

Taking Drugs Seriously says its approach focuses on

"Developing a range of skills which help young people make informed and less harmful, decisions about drug use".³

Lessons included in the packs teach children that crack cocaine is not necessarily addictive to first-time or occasional users, and that smoking heroin is safer than injecting it.

Here are two examples of ideas for lessons from the packs:

1) Benefits and Risks of Drug Use – Children are asked to rank the drugs as to which seems the best, down to the worst, to use. (The lesson suggests children pretend to be a drug dealer who has all the substances on sale).⁴

2) Asserting Yourself – Imagine yourself in the following situations. The children role-play and try to think what it would be like to be the people in the scenario. For example, "You smoke cannabis sometimes and enjoy it. You are fed up with older boring people who exaggerate its risks. You have

a friend who doesn't smoke it and now they have started going on about you not smoking at their house. You think that they have been conned by the boring old ***** into becoming anti-drugs."⁵

The Christian Institute believes these packs are entirely inappropriate and encourage young people to experiment with drugs.

LTS, the Executive's quango responsible for recommending these and other inappropriate packs, has promised to review the sex education resources. But these two dangerous drugs packs should also be removed.

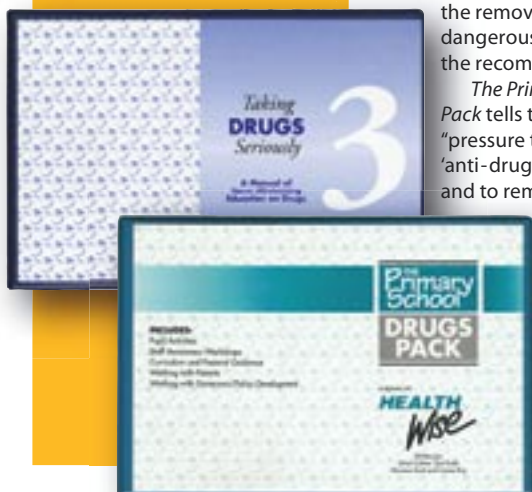
¹ Cohen J et al, *The Primary School Drugs Pack*, Healthwise, 1999, page 8

² *Loc cit*

³ Clements I et al, *Taking Drugs Seriously*, Healthwise, 2000, page 3

⁴ *Ibid*, page 23

⁵ *Ibid*, page 89



Quango admits Executive-backed sex lessons are inappropriate

The Christian Institute first brought the issue to people's attention over two years ago. The Institute published extracts from the packs in the report called *Sex Lessons for Kids*.

The report exposed the shocking and explicit nature of the teaching materials.

■ By Chris Prest

Education bosses have caved in to pressure from campaigners and decided to review a controversial list of recommended sex education resources.

The Chairman of Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), the Executive's quango responsible for the recommendations, announced the decision last December.

In a letter to the Scottish Parliament's Education Committee, LTS chairman, Professor Thomas Wilson, said: "It is my view that there are parts of some sex education resources, including some of those listed in

the bibliography in the *Guide for Teachers and Managers*, that are inappropriate for use with young people at some or all stages of their education".¹

It is understood the review will begin during the early part of 2003.²

The decision is an embarrassment to First Minister, Jack McConnell. When he was Education Minister he resisted calls to review the recommendations.

Many parents wrote to Mr McConnell expressing their objections to the materials. They received replies in which Mr McConnell suggested the materials were never designed for use in schools and were not recommended by the Scottish Executive.

Four local authorities banned the some or all the explicit teaching packs – including the local authority of Mr McConnell's own constituency.

The Christian Institute first brought the issue to people's attention over two years ago. The Institute published extracts from the packs in the report *Sex Lessons for Kids*.

The report exposed the shocking and explicit nature of the teaching materials.

Suggested sex lessons include encouraging pupils to buy condoms for homework, discussing anal intercourse with primary school pupils, and lessons covering orgies and sado-masochism.

The drugs lessons include getting children to role-play being drug dealers, telling pupils that crack is not necessarily addictive to first time or occasional users, and that smoking heroin is safer than injecting it.

The explicit sex education packs made front-page news

in March 2001. Ever since then, the Executive has been under constant pressure to review the recommendations.

The Christian Institute and others organised public meetings throughout Scotland, holding exhibitions of the materials.

The list of recommended resources ignores the Executive's own Guidance Circular on Sex Education.

This states very clearly that "Teaching materials should be selected with great care and sensitivity", and that councils "need to ensure that the content of instruction... is appropriate, having regard to each child's age understanding and stage of development".³

Church of Scotland Minister, Revd Iain Murdoch, organised a 11,500 strong petition to the Scottish Parliament. His petition called on the Parliament to urge the Executive to withdraw the list and ensure that all teaching materials comply with the statutory guidance.

Revd Murdoch's petition led to an investigation by the Parliament's Education Committee.

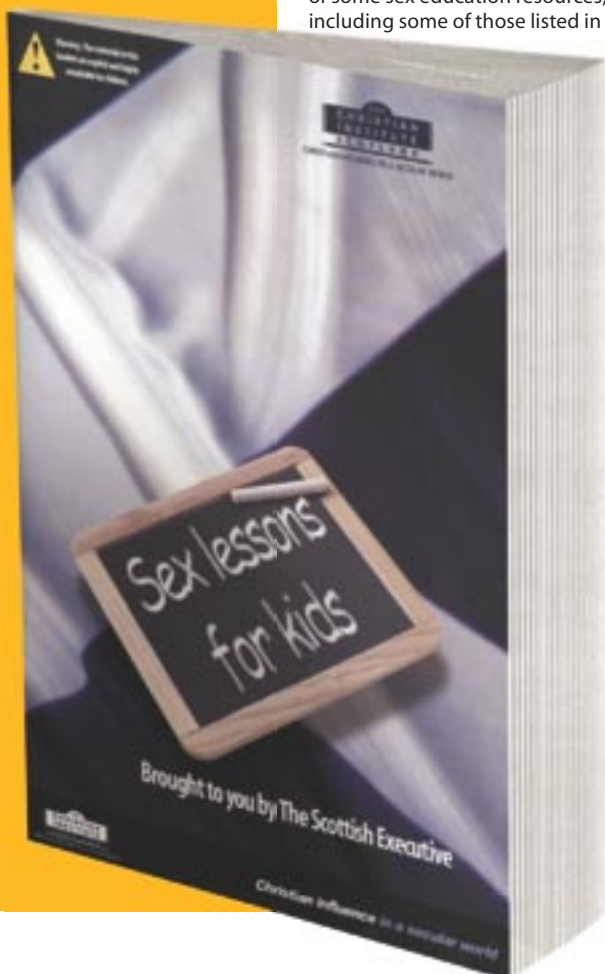
It was this investigation which resulted in the recent announcement by the chairman of Learning and Teaching Scotland to review the recommended list.

The Christian Institute, Revd Murdoch and others have been campaigning against the recommended materials for over two years.

¹ Letter to Education Culture and Sport Committee, 4 December 2002

² *Loc cit*

³ *Circular 2/2001*, Scottish Executive, 2001



Schools controversy highlights secular agenda

Scotland is unusual in having so few Protestant schools. The Christian Institute would like to see more of these.

■ **By Humphrey Dobson**

The past few months have revealed growing pressure to secularise Scotland's schools.

Jack McConnell, the First Minister, recently ignited controversy by advocating that denominational schools should share their campuses with neighbouring schools.

There are also disturbing signs that the Executive's review of religious observance may recommend that Christian assemblies in non-denominational schools be replaced with multi-faith 'times of reflection' (see article below).

These moves highlight the urge by some in authority to interfere in schools – not to benefit education, but purely to remove its Christian foundation.

Jack McConnell advocated shared school campuses as part of his campaign against sectarianism. He said ensuring youngsters did not learn prejudices at an early age

was key to any long-term strategy against sectarianism.¹

The storm created by this announcement was so fierce that in response the Scottish Roman Catholic Church appointed an education 'tsar' to defend its control of some schools.²

However, Mr McConnell begins with the wrong premise. He, and a growing number of others in positions of influence in Scotland, believe that the Christian faith is the cause of 'sectarianism'.

This is untrue – in fact the opposite is the case. The Bible teaches that we should love our neighbour as ourselves – however much we disagree with their views.

Proper tolerance is brought about when the truth claims of opposing views are openly presented and discussed. Only the suppression of this can cause ignorance, hatred and 'sectarian' behaviour.

Sadly the campaign against sectarian violence is quickly being overtaken by the secular

agenda, an agenda which seeks to drive out of the public square all discussion of God and what he says in his Word.

This controversy in Scottish education raises many issues. One is to show why Scotland needs more schools of explicitly Protestant foundation. Scotland is unusual in having so few. There are a small number of independent Christian schools in Scotland, but parents need to pay for these.

A growing secularism perhaps also explains the recent growth in home schooling in Scotland.

One encouraging move in England is the Government's support for the establishment of explicitly Christian schools which are run independently, but funded by the state.

It is sad that so far Scottish politicians have refused to allow this legislation to be extended to Scotland.

¹ *The Times*, 9 December 2002

² *The Scotsman*, 5 February 2003

Executive considers multi-faith school observance

■ **By Chris Prest**

Christian observance in schools will be replaced by a multi-faith 'time of reflection', if education officials get their way.

The Christian Institute has objected to suggestions that assemblies should no longer be broadly Christian.

The Executive has set up a Review Group to look at the issue of religious observance in schools.

Scottish Education Minister, Cathy Jamieson, said that the Review Group is keen to reflect "the variety of religious beliefs and faiths as well as the increasingly secular make-

up of today's Scotland".¹

But official statistics show Scotland as still predominantly Christian – Church of Scotland 47%, Roman Catholic 16%, other Christian 7%, and Muslim 1%.²

Despite this, the only example of religious observance suggested by the Review Group revolves around a Muslim story upon which pupils are asked to "reflect".

According to the Review Group, stimuli for reflection could also include music, art, drama, poetry, films and television. No mention is made of the Bible.

Supporters of Christian assemblies point out that Scotland's culture, laws

and democratic institutions have all been profoundly influenced by Christianity.

It is the major world religion which transcends all barriers of culture and race and has a major part to play in the elimination of racism and cultural intolerance.

¹ News Release, Scottish Executive Media and Communications Group, 6 November 2002

² *Scotland's People, results from the 2001 Scottish Household Survey*, Scottish Executive, 2002, page 202



Executive says it will 'take note' of England's gay adoption law when reviewing policy

■ By Jonathan Phillips

Plans to allow gay adoption in Scotland may be considered by the Executive.

This follows the Executive's consultation last year on the recommendations put forward by the Adoption Review group, established by the Executive in 2001.¹

The plans could also allow unmarried heterosexual couples to adopt.

The Adoption Review intends to counter the falling number of adoptions in Scotland by removing obstacles in the adoption process.

Last November, the Westminster Parliament voted to allow unmarried couples – including gay couples – to adopt.

While there has not yet been any specific proposals to allow unmarried couples to adopt in Scotland, the Scottish Executive is believed to be keen for Scotland to have the same adoption laws as the rest of the UK.

However, there is no obligation on the Executive to allow unmarried adoption.

Executive spokesmen have said the changes to the law in England and Wales will be noted.²

Within the next few months the review

is expected to go into phase 2, where an independent review will study the legal framework and other issues of new proposals. It is estimated this will take eighteen months, following which any legislation deemed necessary will be introduced to the Scottish Parliament.

¹ Press Release, Scottish Executive, 21 June 2002, SEED042/2002

² *The Herald*, 17 May 2002, *The Herald*, 6 November 2002

Call for morning after pill to be given out in schools



■ By Dr Seyi Hotonu

Scottish teachers and doctors groups are demanding that schools be allowed to give the morning after pill to schoolgirls without their parents' permission.

In January Ronnie Smith, the head of Scotland's biggest teaching union, the Educational Institute of Scotland, stated that if young people felt that they wanted to obtain the morning-after pill in school "then I would say OK".

Although he recommended that parents should be consulted before introducing this measure into a school, he did not believe, once the scheme was in place, that parents had the right to know whether their daughter had been given the morning after pill.¹

In December Dr Bill O'Neill, the

Secretary of the British Medical Association in Scotland, stated that school nurses should be able to prescribe the morning after pill without consulting parents.

The BMA claims that the use of the morning after pill in schools would improve Scotland's high teenage pregnancy rate and soaring incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, within two years.²

Mr Smith and Dr O'Neill's views are in line with those of the 21-strong Expert Group on sexual health which was set up by the Scottish Executive in August 2002.

However, the views are contrary to those of the First Minister Jack McConnell who has condemned as "stupid and irresponsible" plans to give this powerful drug to girls without their parents' consent.³

The pill is only 85% effective at preventing pregnancy. Where conception has occurred, it can also act as an abortion pill by stopping the embryo implanting in the womb.⁴

However, the long-term physical consequences for schoolgirl users are unknown.

¹ *Scottish Daily Mail*, 20 January 2003

² *Scottish Daily Mail*, 17 December 2002

³ *Scottish Daily Mail*, 7 August 2002

⁴ Data information sheet on Levonelle-2 from Schering Health Care Limited

'Gay marriage' plans move a step closer in Scotland

■ By Jonathan Phillips

A civil partnership registration scheme for same-sex couples now looks more likely to be introduced in Scotland.

It is reported that the Scottish Executive will have a joint consultation with the Westminster Government and implement identical schemes.¹

In December, the UK government announced it will publish plans for a civil partnership scheme this summer.

Responding to the announcement, Scottish Deputy Minister for Social Justice, Hugh Henry, stated the Executive is "committed to equality" and will be consulting UK ministers on this issue over the coming months.²

Under the schemes, same-sex couples will be given legal recognition for the first time and are likely to receive the same next-of-kin entitlements on inheritance tax, pensions and property. Such rights are currently reserved only for married couples.³



However, the scheme is unlikely to be available to cohabiting heterosexual couples, as the Treasury fears losing too much in tax revenue.

The Government also hopes that by excluding cohabiting heterosexual couples from any partnership scheme, they will

not be seen to be undermining marriage.

There have been calls for civil partnerships in Scotland for some time now, with Lothian MSP Robin Harper putting down a parliamentary motion in January last year.

But the announcement

from the UK Government has now substantially increased the likelihood of a civil partnership scheme coming into effect in Scotland.

Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats support civil partnerships, with Scottish Labour stating "We will continue to ensure equality for single sex partnerships in future legislation".⁴

While no official statement has been made yet, it is expected that the Executive will make a decision after the Holyrood elections in May.

- ¹ *The Scotsman*, 7 December 2002
- ² Official Report, Thursday 19 December 2002, Written Answer (S10-6167)
- ³ *The Herald*, 7 December 2002
- ⁴ The Scottish Labour Party, Policy Documents, Social Inclusion, see www.scottishlabour.org.uk/socInc.html as at 11 February 2003

Important news on the Institute's building appeal

■ By Mike Judge

The Institute, as always, ultimately looks to God to meet all its needs. We give thanks that God has greatly blessed the work in recent years. So much so that we are in urgent need of larger offices.

In the past five years the number of staff has grown from four to fourteen. We are now looking for a new home in Newcastle upon Tyne to accommodate them and all the strategic resources we use for our work.

The number of issues which demand a Christian response has dramatically increased in recent years. To meet these demands more staff will be needed in the future. We have to

bear this in mind as we plan ahead.

For all these reasons the Christian Institute has launched its building appeal. The Trustees believe that buying a building will be much more cost-efficient than leasing.

At the end of April 2003 over £380,000 had been raised. This is an amazing response which has been a very great encouragement to all the staff. As things stand we will be able to put down a substantial down-payment on a

mortgage. Obviously the more we raise the less we have to borrow.

The appeal still remains open for supporters who want to make a donation.

An alternative is to give on a regular basis through a standing order. This will help us meet the increased running costs of a larger building, help us pay a mortgage and above all help us to fund the growth of our work.

We hope and pray that, God willing, sometime during 2004 we will have our own building.

