

institute

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THE
CHRISTIAN
INSTITUTE

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN A SECULAR WORLD

Update

K-wide newsletter of The Christian Institute



Squeezing churches into a secular mould

As the government drafts new employment laws, The Christian Institute calls for greater protection for religious groups

Gay adoption: two Christian social workers threatened with the sack

Abortion: leading American figure-heads switch sides and become pro-lifers

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Around the nation

Staff from The Christian Institute have continued to travel around the nation holding meetings about our work. These meetings give supporters an opportunity to meet staff members and learn more about our work and our campaigns. For people who are unfamiliar with the Institute, the meetings serve as a good introduction. We work hard to make our meetings professional, encouraging and informative.

If you would like The Christian Institute to visit your area, please get in touch. We cannot guarantee to accept every invitation, but we will consider each one carefully.



Some recent meetings are marked on the map.



CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN A SECULAR WORLD

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The Sexual Offences Bill is a sad reflection of our society

After September 11th, the Government rushed through its anti-terrorism legislation. For the first time it was made an offence to possess a nuclear weapon. It was also felt necessary to create new laws to tackle a person who keeps a weapon of mass destruction without a licence.

Five years ago the idea that we needed such laws may have seemed ridiculous. But September 11th changed all that.

When you first pick up the Government's new Sexual Offences Bill the explicitness of the new sexual offences against children can come as a great shock. But the need for such laws is a sad reflection of the times in which we live. Those who framed our existing laws never envisaged the sorts of things which child abusers would do to children. Child abuse is descending to new lows of horrendous depravity.

You would have thought that our Criminal Justice system would have been quick to respond. Yet what do we find? Right across the board, convictions for sexual offences against children have been falling year after year. *A major Home Office Report published in 2000 found that from 1985 to 1995 convictions for the six most serious sexual offences against children fell by 31%.*

There is clearly a serious problem with the enforcement of the law. Judges must take some of the blame. The new era of "human rights" has also not helped. Used with the existing law it seems to offer far too much scope for abusers to avoid conviction by citing legal technicalities.

The Government's new Sexual Offences Bill will certainly help in this respect. The penalties – particularly for the abuse of children aged under 13 – will be significantly toughened up. Crucially, what constitutes sexual abuse will be defined much more wide widely. The Sexual Offences Bill is so explicit that MP's emails about it are being blocked by anti-pornography software at Westminster. That we should need such laws is incredibly sad.

We can thank God that even our

secular politicians have grasped the need for stronger protections for children. It has not always been so. Our existing laws largely stem from the work of the Christian campaigner Josephine Butler (1828-1906) who, along with others like Bramwell Booth and the flamboyant journalist WT Stead, tirelessly worked for 16 years. At the end of the campaign they secured a huge raft of legislation to protect children.

Whilst Christians can warmly welcome the new child sex offences, the same support cannot be given to other aspects of the Bill.

Because of its commitment to gay rights, the Government wants all of our sex offences laws to be completely neutral on sexual orientation. The proposals for criminalising sexual acts in public reflect this. The current law on heterosexual conduct in public is based on the common law offence of "outraging public decency". This law has proved to be appallingly weak in practice.

In 1998 a pornography company filmed an entire scene on a summer's day in a car park at Heathrow Airport. The sexual activity carried out on the bonnet of a car was for real, not simulated. It could not have been more public with 6,000 cars filing in and out of the car park every day. Yet after convicting the four people involved of outraging public decency, the court only meted out a conditional discharge – not even a fine.

Whilst outraging public decency tends to cover heterosexual offences committed in public, the parallel law for homosexual conduct is gross indecency. This is a tougher law where it is much easier to secure a conviction.

To make the heterosexual and homosexual laws equal in seriousness the Government is therefore faced with a choice – either upgrade the heterosexual offence, or downgrade the homosexual offence.

The Government has chosen to do both. The new law on "sexual activity in public" will be a significant improvement on the way in which the current law tackles

heterosexual offences. The upgraded new offence will have a maximum penalty of six months in jail.

But for homosexual offences - relating to adults - the new offence will be a major liberalisation of the law. If the current law of gross indecency is repealed and replaced by the new offence, the maximum penalty will be slashed from 2 years to 6 months.

In public lavatories there will be no penalty at all if homosexual acts are committed inside a toilet cubicle with the door closed. The Government points out that the offence of "outraging public decency" will continue to apply. Given the feeble way in which this law is applied in such cases, the Government is effectively legalising homosexual activity in public lavatories.

So all in all the Sexual Offences Bill manages to look in two directions at once. We can welcome the tougher laws on child sex offences, but must vigorously oppose turning more of our public lavatories into squalid places of sleazy depravity.

Journalists from across the political spectrum have ridiculed the Government's proposal to effectively legalise gay sex in public lavatories. In 2001 journalists similarly ridiculed the plan to introduce 'incitement to religious hatred' in the anti-terrorism bill. We hope the outcome is the same, and the Government drops its absurd proposal.


Colin Hart, Director



Scotland set for complex new smacking law

■ By Mike Judge

A new smacking law in Scotland is expected to be given the go-ahead by the Scottish Parliament at the time of going to press.

Unless amended, the complex new law will ban all blows to the head and all shaking. Whilst this sounds good in theory, there are serious concerns that it could inadvertently catch ordinary parents for trivial incidents.

The new law will not include a complete ban on smacking under-threes. The Executive was forced to ditch this ban last

year following widespread criticism.

However, a legal opinion by a leading Scottish lawyer says the new law – if passed as it is presently drafted – remains unworkable.

Herbert Kerrigan QC says it will be disproportionate, arbitrary and an infringement of the right to family life.

As currently drafted, the new law also makes the use of a wooden spoon to punish a child illegal even though actions using greater force would be treated more leniently.

An influential committee of MSPs highlighted some concerns at an earlier

stage of the legislative process, but the Executive has so far ignored these worries.

The current law works well. The Christian Institute has been pressing the Executive to leave it unchanged.

Institute Director, Colin Hart, said: "The decision to drop the under-three ban was a major success, but unless further changes are made there is a clear risk that ordinary parents could be prosecuted over trivial incidents."



Scottish Justice Minister, Jim Wallace, was forced to drop plans for an under-three ban

The campaign against softer cannabis laws is not over yet

There is much criticism on both sides of the debate over the Governments' confused and conflicting proposals.

■ By Jonathan Phillips

Parliament still has an opportunity to prevent government plans to soften the law on cannabis.

It is believed the Home Secretary will present his reclassification plans to Parliament some time near Easter. However, the plans have then to be accepted by both Houses of Parliament to become law.

If David Blunkett is successful, reclassification will be completed by July.¹ Reclassifying cannabis from a class B to a class C

drug will put it on the same level as sleeping pills.

David Blunkett will use secondary legislation in his attempt to change the law. This means the Commons and the Lords will each only have one opportunity to debate the measure before a take-it-or-leave-it vote with no amendments possible.

Last year the Government was forced to make two key concessions following public and police concerns.²

Police will now keep the power to arrest for possession of cannabis and the maximum sentences for dealing or supplying cannabis will be maintained as at present.

In order to do this, the Government has to amend other legislation, and is using its Criminal Justice Bill, currently going through Parliament to do so.³

The Bill is now in Standing Committee until the

end of February, when it will go back to the Commons for its Report Stage and Third Reading, and then on to the Lords.

There is much criticism on both sides of the debate over the Government's confused and conflicting proposals.

Meanwhile, the Association of Chief Police Officers for England and Wales, is expected to release its much delayed new guidelines for policing cannabis.

Previous guidelines of 'three strikes and you're out', where police would only arrest for cannabis possession after two warnings, were abandoned in December following pressure from rank and file officers.⁴

¹ House of Commons, Hansard, 10 July 2002, col 887

² *The Independent*, 11 July 2002

³ Criminal Justice Bill, see Clause 9 and Schedule 20

⁴ *Daily Mail*, 9 December 2002

Religious liberty threatened as Government implements the EU employment directive

■ By Mike Judge

Religious groups will no longer be able to dismiss staff who renounce their faith, if Government plans get the go ahead.

Political parties, on the other hand, will keep the right to dismiss members of staff who change their political beliefs.

The controversial plans are part of a package of measures aimed at banning workplace discrimination based on religion, belief or sexual orientation.

But the Government has conveniently said that 'belief' does not include political belief.

The plans are contained in draft employment regulations which will implement an EU employment directive,

agreed to in October 2000.

If the regulations become law it will be illegal for a Christian organisation to dismiss a member of staff who becomes an atheist or even a Satanist.

While there are some limited exceptions for religious groups to recruit staff on the grounds of religion or belief, there are no exceptions on the grounds of sexual orientation.

It will be illegal to refuse to employ or to dismiss a practising homosexual.

The EU directive includes some limited safeguards for religious groups. However, the UK government has chosen to ignore many of these safeguards.

The Christian Institute

has produced various publications to help supporters understand the issue. The Institute also held a seminar in London which was attended by representatives of major Christian employers and leading Christian lawyers.

Deputy Director of the Institute, Simon Calvert, said: "It is clear that the government regulations will be a disaster for freedom of religion. No religious organisation can maintain its ethos if it is forced to employ staff who profoundly disagree with the whole basis of the organisation."

A Government consultation on the draft regulations ended on 24 January. The regulations will be put before Parliament as secondary legislation sometime in the first half of this year.



Institute to publish new guide on stopping sex shops

■ By Chris Prest

The Christian Institute has been monitoring a rapid increase in applications for sex shop licences. Many people have contacted the Institute for help in opposing plans. The Institute has been able to successfully assist in blocking several applications.

To help people further, the Institute is set to publish a new step-by-step guide to objecting to sex shop applications.

The Institute is convinced the law could be used more effectively if people were more aware of how it operates.

The book, entitled *Stopping Sex Shops*, covers the whole process from discovering the initial application right through to the application hearing itself.

It contains clear practical advice, case studies, and the law as it relates to sex shops.

The Institute hopes the book will go a long way towards equipping Christians and others who want to use the law to oppose the sex shop industry.

Christians believe that sex is a precious gift of God and have always opposed measures which cheapen sex and detach it from its proper context - marriage. Sex shops are an affront to God and Christians should resist them.

We're bursting to get a big

Common questions about our building needs:

What's wrong with the current building?

Our current building has served us well for five years but we have now outgrown it. The demands of our work mean we need a bigger building. Our current building restricts our ability to work efficiently and is a barrier to future expansion. In any case, our lease runs out in June this year and will not be renewed.

How do you plan to get a new building?

We would prefer not to have to take out a lease again. The Trustees believe that spending large sums of money on rent is not the best use of resources. The best option is to buy a building. This is cost-effective in the long-term. It has a number of advantages. It would give the Institute a permanent base and an asset, and expenditure on improvements would benefit the Institute rather than a landlord. Our aim is to buy, even if we have to move into temporary rented accommodation before we can find a building suited to our needs.

How will you use the larger space?

We make cuttings from six national daily newspapers on 75 distinct categories resulting in 3,000 separate files in our filing cabinets. We receive about 70 regular journals and specialist newsletters. We order between 10 and 20 new research reports every month. A bigger building would allow us to work more efficiently, have space for more filing and more staff, and so allow us to expand.

How much will it cost?

Our target is £800,000. The more we can raise in our Building Appeal the less we will need to borrow commercially. In fact, there is obviously a limit to the amount we can afford to borrow in this way. We opened the appeal a little while ago by approaching a small number of supporters. We praise God that 138 of them have pledged £208,000. This is a great start. But a bigger building will inevitably mean bigger running costs. So, as well as money for a deposit we will also need to receive increased regular support.

Why Newcastle upon Tyne?

Newcastle is where the Christian Institute all started. Our staff and the many volunteers on whom we rely live in or around the city and can take advantage of good public transport. Newcastle is host to major university and professional libraries and one of the UK's EU documentation centres. London is only three hours away by train, and Edinburgh is only one-and-a-half hours away. We would prefer to remain in Newcastle.

By Mike Judge

Anyone who has bought a house knows the disruption and stress it can involve. Buying a property is one of the most important financial decisions anyone can make. The Christian Institute needs to buy a larger office building. But at the same time, we need to continue our vital work. There is an unusually large number of issues that we are currently involved with (the EU directive, the Sexual Offences Bill, civil partnerships, Section 28, and other issues). Trying to find a new building while also responding to all these matters of concern represents a difficult challenge.

We need to move into a new building because our lease expires later this year. In any case, we desperately need more space. Our current cramped offices are hindering our work and are a barrier to future

expansion. Walls are covered with shelves packed tight with research materials. Banks of filing cabinets are squeezed into wherever we can find the space. Computers, printers, photocopiers all have to be accommodated. This leaves little room for the staff to work.

Getting a new, bigger office building is vital. It will be one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced. The Trustees of the Institute believe we would be better to buy a building than lease one. In the long-term a mortgage is more cost-effective. We recently asked a number of our principal supporters for their help. Already, about 138 of them have pledged £208,000. This is a great start. We are well on our way to achieving the down payment needed to enable us to get a mortgage.

A larger property will certainly mean we can do more of our vital work, but a bigger

Maintaining our ongoing work is our number one priority. Expanding it is our ambition.

gger building

building will also mean bigger regular bills. Unless our regular income increases, this will obviously bite into the income we use for our ongoing work – our research, our campaigns, and our publications. Maintaining our ongoing work is our number one priority. Our ambition is to expand it. So we also need to increase our regular income. This is on top of needing to raise money for a deposit.

Whilst looking for a new building we won't take our eye off the ball! There is much that requires a Christian response. In the next few months, we face plans to restrict the right of churches and other Christian organisations to employ Christians, Government

proposals to liberalise the laws on drugs, and attempts to give the rights of marriage to homosexual couples. There will be more challenges than this – some predictable, others out of the blue. There is no doubt that having larger premises will better equip us to respond to these issues.

As our nation continues to turn its back on Biblical standards, there will be increasing need for a clear Christian voice. A bigger building will help us respond to that challenge.

Our current office building is bursting at the seams.



New broadcasting bill continues to discriminate against Christians

■ **By Jon Errington**

In the United Kingdom, in the Government's new Communications Bill, foreign pornographers can now own British broadcasting licences but religious groups will remain unfairly discriminated against. The Bill will become law later this year.

It had been hoped that the government would lift the unfair disqualification of religious individuals and groups from owning broadcasting licences, but so far they have decided to merely alter the grounds for special 'determinations'.

That means Christians have to persuade the authorities to exercise their discretion for a determination first,

before applying for a licence, unlike any other broadcaster. No other groups have to pass this test.

While "deregulation to promote competitiveness" is a key principle of the bill,¹ this clearly does not extend to religious ownership.

Some MPs do recognise this discrimination. In July 1999, a Ten Minute Rule Bill was debated in the House of Commons. A majority of 129 MPs called on the Government to lift the discrimination in law against Christians and other religious groups.

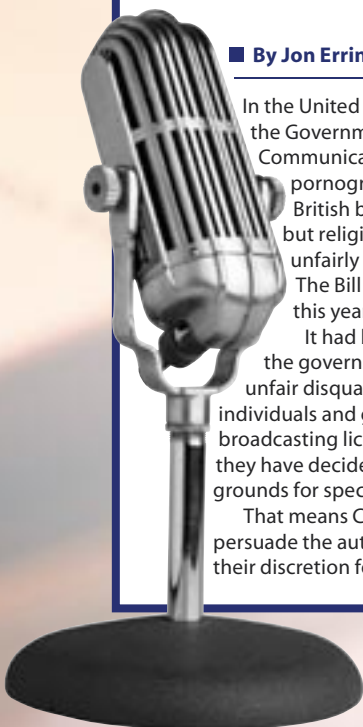
In February 2003 opposition MPs tabled amendments to the Communications Bill to have the restrictions removed. These amendments were unsuccessful in the Commons but are to be tabled again in the House of Lords in April.

Although the extra determinations for local and national digital programme licences are welcomed, Christians still retain the stigma of being banned from the digital multiplexes which these programmes sit upon.

The retention of the disqualification in the Bill will have serious long-term consequences for Christian broadcasters who do win licences.

**For more information contact:
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¹ <http://www.ukonline.gov.uk/NewsRoom/NRArticle/0,1169,199711~801b22~fs~en,00.html> as at 29 January 2002



Conservatives abandon support for Section 28 in favour of new proposals

■ By Chris Prest

Another attempt to repeal Section 28 – the law which bans local authorities promoting homosexuality in schools and other places – is expected to be passed by the House of Commons.

A Labour backbench MP, Kali Mountford, has put down an amendment to the Local Government Bill to repeal the child-protection measure in England and Wales. The amendment has Government support.¹

Opposition leader Iain Duncan Smith announced in January that he would allow Conservative MPs to have a free vote on Section 28.

It is understood that Iain Duncan Smith has been put under pressure from 'modernisers' within his own party to be less 'anti-gay'.

This is a change in party policy for the Conservatives who instructed their MPs and Peers to oppose repeal the last time it was attempted in 2000.

The Conservatives' policy change will make the attempt to repeal Section 28 more likely to succeed.

It is understood that Iain Duncan Smith has been put under pressure from 'modernisers' within his own party to be less 'anti-gay'.

During the previous Section 28 battle, public opinion was firmly in favour of retaining the law.

In Tony Blair's own constituency, 70% of people who expressed a view opposed repeal.² An independent referendum in Scotland found that 86.8% of Scots were opposed to repeal.³

Despite public opinion, the Scottish Executive repealed Section 28 in 2000. Following immediately after that repeal,

explicit sex education resources were recommended by the Scottish Executive (see more below).

Christians do not accept the equivalence of homosexual relations and marriage. The Bible teaches that homosexual acts are always wrong,⁴ that the context for sex is marriage between one woman and one man,⁵ and that sex before or outside of marriage is wrong.⁶

Section 28 seeks to protect children and it works. Christians should pray that Parliament will vote to protect children.

¹ House of Commons, Hansard, 7 January 2003, col 47

² System Three Poll on Section 28, March 2000

³ *The Herald*, 31 May 2000

⁴ Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1: 26-27

⁵ Genesis 2:24

⁶ Matthew 5:27-28

Scottish education bosses announce U-turn on 'inappropriate' sex and drugs teaching packs

■ By Chris Prest

Controversial sex and drugs education packs recommended by the Scottish Executive are to be reviewed 18 months earlier than planned.

Learning Teaching Scotland (LTS), the Executive quango responsible for recommending the teaching packs, announced the U-turn in a letter to the Scottish Parliament's Education Committee.

The controversial sex education packs include lessons in gay role-play, partner swapping and sado-masochism. The drugs

packs teach that crack is not necessarily addictive to first-time or occasional users and encourage children to role-play being a drug dealer.

LTS chairman, Professor Thomas Wilson, said that some of the materials are "inappropriate for use with young people at some or all stages of their education". A review will be initiated during the early part of 2003.¹

The controversial teaching packs were recommended in the wake of the repeal of Section 28 in Scotland.

Christians in England and Wales fear

similarly inappropriate health education packs could be recommended if Section 28 is repealed south of the border.

For over two years Church of Scotland minister, Revd Iain Murdoch, has put pressure on the Executive to stop recommending the packs.

His 11,500-strong petition to the Scottish Parliament along with other initiatives ultimately led to the recent announcement.

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

Institute to publish new booklet on dangers of libertarianism

■ **By Humphrey Dobson**

What is a truly free society? In Britain today the clamour grows for the freedom to consume hardcore pornography or take drugs.

Shrill arguments ring out that any collection of adults and children can be 'a family'. The cries are heard from both the left and the right wing in

political debate. However, this is not liberty, but licence.

The state cannot be neutral in its decision-making and the Bible tells us the state is given to restrain sin.

From the political right the attack on the Christian foundation of our culture comes from 'Libertarianism'.

This creed demands that the state should be strictly limited

to the protection of life, liberty and property.

It insists that in the areas of sex, marriage and the family, there are no moral and cultural absolutes. It is fundamentally anti-Christian.

In response The Christian Institute has commissioned *Libertarianism: A Christian Critique*. Written by Philip Vander Elst, the booklet will be

published in 2003.

Philip Vander Elst outlines the essential tenets of the Libertarian agenda and its history, set in the context of our secular cultural climate.

Ultimately we see that only a Christian framework for law provides a sure defence against both anarchy and tyranny.

Government to consult on 'gay marriage' plans

■ **By Jonathan Phillips**

Government plans to introduce a civil partnership registration scheme for same-sex couples are to be published for consultation this summer.¹

Under the proposals, same-sex relationships will be legally recognised for the first time, and are likely to be given the same entitlements on inheritance tax, pensions and property currently reserved only for married couples.²

The proposals follow a ten-month review by civil servants into the feasibility of civil partnerships.

This review was the result of an attempt by the Liberal Democrat Peer, Lord Lester, to introduce civil partnerships in January 2002.

It is unclear whether the government's civil partnerships scheme will be open to bisexuals. Significantly, it is unlikely to be opened to cohabiting heterosexual couples. It is thought the Treasury fears losing too much in tax revenue.

The government hopes that by excluding cohabiting couples from the plans, they will not be seen to be undermining marriage. That is unlikely to impress Christian groups who see the proposals as gay marriage in all but name.

The government says civil partnerships are not the same as gay marriage because there is no 'ceremony'.

Announcing the plans, Barbara Roche,

Minister for Social Exclusion, outlined the need to tackle what she called 'inequalities' resulting from a lack of legal recognition of gay partnerships.

She stated the scheme "...would send a powerful message about the acceptability of same-sex relationships and about the unacceptability of the homophobia still far too prevalent in our society."³

Following the summer consultation it is thought a bill may be published in the next session of parliament.⁴

Barbara Roche, Minister for Social Exclusion, says the scheme "...would send a powerful message about the acceptability of same-sex relationships..."

¹ What is Labour doing for...lesbians and gay men? January 2003, see www.labour.org.uk/forlesbiansandgaymen/ as at 29 January 2003

² *The Daily Telegraph*, 7 December 2002

³ Plans to recognise same-sex couples, 6 December 2002, see www.labour.org.uk/gaypartnerships/ as at 29 January 2003

⁴ *The Independent*, 6 December 2002



Ridiculous: Gay marriage makes a mockery of real marriage.

Abortion figure-heads switch to pro-life cause

■ **By Humphrey Dobson**

Across the Atlantic, January 2003 saw a sombre anniversary. Thirty years ago, on the 22nd January 1973, the US Supreme Court handed down judgment on *Roe v. Wade* and its companion case *Doe v. Bolton*. The decision legalised abortion in the USA and since then over 40 million unborn children have died by abortion.¹

By God's grace two influential voices from that time are now speaking out against abortion. Norma McCorvey, who took the alias 'Jane Roe' in *Roe v. Wade*, and Sandra Cano, the 'Mary Doe' of *Doe v. Bolton*, have now joined the Christian pro-life movement. In fact both are campaigning to have their 1973 decisions overturned, claiming that the legal cases

were based on lies.²

The tide may have begun to turn against abortion in the US. Recently President Bush called for "compassionate alternatives" to abortion, including sexual abstinence and adoption.³ In 2002 Congress passed an Act protecting children who survive an attempted abortion. One senior pro-abortion figure recently lamented that since 1995 there have been 148 votes on measures relating to abortion in Congress "and we lost all but 25 of them".⁴ Pro-life advocates are hopeful a ban on partial-birth abortions will be passed in 2003.

Abortion transgresses the sixth commandment "You shall not murder" and so it will always matter to Christians. The lives of over 176,000 unborn

children in England and Wales were ended by abortion in 2001. Yet *not one* of these was carried out in an emergency to save the life of the mother.⁵

¹ Focus on the Family, *Family News*, January 2003, page 1 see <http://www.family.org/docstudy/newsletters/a0024012.html> as at 29 January 2003

² Focus on the Family, *Proof of Life*, January 2003, pages 2-4

³ *Orlando Sentinel*, 19 January 2003

⁴ *The News & Observer Raleigh*, 19 January 2003

⁵ *Abortion Statistics 2001*, Series AS No. 28, The Stationery Office, 2002, Table 11, page 9

Institute launches a new pro-life guide to contraception

■ **By Jon Errington**

The Christian Institute is currently researching and writing a new publication on the subject of contraception. The booklet is aimed at Christian couples. It is hoped it will help inform such couples about the pro-life implications of a variety of contraceptive methods.

The booklet would also help church leaders who may be faced with questions from church members in this area.

Many Christian couples will limit the size of their family through contraception. The view of most mainstream protestant denominations over the past 80 years has accepted that couples might wish to use contraception in order to plan a family.

Biblical Christians should affirm that life begins at conception. Once conception has occurred Christians should protect and nurture that life.

But some forms of 'contraception' work by destroying a human embryo created after conception.

The Christian Institute's booklet will describe how the commonest forms of contraception work, including the usual side effects.

The Christian Institute hopes it will be a useful resource for all those who are concerned about this area and are looking for information from a pro-life Biblical perspective.



Police threaten Church members with arrest for sharing the gospel with teenagers

■ By Simon Calvert

A church in Newcastle is breathing a sigh of relief after local police withdrew a threat to arrest church members for sharing the gospel with under eighteens.

Calvary Chapel works with dozens of young people and their families, many from troubled backgrounds.

As well as talking about the Christian faith, they provide friendship and practical help.

Problems with the police arose when a volunteer church worker became involved in discussions with teenagers in a local park.

One asked about homosexuality and was told the Bible says homosexual practice is a sin. A parent telephoned police claiming her daughter

overheard the statement and was distressed.

An officer then visited the pastor of the church at home and told him anyone from the church who told under eighteens about the gospel would be arrested. The officer could not specify under which law.

The pastor of the church contacted The Christian Institute. The Institute worked with lawyers to produce a robust letter to Northumbria constabulary, making clear there is no law against evangelism, which is protected under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Police solicitors agreed and confirmed that no attempts would be made to arrest church members carrying out youth evangelism.

An officer told the pastor that anyone from the church who told under eighteens about the gospel would be arrested.



Two Christian social workers face the sack after objecting to gay adoption

They have been threatened with dismissal unless they agree to support homosexual couples as carers.

■ By Simon Calvert

Two Christian social workers in the North West of England have been told to choose between their faith and their jobs.

Norah Ellis and Dawn Jackson were asked by bosses at Sefton Council Social Services Department if they would take part in placing children for adoption with a homosexual couple.

They said they would not. They have since been

threatened with dismissal unless they agree to support same-sex couples as carers.

They have between them almost fifty years of social work experience, specialising in adoption and fostering, an area where there is a recruitment shortage. Both are regarded highly by colleagues.

Both stressed that their opposition to homosexual adoption was based on sound professional judgement as well as Christian conviction.

Dawn and Norah relied in part on The Christian Institute's book, *Children As Trophies*, written by Patricia Morgan, a respected sociologist.

The book is a comprehensive analysis of the available evidence on homosexual parenting.

It found that what evidence there is points to the

undesirability of same-sex parenting.

Discussions with management about their views on homosexual adoption were informal.

The formal letter threatening them with dismissal therefore came as a surprise.

As well as contacting The Christian Institute, both have instructed solicitors and are determined to fight to keep their jobs - without having to compromise their faith.

They are concerned that Christian social workers around the country will be edged out of the profession as a result of pressure to endorse homosexual adoption.

Now that the law allows joint adoption by homosexual couples, the pressure on social workers will be even greater.



This book published by The Christian Institute highlights the evidence against same-sex parenting.

Government preparing for Las Vegas-style gambling laws

Christians believe gambling is wrong. It appeals to human covetousness and glorifies chance rather than God.

■ **By Chris Prest**

Radical new laws to relax the law on gambling are being drawn up by the Government.¹

The Government outlined its Las Vegas-style plans in March 2002.² Those plans would allow casinos to offer any form of legal gambling, bingo, slot machines with unlimited prizes, as well as live entertainment and alcohol on the gaming floor.

The rules requiring membership of a casino 24 hours before playing would also be abolished.

Other plans included taking away the restriction on the size of jackpots for Bingo halls. Bingo halls would be able to install jackpot and other types of gaming machines.

Advertising restrictions on gambling would be relaxed, on-line gambling made easier and a gambling regulator established.

Announcing these proposals last year Government Minister, Tessa Jowell, said: "The modernisation of our gambling laws is long overdue. Both society and technology have overtaken the law and when that happens, the Government must act."³

Alan Cavill of Blackpool Challenge Partnership said that with unemployment at nearly 14 per cent, the prospect of huge "resort casinos" was too good to ignore.⁴

Opponents of the proposals fear that towns like Blackpool will be turned

into British versions of Las Vegas.

Increased access to gambling also raised enormous fears over a rise in addiction. Gamblers Anonymous described gambling as a mental disorder and said "...the more you expose people to gambling the more likely they are to suffer from that disorder."⁵

Christians believe gambling is wrong. It appeals to human covetousness and glorifies chance rather than God.

According to press reports a gambling bill will be published late this year.⁶

¹ *The Herald*, 27 January 2003

² *A Safe Bet for Success – Modernising Britain's Gambling Laws*, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, March 2002

³ 10 Downing Street Press Release, 26 March 2002

⁴ *Daily Express*, 27 March 2002

⁵ *Loc cit*

⁶ *The Herald*, 27 January 2003



Proposed all-night drinking law put before Parliament

■ **By Chris Prest**

The Government has announced proposals to radically overhaul alcohol licensing laws.

Under the Licensing Bill, announced in the Queen's Speech, licensed premises including pubs will be able to sell alcohol around the clock seven days a week.

Shops and supermarkets will also be allowed to sell alcohol throughout the night.

The ban on unaccompanied children in bars will also be lifted.

Tony Blair says it will help tackle anti-social behaviour.¹ Ministers have claimed it will also improve the quality of life.²

However former Health Secretary Frank Dobson argued that the proposals would lead to more anti-social behaviour in town centres.³

Eric Appleby, director of Alcohol Concern, said the move could encourage underage drinking.⁴

Concern has been growing over heavy drinking. According to a recent study many more Britons than previously thought drink so heavily that they damage their relationships, their health, jobs or careers.⁵

The Government was narrowly defeated in the Lords on 13 January on the all-night drinking proposals, but MPs are likely to overturn this.

The Bible speaks clearly against drunkenness.⁶ The Christian Institute opposes these plans.

¹ *The Independent*, 6 November 2002

² *Daily Mail*, 16 November 2002

³ *Scottish Daily Mail*, 16 November 2002

⁴ *The Independent*, 6 November 2002

⁵ *The Independent on Sunday*, 26 May 2002

⁶ Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:21

