



25 Years of Christian Influence

The Christian Institute

Annual Review 2016

25

Contents

3	Welcome
4	My Story
6	25 Years
12	Defending Gospel Freedom
14	Equipping Christians
16	Meet the Team
18	Other Work in 2015
20	How We Are Managed
21	Summary of Financial Information
22	What We Believe
30	Thanks
31	Basis of Faith

The Christian Institute is a registered charity whose main object is “the furtherance and promotion of the Christian Religion in the United Kingdom and elsewhere”.

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Welcome



BY JOHN BURN

Many Christians in the 1980s were becoming deeply concerned about the spiritual and moral decline in Britain. The church had – on the whole – become very weak and had deserted the public square. Important debates about how we are governed as a nation were being left almost entirely to people and philosophies that cared little for the truths of the Bible. There was a clear need to recover a Christian mind – a worldview consistent across the board with biblical principles – and to help Christians be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16).

It was during this time that God brought a few of us together to establish The Christian Institute – a new organisation seeking to help Christians stand for biblical truth in every area of life. A number of people have been instrumental in making the Institute what it is today, none more so than Colin Hart, our Director from the beginning.

We trust you will be encouraged by reading our 25th anniversary Annual Review. Looking back, there have been many challenges, victories and defeats as our nation has increasingly rejected the Christian faith. We give thanks to God for

providing for all our needs. Through it all we can truly say that He has done more than we could ever have imagined. To Him be the glory.

In late 2015 we were saddened to learn of the death of Alec McNichol after a long illness. Alec, who was a founding Trustee and our Treasurer for the first 20 years, was a steadfast supporter of the Institute. He laid the foundations of sound financial management which continue to this day. Our deepest sympathies are with his wife Evelyn.

Last year was as busy as ever for us. As well as all our research, publications, online activity and campaigns, staff have spoken to over 16,000 people at 239 events around the country.

Once again during 2015 we have had the tremendous backing of our supporters, for which we thank God. May God give us grace to face the challenges of the year ahead.

John Burn OBE,
Chairman

My Story



BY COLIN HART

I could never have imagined, as a young boy growing up in Hove, that I would be where I am today.

Through most of my school life, I would cringe at the idea of talking about my faith. It was much easier to stay quiet. In fact, it wasn't until the summer before university that I began to take Christianity more seriously. Could I really believe the claims of the Bible? And if so, what would that mean for my life?

By the time I arrived in Newcastle upon Tyne to undertake a maths and computing degree, God had done a work in my heart, and I was determined to live for Jesus Christ. I threw myself into Bible studies, missionary conferences and campus evangelism. I met with Christian friends regularly and got stuck into the local church. I also used to go for long cycle rides, sometimes for hours, praying that God would use my life for his glory.

In 1984, having completed my degree, I decided to become a maths teacher. It was a remarkable job. To this day, I have the greatest

admiration for those who seek to positively influence children through education.

I enjoyed maths so much that I even used to attend national mathematics conferences. And it was during one such event, at Selwyn College in Cambridge, that my plans to pursue a career in teaching changed. It wasn't a particularly glamorous moment. Nor was it very fun.

One evening, as I was walking down the college corridors, I slipped and broke my leg. Returning to teach at the start of the next term was out of the question. My injury was so bad that I had to stay at home.

During that time I read John Pollock's biography of William Wilberforce. I knew Wilberforce was passionately committed to the spread of the gospel, and that he was involved in the abolition of slavery, but I had no idea what a long and lonely struggle it had been.





The book was inspiring. I was captivated by the thought of believers doing great good in politics. As I began to read more, it soon became clear that being a Christian meant living out my faith in every area of my life.

It was around this time, in 1986, that I first met John Burn. He was headteacher of a nearby secondary school, and was passionately concerned about the growing influence of secularism.

Together, John and I started to campaign to protect Christian teaching in schools. We also began to raise broader concerns about the moral direction of the nation and the implications for society, for families and for the church.

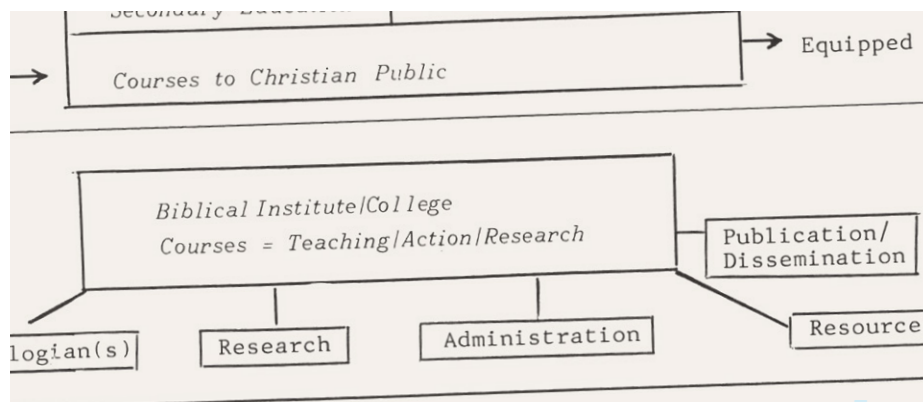
In 1988, we presented a paper to a small group of Christians. The opening line was: "The need is for robust Christians to think Christianly in all areas of life." It sketched out a simple idea for what became The Christian Institute (see below).

Following an unexpected £20,000 donation, John persuaded me to give up my job as a teacher. And so, as a 25-year-old, with limited experience, no other staff, and no mailing list, I spent the next year campaigning on religious education and trying to set up the Institute working from a spare bedroom.

We officially became a registered charity in 1991, which means that this year we celebrate our 25th birthday.

Looking back, it is remarkable to see how God has provided for the Institute. As this Annual Review shows, there have certainly been many challenges. Yet, in every circumstance, all our needs have been met. I continue to give thanks to God for all that he has done.

Colin Hart,
Director



25 Years – 1991 to 2000

1991

The Christian Institute became a company with charitable status.

There was a three-fold strategy to be a Christian influence through publications (and proclamation), research, and conferences on applying the Christian faith to the whole of life.

Regular newsletters for supporters included news, book reviews, and articles on the ethical issues involved in abortion and embryology.

1992

Conferences were held for Christians on the subjects of euthanasia, crime and punishment, biblical teaching on law, and Christianity and education. We published bulletins on religious education and euthanasia.

1993

We established an office in Newcastle upon Tyne.

1994

A series of lectures was held on 'Unlocking the Bible' as well as a special lecture giving a Christian perspective on genetics.

1995

We organised the 'Breakdown of Britain' event in Westminster, focusing on the moral and spiritual crisis facing the nation. Speakers included Baroness Cox, a patron of the Institute, and the late Norman Dennis, a respected social commentator. We went on to publish a number of briefings by Norman.

1996

Our website christian.org.uk was launched.

We published a key briefing arguing against the National Lottery.

We opposed the Conservative Government's plans to introduce no-fault divorce.

Working with Sir Edward Leigh MP, a series of amendments were introduced to promote reconciliation for couples contemplating divorce. This proved more popular than mediation, which lay at the heart of the legislation. The incoming Labour Government led by Tony Blair abandoned the no-fault divorce plans.

A conference was held in Westminster called 'Repairing the Moral Fabric', addressed by the late Baroness Young, our Chairman John Burn and Norman Dennis.

1997

We began publishing current MPs' voting records on our website, see christian.org.uk/mpvotes

We spotted that the Human Rights Bill could have led to churches being unjustly sued for their beliefs. We worked with Institute patron Lady Young to successfully amend the Bill to safeguard church freedoms.

We published a special 40-page 'Drugs Bulletin', providing detailed public policy and medical evidence against liberalising the UK's drugs laws.

Conferences were held on 'Christian use of the Internet', the history of revival, and pro-life issues.

We helped author Richard Dyter and CARE produce a book, 'School Assemblies Need You', a practical guide to help Christians get involved with school assemblies. We provided support to Lady Young in opposing the lowering of the age of homosexual consent and the repeal of Section 28, the law which prohibited local authorities from promoting

homosexuality in state schools and other places. We published briefings on both issues for Christians and others.

1998

We moved into larger office premises on Jesmond Road in Newcastle, the first volume of our 'Advocate' magazine was published and our Autumn Lectures series considered 'The Character of God'.

1999

We launched our 'Faith in Education' project, including newsletters and lectures, and campaigned to remove legal barriers to religious broadcasting.

2000

We helped secure important religious liberty protections in a European Union directive on employment. Without the protections, the freedom of churches to require staff to be Christians would have been jeopardised.

We published a briefing for Scotland promoting marriage and opposing attempts to liberalise Scottish divorce laws.

Our final 'Advocate' magazine provided a Christian ethical response to the controversial separation of conjoined twins Jodie and Mary, a personal perspective on being a stay-at-home mum, and book reviews covering a range of issues.

European Threat to

Religious Freedom

a response to the European Union's proposed **Employment Directive**

25 Years – 2001 to 2010

2001

We toured the UK with our 'Faith in Education' project. It suggested various ways that Christians could get involved in education, such as by volunteering to speak in school assemblies, by becoming a school governor, or by getting involved with parent-teacher associations.

2002

Following calls for weaker laws on cannabis, the Institute published a briefing critiquing the main arguments used to advocate decriminalisation. We published the book 'Children as trophies', by sociologist Patricia Morgan, which reviewed the research on same-sex parenting ahead of Parliamentary debates on adoption law.

2003

As the work expanded we moved to temporary offices in Jesmond, Newcastle.

2004

We helped Hull University Christian Union successfully defend itself against student authorities.

One of our most popular theology booklets, 'The moral law' by Professor John L. Mackay, was first published.

We hosted a Westminster conference examining 'Religious Freedom and the Law'. It was the first conference of its kind in the UK, providing Christian leaders with an overview of the law relating to religious liberty.

2005

Our nationwide meetings with Pastor Daniel Scot to highlight the dangers of a religious hatred law were attended by over 3,500 people.

2006

We launched our Legal Defence Fund (LDF), which has since gone on to help hundreds of Christian individuals, groups and churches.

In our first LDF case we won an out-of-court settlement for Joe and Helen Roberts for breaches of their rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

Our new purpose-built headquarters, Wilberforce House, officially opened – all paid for by the generous donations of our supporters.

We helped to secure a historic victory to protect religious liberty against a religious hatred law.

After strong opposition from Christians around the country, several Labour MPs rebelled against their Government and the House of Commons voted to substantially alter the offence to include a robust free speech protection.

2007

A draft embryology Bill was put out for consultation. This began our opposition to what became the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill. Proposals included allowing the creation of animal-human embryos for research, permitting the creation of 'saviour siblings', and removing the requirement for doctors to consider a child's 'need for a father' in relation to IVF treatment. We published detailed briefings on these controversial proposals. Each was eventually passed by the UK Parliament.

2008

We began publishing daily news articles on our website and launched our YouTube channel – [youtube.com/christianorguk](https://www.youtube.com/christianorguk)

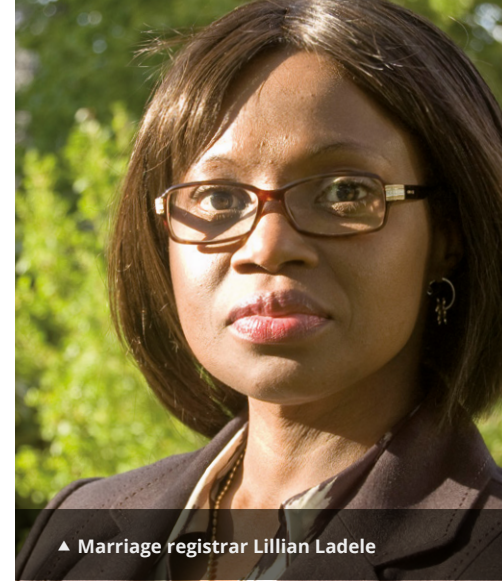
We succeeded in arguing for a free speech protection to a law on 'sexual orientation hatred'.

We commenced our support for marriage registrar Lillian Ladele, in her claim of discrimination in the workplace.

2009

We took on the case of B&B owners Peter and Hazelmary Bull after they were sued for only allowing married couples to share a double bed.

We published our 'Marginalising Christians' briefing, to highlight instances of Christians being sidelined because of their faith.



▲ Marriage registrar Lillian Ladele

2010

We worked with Institute patron Baroness O'Cathain to protect church employment freedoms from harmful changes in the Equality Bill. Our prayers were answered when three successive votes were won in the House of Lords.

We expanded into the building adjacent to Wilberforce House – this became the John Newton Centre.

We hosted Wayne Grudem as he toured six venues in England addressing the question: 'Does political involvement distract from the Gospel?' The events were attended by 2,500 people.

Our 'Charity Roadshow' toured England and Wales. It provided practical information on various legal issues confronting Christian charities to over 1,000 people.

25 Years – 2011 to Today

2011

We launched our weekly video news bulletin and published Dr John R. Ling's briefing on the decisive question: 'When does human life begin?'

Following repeated calls for sex education to be made mandatory for all primary schools in England, we produced our briefing, 'Too much, too young', to expose the extent of inappropriate materials already being recommended.

We supported the efforts of Baroness Cox to prevent sharia courts establishing a parallel legal system in Britain. Lady Cox introduced a Bill to restrain their operation, which has since twice been debated in the House of Lords.

We successfully campaigned to protect free speech by repealing "insulting" words or behaviour from Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986.

2012

Our new in-house TV studio was founded, based in the John Newton Centre.

We supported the launch of national campaign group Coalition for Marriage (C4M).

The High Court ruled in favour of Adrian Smith after the LDF helped him take legal action against Trafford Housing Trust for breach of contract.

2013

We assisted a broad-based free speech campaign, Reform Clause 1, to successfully oppose plans to outlaw causing "nuisance or annoyance" in a public place.

We published Professor Calum MacKellar's cutting-edge briefing highlighting the ethical and safety concerns of creating genetically modified babies with three or four parents.

2014

Following proposals in Northern Ireland to weaken abortion law, we launched our 'Choose Life' video series.

This pro-life DVD highlights stories of people who have been affected by the life and death decisions of abortion.

We published our expert guide for Christians, 'Same-sex marriage: Your legal rights to object'.



▲ Housing manager Adrian Smith

The Institute responded to a Department of Health consultation on new guidelines to regulate abortion clinics. In the biggest liberalisation of abortion practice since 1967, the final guidance said that doctors do not need to see the women involved before approving abortions.

We helped to launch NO2NP, an ongoing campaign which opposes plans to appoint a 'Named Person' for every child in Scotland.

2015

The Institute's Northern Ireland Officer, Callum Webster, reached the milestone of 1,000 meetings.

As in previous years we published our General Election briefing, encouraging Christians to think carefully about how to vote from a biblical perspective. We also provided question cards for use with candidates.

To mark the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta we produced a short briefing, highlighting its lasting importance and how the freedoms we enjoy have been hard-won over centuries of Christian influence.

A new campaign was launched to oppose the Government's controversial Extremism Disruption Orders (EDOs).

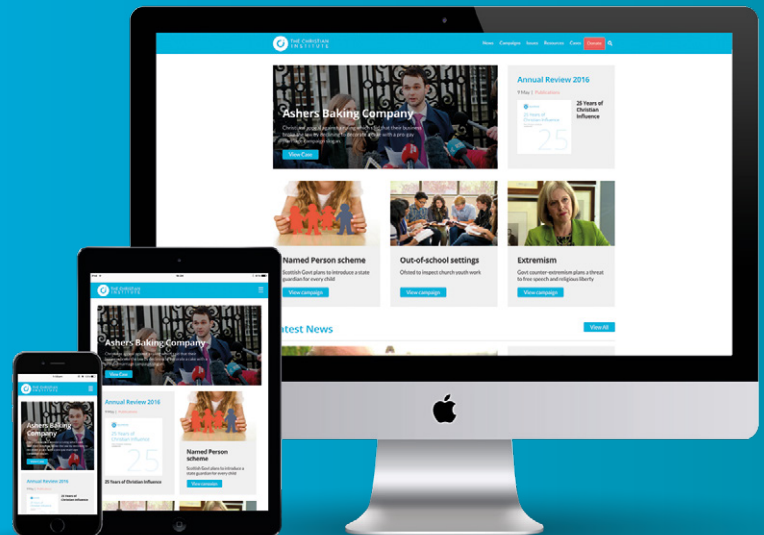
Defend Free Speech is backed by several organisations concerned about civil liberties, including The Christian Institute.

2016 ONWARDS

We are already using the John Newton Centre to expand our capability for meeting supporters and provide the best possible legal support for Christians whose religious liberty is threatened. This continues to move us towards our long-term goal to host centres of excellence for our legal, media and supporter work.

COMING SOON...

Later this year we will be launching a new version of our popular website. As well as all the up-to-date news you've come to expect, there will be more on all our causes and campaigns, and we're making our publications and other resources more accessible.



Defending Gospel Freedom



Our Legal Defence Fund supports cases of national significance for the religious liberty of Christians in the UK. We also provide individuals, organisations and churches with legal guidance away from the limelight.

FAITH IN THE WORKPLACE

In April 2015 the Institute took part in an advisory group meeting at the Equality and Human Rights Commission in London which provided the opportunity to argue for better legal protection for religious beliefs. This is part of a longer-term project with which we have been invited to be involved.

CHRISTIAN UNIONS

Draft Home Office anti-extremism guidance would have required university societies, such as Christian Unions, to hand over speakers' presentations 14 days in advance to be vetted. We encouraged Institute supporters to respond to a consultation on the issue in early 2015, highlighting the implications for innocent groups that risked being hit by the vague restrictions. After the Government was widely criticised for its approach, it reworked the final guidance to protect freedom of speech.

SWANSEA CITY COUNCIL

In November 2015 we contacted the City Centre Management at Swansea City Council after several street preachers, including from Open-Air Mission, reported being challenged for using their display boards when speaking. Since the Institute wrote pointing out the legal rights of street preachers, the Council has not interfered further in their outreach.

REGISTER OF CHURCH LEADERS

A draft version of the Government's counter-extremism strategy leaked to the media said that pastors, rabbis and other religious leaders would have to enrol in a national register of faith leaders before they could

work with public bodies. This meant that any church minister serving as a hospital chaplain, taking school assemblies or leading a university CU mission faced needing state approval. We encouraged Christians to contact their MP pointing out the harm to religious liberty. The Government omitted the plans from the final strategy document and conceded that it is not its role to regulate faith leaders.

CHURCH YOUTH WORK

There are serious concerns over plans to subject church youth work in England to 'British values' inspections. Under the proposals, Ofsted will be given the power to carry out extremism checks on out-of-school settings. Any place which provides instruction to under 19-year-olds for more than 6 hours in any week would be covered. This could catch various forms of church youth work, such as holiday Bible clubs, church weekends and summer camps. Institute supporters have been encouraged to respond to a consultation on the issue, as well as contact their MP. Similar proposals were published by the Welsh Government in February 2016.

The Christian Institute strongly supports Government efforts to combat terrorism. We nevertheless have serious concerns about the vague definition of 'British values' used by the Government's counter-extremism strategy.

ASHERS BAKING COMPANY



▲ Daniel McArthur speaks outside the Court of Appeal, Belfast, alongside his wife Amy.

During 2015 we continued to support a Christian-run bakery in Northern Ireland which faced legal action for declining to produce a pro-gay marriage campaign cake.

The McArthur family, who own Ashers Baking Company, said they could not fulfil the order because it conflicted with their Christian belief that marriage is the union of a man and a woman.

The taxpayer-funded Equality Commission for Northern Ireland launched a legal action against the bakery.

Ahead of a hearing at Belfast County Court, we held a series of public meetings in February 2015 entitled 'Faith under fire'. Ashers General Manager Daniel McArthur spoke to over 2,000 people in total about why the family's Christian faith led

them to decline the order. We also hosted a major event at Belfast's Waterfront Hall in March 2015, where Daniel addressed over 2,400 people.

Sadly, in May 2015, the judge ruled that the bakery had broken sexual orientation and political discrimination laws. This was despite the fact that the McArthurs' decision was based on the message they were asked to promote, not the sexual orientation of the customer.

However, the bakery has received widespread support, including from those who do not share the McArthur family's Christian faith or views on marriage.

The case has also received a great deal of sympathetic media coverage, triggering an international debate about the protection of rights to freedom of expression and freedom of conscience.

Ashers' appeal against the original ruling was adjourned until 9 May 2016. The Christian Institute is backing the appeal.



DEFEND FREE SPEECH

We are supporting an umbrella group, Defend Free Speech, which launched in October 2015 to oppose the Government's planned Extremism Disruption Orders (EDOs).

The proposals are expected in a new Counter-extremism Bill and will be aimed at combating those deemed to be 'extreme'. Many have expressed concerns that EDOs have such a low threshold that they risk catching all kinds of legitimate speech.

Equipping Christians



2,536,511

VISITS TO OUR
WEBSITE IN 2015



30%



33%

INCREASE IN FOLLOWERS IN 2015



OVER

16,000

PEOPLE AT

239

PRESENTATIONS IN 2015

OVER

250,000

VIEWS OF

109

VIDEOS POSTED IN 2015



51,405

INFORMED SUPPORTERS



42,273

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



400 **14**

IN 2015

PUBLICATIONS
OVER 25 YEARS



CHRISTIANINSTITUTE



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MEETINGS

Since the Institute began, we have sought to help equip Christians to engage with the issues of our day. This means we host regular lectures, seminars, conferences and meetings.

Organising and speaking at meetings is a substantial activity for the Institute. In 2015 Christian Institute staff gave presentations at 239 events, speaking to over 16,000 people.

Our general meetings include biblical teaching about Jesus' command for his followers to live as salt and light, Christian citizenship and democracy, and the importance of praying for governing authorities.

We give presentations about current ethical issues and inform our audience with key facts and Christian teaching. We also regularly distribute our teaching resources and speak to Christians at conferences around the UK. During 2015 we had 39 such opportunities.

The Institute has five members of staff whose work is mainly devoted to operating our meetings, and as many as 26 others are routinely involved in planning, publicity, and writing or giving presentations.

AUTUMN LECTURES

Our annual series of lectures took place in Newcastle. The theme for 2015 was 'Having an answer' – encouraging Christians to be more confident in the Bible. Topics included suffering, church history, biblical scrutiny, the design argument, and secular culture. They were very popular, with over 120 people attending every week.

PUBLICATIONS

In 25 years we have produced a total of 400 printed publications, ranging from briefing papers to magazines to books. In 2015 we produced 14 publications for Christians, including a Legal Defence Fund newsletter, a Magna Carta leaflet and a popular short briefing highlighting worldwide extremism against Christians.

ELECTION BRIEFING

The Institute's General Election booklet was our most popular publication of 2015. It provided key background information on legislation, as well as analysis of party policies which matter to Christians. We also distributed a handy-sized question card to help people find out the views of their candidates.

WEBSITE

Our website has become one of the leading Christian news sources in the UK, receiving over 2.5 million visits in 2015. The site features up-to-date news articles, a weekly video bulletin, and a wide range of resources – including MPs' voting records and an extensive audio archive, where hundreds of people listen to lectures and sermons each day.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2015 we placed over 100 videos on social media, which have been viewed over 250,000 times. Our Twitter following stands at over 7,500, and our Facebook page has over 32,000 fans.

Meet the Team



Back Row:

- Callum Webster MA MSc Northern Ireland Officer**
Develops the Institute's work in Northern Ireland.
- Dave Boswell BSc Administrative Assistant**
Handles correspondence and calls from supporters.
- Christine Thwaites Cert Ed Administrative Assistant**
Handles correspondence and calls from supporters.
- Benjamin Mitchell BA Development Officer**
Develops the Institute's work with churches and supporters.
- Stewart McLurg Grassroots Director**
Works with volunteers around the country.
- Johnny Timm BSc IT Manager**
Oversees our IT systems.
- Jason Abdelnoor BSc MSc PGCE Finance Clerk**
Works on book-keeping and accounts.
- John Bailes Finance Clerk**
Works on book-keeping and accounts.
- Sam Webster BA Solicitor Advocate In-house Solicitor**
Manages religious liberty cases.
- Judi Coulson BA PGCE Personal Assistant to Humphrey Dobson and Senior Administrator**
- Humphrey Dobson BA Deputy Director (Policy and Staffing)**
Responsible for policy and staffing.
- Simon Calvert LLB Deputy Director (Public Affairs)**
Responsible for public affairs, including our Parliamentary work.
- Jane Leung BA Public Affairs Assistant**
Works with the Deputy Director (Public Affairs).
- Mark Taylor BA Multimedia Designer**
Assists with the design of the Institute's various communications.
- Sam Wylie BA Communications Officer**
Helps with the Institute's communications.
- Matt Crouch BSc Design Manager**
Manages the Institute's publications and digital media.
- John Denning BSc PGCE Education Officer**
Conducts research on education issues.
- Rodney Aiken LLM Senior Researcher**
Works on major projects with the Director.
- Sam Mason BA Research Assistant**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Sharon James MA (Cantab) MDv PhD PGCE Social Policy Analyst**
Conducts research on developments in social policy.
- Paul Mawhinney BSc Research Assistant**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Nigel Kenny LLB DipLP Scotland Officer**
Develops the Institute's work in Scotland.

Front Row:

- Sandra Mackay Personal Assistant to the Northern Ireland Officer**
- Kim Welford Administrative Assistant**
Handles correspondence and calls from supporters.
- Kathryn Oliver Administrative Assistant**
Handles correspondence and calls from supporters.
- Jonathan Patterson BA Office Manager**
Supervises the administration and running of the office.
- Amanda Dobson BA Development Assistant**
Assists with databases and supporter work.
- James McIntosh MTheol MTh Development Officer**
Develops the Institute's work with churches and supporters.
- Jonathan Wood BA Assistant to the Head of Finance**
- Frank Oliver Financial Administrator**
Handles the Institute's payments and financial data.
- Jon Errington BA DipTP Head of Finance**
Supervises the financial administration.
- Hannah Ballard LLB Personal Assistant to the In-house Solicitor**
- Louisa Bratley BA Personal Assistant to the Director**
- Colin Hart BSc PGCE Director**
Controls the day-to-day running of the Institute.
- Judith McKeown LLM Personal Assistant to the Deputy Director (Public Affairs)**
- Peter Marsay Cameraman/Video Editor**
Produces audio-visual output.
- Ciarán Kelly BA MSc Head of Communications**
Oversees the Institute's communications.
- James Gillies BA Communications Officer**
Helps with the Institute's communications.
- Hannah Compton BA Research Assistant**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Dave Greatorex LLB Head of Research**
Supervises the research work.
- Sarah Aiken BA Senior Researcher**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Rachel Gowdy LLB Research Assistant**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Rhys Curnow BA Senior Researcher**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Rebekah Wake BA Personal Assistant to the Scotland Officer**
- Fiona Rushton Cleaner**



Other Work in 2015



John Denning is our new Education Officer. He taught in state schools for 17 years, and has been Head of Science. The appointment reflects the growing demand from Christians who have contacted us for help in this area. It means we have a member of staff dedicated to helping Christian parents, teachers and pupils. It enables us to create resources to help schools apply Christian thinking to the curriculum.

EDUCATION

We raised concerns about new rules from the Department for Education, which stated that all schools in England have to “actively promote” British values. Supporters were encouraged to contact their MP and point out how the regulations had been used to impose political correctness on Christian and Jewish schools. Although Government guidance says that it is respect for *people* – rather than their *beliefs* – that schools need to promote, Ofsted has failed to follow the guidance in many cases.

In June we publicly opposed proposals on religious education from former Education Secretary Charles Clarke. His ideas were contained in a report entitled ‘A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools’.

Under the proposals, the law on daily Christian assemblies would be scrapped, and church schools would in effect be stripped of their ethos, losing control over their religious teaching and staff appointments.

In November it was suggested that atheistic worldviews should be included in the new Religious Studies (RS) GCSE. We issued a press release against this to highlight that, by its very nature, RS deals with the study of religion, not non-religion.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

In June Rob Marris MP introduced a Bill to legalise assisted suicide in England and Wales. We produced a briefing on the subject, highlighting that any change in the law would place pressure on vulnerable people to end their lives for fear of being a burden on others. We also encouraged supporters to contact their MP.

Thankfully, in September, the House of Commons overwhelmingly voted against the Bill in a free vote by 330 to 118.

In May, politicians at Holyrood rejected a similar Bill, voting 82 to 36 against MSP Patrick Harvie’s proposals.

NAMED PERSON

Our appeal of the judicial review of the Named Person scheme is heard at the Supreme Court ►



We continued to oppose plans to appoint a 'Named Person' to every child in Scotland. Despite the intention to protect children, there are concerns that the scheme will undermine the unique role of parents and erode the right to family life and privacy.

We supported campaign group No to Named Persons (NO2NP) by taking part in 26 roadshows and action days.

We also continued a judicial review against the Scottish Government's proposals, alongside CARE, TYMES Trust and the Family Education Trust. In September 2015 the Inner House of the Court of Session disappointingly ruled that the legislation does not conflict with human rights or data protection laws. Our appeal against the decision was heard by the UK Supreme Court in March 2016. We are awaiting its ruling.

SUNDAY TRADING

In July the Government announced proposals to open shops for longer on Sundays – despite the Conservatives stating before the General Election that they had no such plans. We warned that changing the law would lead to more pressure for people to work on Sundays, harming family life and further interfering with Sunday as a day of rest.

We encouraged Institute supporters to respond to a consultation on the issue and, in October, we met with civil servants from the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills to explain the serious and widespread concerns. The proposals were halted in November after MPs from the Conservatives, Labour, the SNP and the DUP said they would oppose the move.

The proposals were revived by the Government in February 2016 but, following strong opposition from Institute supporters and others, they were defeated in the House of Commons in March by 317 votes to 286.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In December the Institute responded to a consultation on a proposed Bill which called for all forms of prostitution to be legalised in Scotland. Independent MSP Jean Urquhart advocated decriminalising kerb-crawling and brothels, and removing financial penalties for those involved in the sex trade.

We warned, however, that relaxing laws on prostitution would lead to greater exploitation of women and an increased demand for human trafficking. Our response concluded that the Scottish Government should bring forward legislation similar to that introduced in Northern Ireland, which back in January had criminalised the buying of sex and tightened laws on human trafficking.

How We Are Managed



TRUSTEES OF THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

From left to right:

Trevor James
Rod Badams
Revd Rupert Bentley-Taylor
Revd David Holloway
Revd Dr William Philip
John Burn (Chairman)
Geoff Fox
Revd James Leggett
Revd George Curry
Dr Philip Robinson

The Institute is governed by its ten-member Council who act as Trustees and are legally responsible for the registered charity. The Council meets regularly throughout the year. Their skills, knowledge and support are invaluable to the organisation.

An executive group, comprising the Chairman, Treasurer and Geoff Fox, meets regularly with the Director to discuss the Institute's affairs, while the day-to-day running is the responsibility of the Director, Colin Hart.

The Christian Institute relies upon the generosity of its supporters. Our charitable work continues because

our supporters are willing to give financially to it. We give thanks to God for his continued provision through the generosity of his people. Over 99 per cent of our income comes through such gifts.

Giving to our work (excluding the Legal Defence Fund) is split between regular giving (e.g. by standing order) and one-off gifts (i.e. we do not know about them in advance). We therefore rely upon roughly £24,000 arriving each week, either through the post or online giving. This is a challenge to the staff and Trustees. If you are able to give regularly by standing order it is a great help to us in our planning and budgeting.

Summary of Financial Information

This summary is provided to indicate to supporters how funds were obtained and spent during the years 2014 and 2015.

The summary for 2015 is based on draft and unaudited figures. The summary for 2014 is based on the audited accounts for that year but does not form part of the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements of The Christian Institute.

Copies of the full audited annual accounts for 2014 and 2015 (when available) can be obtained by contacting our office:

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Jon Errington,
Head of Finance

Expenditure		2015	2014
General Fund			
Staff	47%	£1,229,525	£1,142,119
Printing and stationery	6%	£154,259	£127,065
Postage and telephone	10%	£249,115	£250,224
Travel	6%	£149,877	£174,285
Research materials	2%	£58,802	£56,353
Rent and building running costs	6%	£151,627	£171,457
Equipment and depreciation	3%	£72,251	£48,995
Conference and meetings costs	<1%	£16,631	£7,411
Professional fees	5%	£116,888	£116,122
Miscellaneous	<1%	£3,205	£3,634
Total for the General Fund		£2,202,180	£2,097,665
Legal Defence Fund	13%	£349,401	£330,721
Growth Fund	<1%	£6,930	£1,353
No to Named Persons and other restricted funds	1%	£37,069	£27,149
Total Expenditure – All Funds		£2,595,580	£2,456,888

Income		2015	2014
General Fund			
Unrestricted	80%	£2,073,510	£2,173,481
Sales	<1%	£3,677	£2,678
Total for the General Fund		£2,077,187	£2,176,159
Legal Defence Fund	14%	£479,699	£415,647
Growth Fund	<1%	£2,584	£2,053
No to Named Persons and other restricted funds	1.4%	£37,069	£27,149
Total Income – All Funds		£2,596,539	£2,621,008

What We Believe

1. GOVERNMENTS EXIST TO RESTRAIN EVIL

Governments are vital for civilisation. The rule of law is the basis of order and civilisation. Authorities are instituted by God for the good of everyone to restrain evil. The Bible teaches that governments are ordained by God to punish the wrongdoer and to commend those who do right (Romans 13:3-4; 1 Peter 2:14).

The Bible plainly teaches that it is the duty of every Christian to submit to authority. This includes the payment of taxes: "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established... This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing." (Romans 13:1,6). "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right" (1 Peter 2:13-14).

It is the duty of those in authority to punish those who do wrong. The punishment envisaged in the Bible clearly includes physical force. The Apostle Paul notes that a ruler "does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13:4).

It is right and proper for the state when deciding on appropriate punishments to consider deterrence and reformation. But desirable though these aims may be, punishment cannot be separated from the concept of just desert or retribution. Justice demands that the guilty are punished as their deeds deserve. For this reason it is detestable in God's sight for the guilty to be acquitted or the innocent condemned (Proverbs 17:15).

The New Testament teaching on submission to authorities was given to the Church in the context of corrupt authorities. There may be circumstances where the Christian cannot obey the state: if the state should command what God forbids or forbid what God commands then the duty of the Christian must be to obey God rather than man (Acts 4:19; 5:29). The supreme example of Jesus Christ teaches that Christians will experience persecution and injustice in this life.

All judgment dispensed on earth is provisional. One day God will dispense perfect justice "so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God" (Romans 3:19). The Bible teaches that "man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). This judgment will be on the basis of

works in this life, and is not to be confused with justification which is solely obtained through the merits of Jesus Christ's atoning death on the cross.

In a democracy Christians can seek to be salt and light and use their democratic rights for the good of the Gospel. It is often said today that the law should not be used to enforce morality. This is quoted against Christians, as if we are the only ones who believe the law should be based on a moral position. In reality, everyone has a 'moral' position upon which their view of the law is based.

Secularists passionately believe that their assumptions should be the basis of our law and policy. However, Christians have always recognised that the purpose of national laws is to restrain evil. So morality cannot be divorced from the law.

God knows how we are made. He knows what is best for us. We believe the Bible contains the 'Maker's instructions'. Only God's moral law can truly protect people and promote what is good. Christians want to see God's moral law obeyed. This brings glory to God and it is also what is truly best for people. Christians want to see public policy which is consistent with the teaching of Christ and the Ten Commandments.

In a democracy Christians have the freedom to argue their case like everyone else. Our responsibility is to speak out for what is right. We are not responsible if men and women reject what they have heard.

It is because we love our neighbour and want what is best for them that Christians should speak up for what is right.

And when Christians speak up, very often they will find that non-Christians agree with them. Man is fallen, but God's image has not been entirely eradicated. Men and women still have a conscience which can agree with God's standards (Romans 2:14-15).

Christians believe that there is not only special revelation found in the Bible; there is also general revelation which comes through nature and conscience. Thus there is a higher universal moral law as distinct from the specific laws of individual states. Because these specific laws can be in defiance of the moral law and what is right, governments and individuals can be held accountable. This happened with the Nazis in the mid-twentieth century, where laws were held to be immoral. This and similar tyrannies resulted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which are based on the moral law. If governments, ignoring the moral law, enact immoral legislation giving rise to so called 'rights', Christians, people of other faiths and people of no faith, seeking to uphold the moral law, have a duty to protest.

2. MARRIAGE IS SACRED

It is now being argued that marriage is no better than any other type of relationship and should not have a special status in law. It is said that marriage is just a piece of paper.

But this is not how God sees it. At the beginning of creation God spelled out the importance of marriage to mankind when, after Eve was created for Adam, the Bible records: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Marriage is a creation ordinance and therefore God's teaching on marriage and sex is relevant to the world as well as to the church. Marriage is meant for the good of all people – not just Christians.

Marriage clearly *is* different from other types of relationship. Marriage is part of God's 'common grace'. The Bible clearly teaches that the only context for sexual activity is within lifelong monogamous marriage (1 Corinthians 6:9). Marriage is the proper context for raising children. Even secular research shows that marriage is head-and-shoulders above other types of human relationships in terms of the benefits it gives to adults and children. In the past marriage was protected in the Western legal tradition because of the unique social benefits it offers. Today marriage has lost much of its unique status in public policy. The Christian Institute is concerned about any legislation, public policy, benefit or tax requirement that undermines marriage and Christian family patterns. The family is a fundamental carrier of values and is at present being undermined. This is evident not least in the area of divorce. Jesus emphasised that marriage was for life, but successive reforms of the divorce law have fostered a rampant divorce culture. God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) and Jesus clearly aligned himself against easy divorce (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12). Successive reforms of the divorce law in Britain have increased both the divorce rate and the number of children born outside marriage. The Institute believes that the legal framework should be reformed so that divorce is discouraged and reconciliation encouraged. Divorce law should not acquit the guilty and condemn the innocent.

When Paul went to Athens he found it "was full of idols". Paul attacked the rampant idolatry (Acts 17:16-34). In our own day there may not be idols on every street corner, but there is the all-pervasive worship of sex. Christians must continue to argue for marriage. We also have to be firm that all sex outside marriage is wrong.

This means that fornication, adultery and homosexual practice are wrong. Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).



3. PARENTS HAVE A GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY OVER THEIR CHILDREN

In the Bible it is parents who have the responsibility for raising children. Parents have a God-given authority over their children.

The fifth commandment requires a child to honour its father and mother (Exodus 20:12). This was quoted by Jesus and by the Apostle Paul.

Parents are expected to exercise loving discipline over their children. As part of this most parents use physical chastisement such as smacking. Discipline must not be harsh. Fathers are told to instruct children according to what is good and not to exasperate their children (Ephesians 6:4). That discipline can be painful is clearly accepted in Scripture (e.g. Hebrews 12:7-11). However, attempts to make the administration of reasonable chastisement a criminal offence should be strongly resisted as should other moves which usurp the authority of parents.

Christians ought particularly to be concerned by any proposals which weaken the moral protections for children. Jesus gave a serious warning of judgment against those who cause children to sin (Matthew 18:6). This is an apt warning in these days when children have their innocence stolen from them.

4. DRUG TAKING IS WRONG

The Bible bluntly teaches that drunkenness is wrong: "Do not get drunk on wine" (Ephesians 5:18). Intoxication and loss of control are intrinsic to taking drugs. Intoxication is also wrong because of escapism. People cannot solve their problems by running away from them. Down the ages Christians have been at the forefront of battling against the epidemic of public drunkenness and the personal tragedy of alcoholism. Now Christians must take a stand as it becomes ever more fashionable to argue for the legalisation of all drugs.

5. 'HARM REDUCTION' APPROACHES ARE UN-CHRISTIAN

Teenage pregnancy and drug taking are recognised as two of the major social problems affecting this country.

Telling young people to steer clear of drugs and to abstain from sex until marriage is now viewed as 'indoctrination' and a waste of time. Such approaches have been ridiculed as a simplistic 'just say no' message. For the past twenty-five years the argument has been made that preventative approaches which give strong moral guidance to young people do not work.

Instead, 'harm reduction' approaches have been advocated with the justification that telling young people not to take drugs or engage in underage sex will not stop them doing it, therefore it's better to allow them to do it and ensure they do it safely. This harm reduction philosophy has led to young people being told how to have 'safer sex' and how to take drugs 'safely'.

This philosophy is superficially appealing because it has a desirable

goal – the reduction of harm. Many people have been taken in by this profoundly naïve philosophy. But by opposing restraint, harm reduction actually increases the number of people involved in a harmful activity rather than reducing it.

Harm reduction was originally introduced to help drug addicts who were hooked on a chemical substance. As part of a programme to end their addiction, addicts in danger of killing themselves were given advice on how to take their drugs more safely. The important point was that the aim in view was to end the addiction. This original approach has now largely been abandoned. Heroin addicts are now being given methadone on a long term basis.

Of even wider significance is the fact that harm reduction approaches have been extended to cover the whole population of young people rather than just those who are addicts. From a Christian perspective, harm reduction greases the tracks of sin. Instead of telling young people that actions

inevitably have consequences, harm reduction presents as a paradise what is inherently dangerous.

Harm reduction creates an atmosphere of acceptability that encourages more people to engage in harmful activity and stigmatises those young people who remain opposed to it. This will result in increased harm, not reduced harm.

This is clearly seen in the field of sex education. Since 'safer sex' education was introduced the number of children engaging in underage sex has increased. The levels of sexually transmitted disease have also rocketed, as have teenage abortions. Meanwhile, it has become almost impossible for young people to feel

free to say they want to wait until they are married before having sex. Harm reduction has increased harm, not reduced it.

Harm reduction undermines the rule of law and parental authority. It leads young people into wrongdoing. It sends out the message that taking drugs or engaging in underage sex is acceptable. Increasing use of the harm reduction philosophy is leading to increasing failure. The only answer that the gurus of harm reduction can give to this is to say that there must be more use of harm reduction at ever younger ages.

By contrast, where preventative approaches are used they have been seen to succeed. Take, for example,

smoking. The Government has embarked on a tough anti-smoking campaign that tells people in no uncertain terms: don't smoke. It has launched hard-hitting advertising campaigns with heart-rending stories of people suffering from lung cancer. Smoking is now banned in almost all workplaces and public buildings. Instead, we see smokers huddled outside because smoking is not allowed inside. The result of the public education programme has been a decline in smoking amongst men aged over 35. This led to a 43% reduction in the lung cancer rates for men over a 25 year period to 1999 (see *Social Trends*, No 32, 2002, page 126). If we can promote 'just say no' to smoking, why not to activities which are illegal and morally wrong?

6. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM MUST BE PRESERVED

Christians are to pray for the governing authorities "that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness". Paul says, "this is good and pleases God our Saviour who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4). In other words, we are to pray for freedom to live the Christian life and to proclaim the Gospel.

When religious liberty is threatened, gospel liberty is also in danger. It becomes more difficult to proclaim the Gospel and more difficult for Christians to live out godly lives that witness to the Gospel. Jesus himself warns his followers not to lose their distinctive 'salt', lest they become

useless and trampled on by men (Matthew 5:13). Jesus wants us not to be ashamed but rather to put our light on its stand. Christians should therefore be concerned greatly about any laws or policies that limit our religious liberty.

Christians must submit to the Governing authorities except where they require what God forbids or forbid what God requires (Acts 5:29).

The Christian Institute has been very concerned about laws which limit religious broadcasting and seek to impose unwarranted secular restrictions on churches – such as being forced to employ unbelieving staff.

These days there is a deliberate twisting of what 'religious liberty' actually means. Religious liberty is not only the liberty to believe certain things in our head, but the liberty to act according to those beliefs. It is, for example, the liberty to gather with like-minded people, to form associations with those who share our faith, to tell other people about our faith, and to speak out against what we believe to be wrong.

It is this liberty to act on our beliefs that is under attack in our day. Part of this stems from the growing chasm between Christian values and the values of those in public life.

7. LIFE IS SACRED FROM CONCEPTION

The Bible clearly teaches that human life is precious and that murder is wrong (Genesis 9:6). Uniquely among all creatures only man has the capacity for a relationship with God. Only man has a soul. Only man was made in God's image, God's likeness (Genesis 1:26).

The Bible talks of God establishing and sustaining this relationship with an individual from conception (Jeremiah 1:5, Psalm 139:13). It follows that the human soul must be present from conception. Body and soul cannot be separated until death.

The incarnation of Christ also has important implications for medical ethics. Jesus Christ reveals not only the nature of deity but also the nature of what is human. The incarnation of the divine Son of God began with the conception and not the manger in

Bethlehem – he “was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the virgin Mary” (see The Apostles' Creed and Matthew 1:20). Since Jesus shared our humanity and was made like us in every way (Hebrews 2:14,17), our own human life must also have begun at conception.

The early church was at the forefront of ending the practice of abortion in the Roman Empire.

The Christian Institute therefore affirms that human personhood begins at conception and that the human embryo is precisely that – a *human* embryo. There are enormous practical implications which flow from this belief. Not only is abortion wrong, but also any practice which deliberately destroys human embryos. This includes human cloning and the use of drugs which prevent the implantation of an embryo.

8. CHRISTIAN BELIEFS ON TRANSEXUALISM

Transsexuals are people who are biologically normal, but who believe themselves to be members of the opposite sex – they say they are ‘trapped in the wrong body’. And so a male-to-female transsexual will assume the identity of a woman. Often transsexuals undergo a ‘sex change’ operation. The Gender Recognition Act provides many legal rights for transsexuals.

Three fundamental premises lie behind the Act: *one*, human psychological states rather than human bodily nature can determine a person's gender; *two*, it is right for a surgeon to deform a healthy body in the interests of a psychological disorder; and, *three*, the State should validate psychosocial confusions having precedence over unambiguous biological sex.

Christians say these premises are wrong from biblical teaching, and also church tradition and common sense reason.

Firstly, the Bible teaches that a human person is a mind-body whole. So the body determines personhood, not just the mind. The first Christian heresy was to deny that “Jesus Christ has come *in the flesh*” (1 John 4:2). Genesis 1:27 records: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Biblical Christians hold that ‘sex change’ surgery desecrates a body made in the image of God. And the Bible teaches



that the State should validate what is right and not what is wrong (Romans 13:3).

Secondly, the Church of England's 2003 discussion document also equated transsexualism with the ancient heresy of Gnosticism.¹ Both see the body as unimportant and the mind as all important. Gnosticism was strongly condemned by early Christian theologians such as Irenaeus (c130-200 AD) and Tertullian (c155-220 AD).²

Thirdly, the philosopher, Sir Peter Strawson, also holds that a person must have “*both* states of consciousness *and* corporeal characteristics... [so] the orthodox have wisely insisted on the resurrection of the body”.³ It is therefore wrong to determine a person's gender because their mind cannot accept their body. As the Bishop of Winchester has stated: “When the bill passes into law, for me the words woman and man will no longer mean what they have always meant and the government will have introduced marriage between two people of the same sex.”⁴

Churches try to care for transsexuals and to speak to them about the Gospel. The Christian response to a transsexual, as with any other person, should be prayer, care and counsel as for any with psychological difficulties and where necessary

repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). There will, of course, be differences in the pastoral approaches that are taken. However, when it comes to deciding who should join ladies' prayer meetings or be leaders, who should use the ladies' lavatories or take Holy Communion, surely individual churches should have the freedom to decide this themselves? Surely the law should not leave churches wide open to legal actions in secular courts over such matters?

The theologian Oliver O'Donovan (Emeritus Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology, University of Edinburgh) has argued: “If I claim to have a ‘real sex’, which may be at war with the sex of my body and is at least in a rather uncertain relationship to it, I am shrinking from the glad acceptance of myself as a physical as well as a spiritual being, and seeking self-knowledge in a kind of Gnostic withdrawal from material creation.”⁵

¹ *Some Issues in Human Sexuality – A Guide to the Debate*, discussion document from the House of Bishops' Group on Issues in Human Sexuality, Church House, 2003, page 249

² Berkhof, L, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, The Banner of Truth Trust, latest edition 2002, pages 45-51 and 62-63; Elwell, W A (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Paternoster Press, 1999, pages 444-447, 569 and 1078 -1079

³ Strawson, P F, *Individuals – An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, Methuen, 1959, pages 104, 116

⁴ *The Sunday Times*, 29 February 2004

⁵ O'Donovan, O, *Transsexualism and Christian Marriage*, Grove Booklet on Ethics, 1982, page 11

9. CHRISTIANITY AND THE STATE

Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords “far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come” (Ephesians 1:21).

Scripture clearly teaches that God's present judgment is a reality for nations which defy Jesus Christ: “Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him” (Psalm 2:10-12).

Christians are to pray for those in authority and for the state to provide freedom for the Gospel to be preached and for men to live “quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:1-3). A ruler in authority is “God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer” (Romans 13:4).

Christ's kingdom can never be identified with any particular nation or political party. While it is not the role of a state to coerce individual citizens to adhere to particular beliefs, the state can never be neutral as regards values. Christians are to work for the state to adopt Christian values and to implement godly laws.

There are different views among Christian people regarding the establishment of religion.

However, as a matter of fact the Coronation Oath is an explicit denial of the secularity of the United Kingdom; and the establishment of the Protestant Reformed Christian religion in general, and of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland in particular, still defines the UK as constitutionally a Christian country. These constitutional arrangements will remain in force until there is intentional constitutional change to the contrary.

In promoting the Christian faith The Christian Institute seeks to affirm the universal Lordship of Christ and to challenge secular humanism, theological liberalism, universalism and other ideologies.

The Institute affirms:

(1) Salvation solely through the atoning work of Jesus Christ (John 14:6); and

(2) That biblical Christianity maintains the true basis for tolerance, democracy and human dignity; and

(3) Its commitment to freedom *for*, not freedom *from* religion. No state can be neutral in terms of morality or religion. When a state has a majority who claim allegiance to one religion, it may not enforce that one religious belief. There will, however, inevitably be a privileging of that religion at certain public ceremonies such as thanksgivings, funerals of public figures, and rituals and prayers at the beginning of Parliaments. Also it will be privileged in education, while ensuring opt-outs for those of other faiths and none. There must be freedom for minority faiths and philosophies except where these plainly transgress the moral law. To fail to privilege one religion would be for the State positively to endorse either a secular humanistic philosophy (which results in atheism), or a “multifaith philosophy” (which is opposed by faithful people in all religions). Currently Christianity is privileged in the United Kingdom where the majority claim a Christian allegiance (cf. the Coronation Oath and the National Census 2011 in which 59% of all people in England and Wales stated their religion as Christian). The Christian Institute sees this as entirely appropriate and is committed to the ideals behind the current Coronation Oath whatever future form of constitution the UK may have.

10. GAMBLING IS WRONG

Gambling is any activity in which wealth changes hands, mainly on the basis of chance and with risk to the gambler. Such activities include betting, fruit machines, lotteries, casino games, scratchcards and card games. Creative effort, useful skills, and responsible investment are not integral factors.

There are three legitimate ways in which wealth may change hands – by giving, by working for it, or by genuine exchange: anything else is virtual theft and so a breaking of the 8th commandment. As has been said: “Gambling is a kind of robbery by mutual agreement; but it is still robbery, just as duelling, which is murder by mutual agreement, is still treated as murder.”

Of the three impulses behind gambling – the desire for gain, the desire for a thrill and the desire for competition, the moral and ethical problems are focused on the desire for gain.

(1) Gambling directly appeals to covetousness and greed “which is idolatry” according to the Apostle Paul (Colossians 3:5). Gambling breaches the 1st, 2nd, 8th and 10th Commandments. It enthrones personal desires in place of God. Jesus warned: “You cannot serve both God and Money” (Matthew 6:24). A greedy and unrepentant person is an idolater who cannot obtain salvation (Ephesians 5:5).



(2) Gambling directly depends on other people incurring financial loss. Jesus said that you should “do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12). But gambling depends on doing to others what we would *not* have them do to us. At that point no gambler desires the best for his fellow man. Instead he is indifferent to his fellow gamblers or wants them to lose so that he can win. In any honest business transaction it is the intention of both parties to benefit, yet with gambling the intention is to gain but the gain is at the other’s expense. We are called to do good to all people, not to do harm (Galatians 6:10).

(3) Gambling denies the biblical work ethic which links honest labour with reward. The Apostle Paul said “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (Ephesians 4:28). Gambling holds out the dream that it is possible to get something for nothing. It can encourage laziness rather than work. Laziness is condemned in Scripture (e.g. 2 Thessalonians 3:10).

(4) Gambling is a reckless use of resources. It undermines the creation mandate to be stewards of creation and to work (Genesis 1:28; 9:1-2). The Bible teaches that all things

belong to God (Psalm 24:1) and that man will have to give an account for his stewardship of all that he has been given (Matthew 25:14-30).

(5) Rather than facing up to reality, gambling is a form of escapism. The gambling industry trades on people’s vulnerability to temptation and relies on the fact that statistically it is the industry that wins practically every time. Those who gamble often are not thinking rationally about risk. Instead they are thinking about luck and superstition. Chance is glorified and God’s sovereignty denied (Job 42:2; Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16,17; Hebrews 1:3). Scripture makes clear that trust in God and trust in luck cannot co-exist (Isaiah 65:11).

(6) There is evidence that gambling disproportionately affects the poor who face particular temptations because of their strained financial circumstances (Proverbs 30:8-9). It is very wrong to exploit this vulnerability.

(7) Gambling is inherently addictive. As with alcohol or drug addiction, compulsive gamblers lose control of their lives. This is plainly contrary to the teaching of the Bible, which teaches us to be self-controlled



(Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:22-23; Titus 2:11-12; 1 Peter 5:8).

(8) Gambling is the very opposite of contentment (1 Timothy 6:6-10). Man’s duty is to seek first God’s Kingdom and trust that God will meet his needs (Matthew 6:30-34; Philippians 4:19).

Mainstream Christian belief has always viewed gambling as incompatible with the Bible’s teaching. Gambling was strongly opposed by Tertullian, Hugh Latimer, John Wesley, William Wilberforce, C H Spurgeon and William Temple. On this issue, Thomas Aquinas is not representative of mainstream Christian belief.

Gambling does not cease to be wrong because a proportion of the take is devoted to so-called good causes. Many are misled at this point, and persuaded of the legitimacy of the National Lottery, for example. The end does not justify the means.

Thanks

I am continually encouraged by those who voluntarily give their time to the work of The Christian Institute. It is a great help and encouragement to us. I would especially like to thank the volunteers and supporters listed here and apologise to any whom I have inadvertently omitted.

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Thank you to all those who have spoken at Christian Institute meetings, given seminars to staff and helped us to organise meetings. Many more have offered us hospitality.

At the 2015 Autumn Lectures the speakers were: Pastor Paul Mallard;

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Graham Oakes, who has been assisting the research department for many years, has 'retired' from this voluntary position. I would like to thank him for his faithful help.

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Colin Hart,
Director

Basis of Faith

We are committed to the truths of historic, biblical Christianity including:

- A.** The existence of the one, eternal God, Creator and Lord of the universe, who in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both governs all things according to his will and is accomplishing his purposes in the world and in the church.
- B.** The inspiration of the Holy Scripture in its entirety by God's Spirit through the human authors, and its revelation of God's truth to humanity. The Bible is without error not only when it speaks of salvation, its own origins, values, and religious matters, but it is also without error when it speaks of history and the cosmos. Christians must, therefore, submit to its supreme authority, both individually and corporately, in every matter of belief and conduct.
- C.** The inherent value of all human beings, in consequence of their creation by God in his own image, and their sinfulness and guilt since the Fall. This has rendered them subject to God's wrath and condemnation, and has resulted in their alienation from his life, suppression of his truth, and hostility to his law.
- D.** Salvation from the guilt, penalty and all other consequences of sin solely through the work of Jesus Christ – his perfect obedience, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection and exaltation as Lord. He alone is truly God and truly man, the only mediator between God and man. There is salvation through no other person, creed, process or power. Each sinner is justified before God and reconciled to him only by his grace appropriated through faith alone.
- E.** The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit for the individual's new birth and growth to maturity, and for the Church's constant renewal in truth, wisdom, faith, holiness, love, power and mission.
- F.** The one, holy, universal and apostolic Church, which is the body of Christ, and to which all true believers belong. The Church's calling is to worship and serve God in the world, to proclaim and defend his truth, to exhibit his character and to demonstrate the reality of his new order.
- G.** The personal and visible return in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ to raise the dead and bring salvation and judgment to final completion. Evildoers will suffer eternal punishment. God will fully establish his kingdom when he creates a new heaven and a new earth from which evil, suffering and death will be excluded, and in which he will be glorified for ever.



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Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.
(Psalm 107:1)

