

GOOD NEWS

Foster carer wins case over 'convert' ban

Pay out for mum in prayer email case

Lords votes to protect church employment law

Northern Ireland charity guidance put on hold

Institute Update

Issue 13
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THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN A SECULAR WORLD

FREE

The UK-wide newsletter of The Christian Institute



New Government

The coalition's plans for the coming Parliament

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CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE
CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN A SEKULAR WORLD

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“...a great door for effective work has opened to me,
and there are many who oppose me.”

1 Corinthians 16:9

Opportunity for effective Christian work is invariably accompanied by opposition. With a different Government in power, Christians are presented with some different opportunities but there will also be opposition.

On pages 4 and 5 of this Update we highlight five areas of interest in the coalition's programme for Government. There will be other areas of interest to Christians too.

Plans for a Freedom (or Great Repeal) Bill present Christians with an opportunity to seek to remove laws that unjustly limit religious liberty and freedom of speech.

Plans to tackle the sexualisation and commercialisation of childhood present Christians with an opportunity to advance virtues of modesty, restraint and the stability of marriage – and to urge the Government to protect children from sexualisation in the classroom as well as on the high street.

There are other plans being pursued by the coalition Government that present Christians with opportunities in the field of education. Encouraging state schools to become academies will give schools greater independence over what is taught. It could give a lifeline to good schools that are situated in failing or interfering local education authorities.

The Free Schools programme gives a real opportunity for the creation of parent-run schools, an opportunity that Christian parents can take advantage of.

The economic crisis – while undoubtedly causing real difficulties for many families – means there will be substantial cuts in public spending. This will not be easy in many areas, but one positive outcome will be better scrutiny of some of the lavishly-funded schemes that promote political correctness out of the public purse.

Leaving aside the proposals of the new coalition Government, The Christian Institute is making the most of opportunities to help Christians.

We are pleased that 2,500 people attended

our six-venue tour with Dr Wayne Grudem addressing the issue of Christian involvement in politics, government and the law. A DVD of Dr Gudem's biblical examination of the issue has been sent to 3,500 church leaders free of charge. You can read more about the Grudem Tour on pages 8 and 9 of this Update.

We are also delighted that over 1,000 Christian leaders were able to attend our Charity Roadshow. The Roadshow provided great reassurance on the legal rights we have to preach the gospel and protect the ethos of churches. You can read more about our Roadshow on pages 6 and 7 of this Update.

Our Legal Defence Fund continues to present us with opportunities to protect and advance the religious liberty of Christians. There have been some positive conclusions to a number of our legal cases, as well as new cases being supported by the Fund. You can read more about this on pages 10 to 13 of this Update.

So, there are many opportunities for Christians to be salt and light, to love our neighbour, and to be a Christian influence in a secular world.

But, as the Apostle Paul said in his letter to the Christians in Corinth, with opportunity there is also opposition.

The sex education lobby is vigorously calling for the subject to become mandatory in all state schools, including primary schools. Homosexual campaigners are pushing hard for full same-sex marriage to be legalised. Euthanasia activists are launching legal cases in the courts to blur the law on ending the lives of the elderly, the disabled and the terminally ill.

So we hope you will stand with us as we, with God's help, seek to take the opportunities presented to us and to persevere whenever there is opposition.



Colin Hart

Colin Hart
Director

What the coalition has in store

■ By Mike Judge

Before the General Election the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats had very different ideas for governing the nation, as The Christian Institute's Election Briefing documented. So, what can we expect from this new coalition?

Shortly after taking office, David Cameron and Nick Clegg published their 'Programme for Government'. The document sets out the coalition's headline policy proposals. The editorial (page 3) highlights key opportunities in education. Here, we highlight five other areas of particular interest.

Freedom (or Great Repeal) Bill

According to the Government, this Bill's purpose is to "roll back the state", to restore freedoms and civil liberties by the repeal of "unnecessary laws".¹ The Bill has not yet been published, but Nick Clegg says it is his department's "main priority" for the autumn.

Christians throughout Britain have been greatly concerned by the erosion of religious liberty, including a number of serious incidents where citizens have been arrested or investigated by the police for stating Christian beliefs on sexual ethics or other religions.

Inadequate wording of hate crime laws, public order laws, and 'aggravating factor' laws have caused a great deal of confusion.

Numerous recent equality laws have

failed to protect rights of conscience and religious liberty. Faith-based adoption agencies have been crushed by sexual orientation laws; hostile litigation has been taken against Christian B&B owners; Christian registrars have been forced out of their jobs.

Aspects of new charity laws place an onerous bureaucratic burden on small Christian charities and churches. Such overbearing state regulation does not encourage civic service.

The Christian Institute will be publishing specific proposals in the autumn urging the coalition Government to do more for religious liberty. We will be informing our supporters of how they can help.

Any criminal laws repealed by a Freedom Bill will most likely apply to England and Wales only, but any changes to equality laws would apply to Scotland. It is likely that Northern Ireland will be largely unaffected by any such Bill but

Downing Street says some criminal law in the Province may be affected.

Sexualisation of children

The coalition Government has promised to "take action to protect children from...prematute sexualisation."² The document connects this with what it calls the "commercialisation" of childhood.

David Cameron believes some advertisers, shops and magazines inappropriately target youngsters,

commercialising and sexualising children when they are too young.³

Meanwhile, a general review of the education curriculum for England is scheduled for the autumn and the sex education lobby is pushing for the subject to be made mandatory in all primary and secondary schools.

The Education Secretary, Michael Gove, said in July: "I agree that it is important that when sex and relationship education is reformed – as it will be – we go for the maximum consensus across the House [of Commons], and that we do so in a way that ensures that as many schools as possible buy into our belief that we should have a 21st-century curriculum that reflects a modern understanding of sex and relationships."⁴

The Christian Institute will be pressing the Government to protect children from sexualisation in the classroom as well as on the high street.

Hate crimes

The coalition Government has promised to promote better recording of 'hate crimes' against homosexual or transsexual people.⁵ This commitment is expanded upon in the Government's 'Programme of Work for LGBT Equality'.

In addition, equalities minister Lynne Featherstone has said she supports adding 'transphobia' as an aggravating factor to the criminal law.

But pressure to record hate incidents, together with policies that appear to prioritise politically-correct 'crimes', have led to serious infringements of civil liberty.

A Christian grandmother from Norwich was investigated by police because she sent a letter of





Flickr/The Prime Minister's Office

complaint about a homosexual rally in the town.

Police in Lancashire questioned Christian pensioners Joe and Helen Roberts for over an hour because they opposed their local council's promotion of homosexuality.

Police arrested and charged a Christian in Cumbria because, during a conversation with a Police Community Support Officer, he reasonably expressed his belief that homosexual conduct was a sin.

The coalition Government controls criminal law in England and Wales. Criminal law is a devolved matter in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Christian Institute will oppose Government measures that erode the free speech and religious liberty of Christians.

Drugs

The coalition Government has committed itself to receiving full advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs before deciding to ban a substance.⁶

Although this doesn't commit

the Government to implement any recommendation of the Council, it is nevertheless a concern given the Council's recent record.

The Council favoured a softer law on cannabis, which proved to be a disaster when the Government implemented one. It opposed the subsequent re-toughening of the cannabis law, despite overwhelming evidence in favour of it.

Former Chairman of the Council, Professor David Nutt, was sacked when he criticised the U-turn. He has also repeatedly claimed that taking ecstasy is no more dangerous than riding a horse.

The laws governing drugs across the UK are controlled by the coalition Government.

Family law

The coalition Government wants to increase the use of mediation for divorcing couples.⁷

Mediation helps couples to split their assets and make decisions about children. It is not a reconciliation programme, rather it greases the tracks to divorce.

The Conservative Government of the 1990s tried to do a similar thing. But following a campaign by The Christian Institute it was forced to introduce a pilot programme where couples were given an option of mediation or reconciliation. Twice as many couples opted for reconciliation rather than mediation and so the proposals were abandoned.

There was no family law bill announced in the last Queen's Speech but The Christian Institute will continue to be vigilant and urge the Government to protect marriage.

- ¹ See <http://www.number10.gov.uk/queens-speech/2010/05/queens-speech-freedom-great-repeal-bill-50647> as at 17 August 2010
- ² *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, Cabinet Office, May 2010, page 19
- ³ See <http://www.christian.org.uk/resources/video/david-cameron-on-child-sexualisation/> as at 17 August 2010
- ⁴ House of Commons, Hansard, 19 July 2010, col. 25
- ⁵ *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, Cabinet Office, May 2010, page 14
- ⁶ *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, Cabinet Office, May 2010, page 14
- ⁷ *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, Cabinet Office, May 2010, page 20

Charity Roadshow reaches

■ By Roger Jordan

A number of recent legal cases have demonstrated the urgent need for charities to have a fully up-to-date understanding of charity law.

In response The Christian Institute mobilised a number

of charity law experts to travel the country and equip hundreds of evangelical leaders with the information they so desperately needed.

From January to May this year the Institute held a series of ten meetings at venues across the country, equipping

and informing over 1,000 church and charity leaders.

After the Cardiff event, 80 per cent of respondents said the Roadshow was "excellent" and ten out of ten said they would recommend it to Christian leaders.

Running churches and charities

The administrative requirements of running a church or Christian organisation can seem daunting and overwhelming.

But Caroline Eade, a charity lawyer at Taylor Vinters Solicitors, provided many evangelical leaders with an easy to understand explanation of the key issues affecting the running of churches and charities today.

Caroline explored issues such as protecting the beliefs of a church in its trust deed and issues of charity governance.

Charity Commission requirements

Rod Badams, Administrator at the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, explored what the Charity Commission actually requires from churches and other Christian charities.

Rod helped church leaders explore the criteria which determine whether churches need to register with the Charity Commission.

Rod also debunked some of the popular myths surrounding the "public benefit requirement" which the Charities Act 2006 imposed upon churches.

And he helped delegates understand what impact the Act has upon churches and how they can fulfil its requirements.

Employment matters

Churches and Christian employers have many legal rights to insist that staff live in accordance with the organisation's doctrinal beliefs.

Sam Webster, the Institute's in-house solicitor, explained these legal freedoms. He focused on the three main areas of discrimination law that concern many evangelical groups: religion or belief, sexual orientation, and transsexualism.

Sam stressed the importance of employers writing down in detail the doctrinal and ethical stance of their organisation, and the importance of making it clear to staff that they must comply with that stance – both in terms of belief and conduct.

He concluded by saying that there was no need for Christian organisations to act against their convictions when employing staff, but stressed that care needs to be taken to ensure that organisations are able to make use of the legal protections that exist.

Audio recordings are available
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a thousand church leaders

Evangelism and the law

The public proclamation of the gospel has a long and illustrious history in the United Kingdom and many of our nation's free speech laws are built upon the foundation of public Christian evangelism.

Sam Webster, The Christian Institute's in-house solicitor, hosted a seminar which helped many evangelical

leaders understand their legal rights to publicly proclaim the gospel and distribute evangelical literature in public places.

Sam encouraged delegates by reminding them of their right to freedom of speech, and he called upon the delegates to be courageous in their faithful proclamation of the gospel.

He also reminded church leaders that there is a great deal which they can say and do, both inside a church and out on the street, without having to worry in the slightest about transgressing any law.

He reviewed a number of cases where public authorities had wrongfully interfered with public evangelism

and talked about the importance of wisely challenging these cases when they arise.

Sam examined a number of different areas of the law, including the Public Order Act, incitement to religious hatred offences, the common law offence of breach of the peace and anti-social behaviour legislation.

Health and safety myths

Many churches and Christian organisations can be baffled by what often appears to be a never-ending maze of health and safety rules.

And the many myths that surround this issue can obscure the actual legal requirements.

Rod Badams, Administrator of the Fellowship of Independent

Evangelical Churches, explained how Christian organisations can navigate their way through.

Rod tackled the folklore and examined a number of areas including training, legal liability and the preparation of food.

Rod also explored a number of other topics including risk assessments, child protection, data protection, maintenance of electrical equipment and fire safety.

Financial issues

Many churches and Christian charities are responsible for honestly handling the donations from their congregations or supporters, but to many treasurers this can seem like a daunting task.

Trevor James, a partner at accountancy firm Sheen Stickland LLP, addressed a series of common financial questions posed by many of the treasurers and leaders of Christian organisations across the country.

These questions covered a wide variety of topics such as liability for business rates, expenses, personal pensions, VAT, financial reserves and gift aid on donations.

Does 'political' involvement

■ By David Greatorex

In June, The Christian Institute hosted Wayne Grudem as he toured six venues in England addressing the question "Does political involvement distract from the Gospel?"

Dr Grudem argued powerfully that one way to "love our neighbour" is to seek good laws and significant Christian influence on government.

One of the world's leading evangelical theologians, Dr Grudem is best known as the author of bestselling *Systematic Theology* and is also general editor of the *ESV Study Bible*.

During his tour he spoke to 2,500 people at six venues around the country including London, Liverpool, Sheffield and Cambridge.

Stuart Townend, writer of *In Christ Alone*, led singing at the events in Peterborough and Chessington.

DVDs or audio CDs of Dr Grudem's talk can be bought from our website (christian.org.uk) for £10 and £5 respectively. Alternatively, the audio is available as an mp3 download for £2.



5 wrong views:

Wayne Grudem used his biblical knowledge to analyse and reject five wrong views about Christian involvement in politics, law and government.

1. "Government should compel religion"

When challenged about the lawfulness of paying taxes to Caesar, Jesus established a principle that there was a sphere which did not belong to Caesar but to God. There are therefore areas over which civil governments should not rule. State enforcement of religion flies in the face of genuine religious faith, which must be voluntary and not coerced. The idea that the state should enforce religion is therefore clearly wrong. Freedom of religion is in fact one of the most important principles we should insist on because it protects freedom for all.

2. "Government should exclude religion"

This view, advocated by secularists here in the UK, is also wrong as it silences the Gospel. It states that religious belief should be kept at home, kept quiet and kept well away from the political process. This would prevent rulers having the benefit of advice as to how they should govern in accordance with God's word, which is critical to their God-given role of punishing what is wrong and commending what is right (Romans 13).

3. "Government is 'evil'"

This argument, promoted by pacifist Greg Boyd in the United States, says that Christians should have nothing to do with governments because they are "Satan's domain". However, although Scripture shows Satan claiming to control all earthly governments (Luke 4:6) and he undoubtedly has influence, governments are ultimately God's servant for our good (Romans 13:4). Government and laws are part of God's means of restraining evil, so to view them as evil must be wrong.

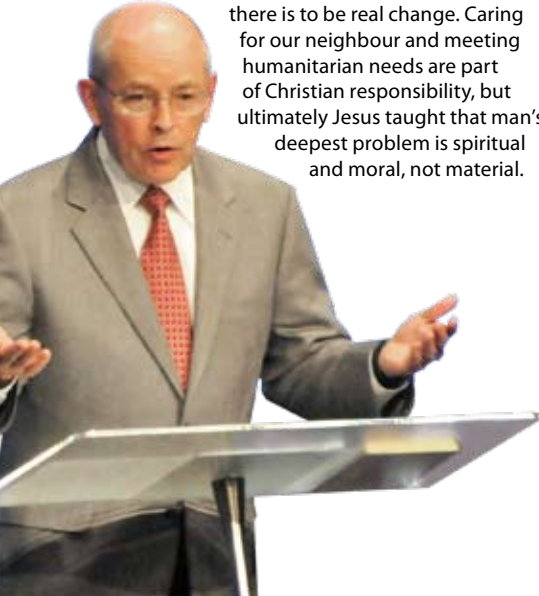
distract from the gospel?

4. “Do evangelism, not politics”

This is the error at the heart of the argument that political involvement is a distraction from the Gospel. It states that because politics and laws do not save anyone, Christians should not spend any time in this area because it will not do any eternal or spiritual good. But if we love our neighbour as ourselves, in obedience to Christ’s words in Matthew 22:39, we will want good laws that protect our neighbour’s marriage, property, etc. The implications of the Gospel extend to transforming lives and society, not just the forgiveness of sins. True biblical teaching involves teaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), which includes what the Bible has to say about government (e.g. Romans 13, 1 Peter 2).

5. “Do politics, not evangelism”

This was the message of the now discredited ‘social gospel’ movement. The suggestion is that if we just have good laws then we will have a transformed society, heaven on earth. But this view ignores the vital need for hearts to be transformed if there is to be real change. Caring for our neighbour and meeting humanitarian needs are part of Christian responsibility, but ultimately Jesus taught that man’s deepest problem is spiritual and moral, not material.



The right view:

Significant Christian influence

The right view of Christian involvement in politics, law and government, according to Dr Grudem, is exercising significant influence.

There are many examples throughout Scripture of God’s people bringing counsel to secular rulers.

Daniel was an adviser to Nebuchadnezzar, and in Daniel 4:27 he did not shrink back from telling the king he should stop sinning and do what was right.

Daniel did not say that as a Jew he would not presume to ‘impose his moral standards’ on the secular ruler Nebuchadnezzar but spoke up boldly about what was right.

Similarly, John the Baptist spoke out against Herod the tetrarch for all the evil things he had done (Luke 3:19), and Paul addressed the Roman governor Felix about righteousness, self-control and judgment (Acts 24:25).

If Christians fail to fulfil this role of exercising significant influence on government then opponents of the Gospel will be quick to capitalise on the resulting void.

Christians staying silent about the moral and ethical issues of the day will leave a moral vacuum, allowing every decision to be influenced in a way contrary to biblical standards. If there is no Christian influence, then governments will use their power to keep Christian beliefs behind closed doors.

Christians, therefore, must be involved in politics at all levels to make sure that this vacuum is not created.

We will inevitably be called to different degrees of involvement, but every Christian should at least keep themselves informed about the issues and exercise their vote.

The role others are called to may involve more of their time, from active campaigning to serving in political office.

Visit christian.org.uk/grudemtour for more information and resources.

Council wrong to ban foster carer who allowed Muslim girl to convert

■ By Mike Judge

A foster carer with 10 years experience won her legal battle in July after she was struck off when a Muslim girl in her care converted to Christianity.

The woman had been banned from fostering by Gateshead Council in November 2008 for failing to prevent the teenager from getting baptised.

The girl was aged 16 at the time and had made up her own mind to change religion.

Gateshead's decision to deregister the foster carer has now been quashed by the High Court after the

Council admitted it had acted unlawfully.

The carer, a churchgoer in her 50s who has fostered more than 45 children, brought a Judicial Review against the Council after she had exhausted every other available remedy. The case was backed by The Christian Institute.

Her lawyers said the Council had failed to take account of the girl's right to religious liberty and had acted disproportionately in deregistering the foster carer.

Gateshead Council had wanted the girl to stay away from church for six months and said that the girl should take part in 'normal' teenage activity.

A court order protecting the identity of the girl is still currently in force. The foster carer does not wish to be named in case it leads to the identification of the girl.

Responding to the outcome, the foster carer said she is pleased that the Council has finally admitted it was wrong. But she says the decision to ban her has had a devastating impact.

She said: "I've had to move house four times because of my financial situation, and I wasn't able to help pay for my daughter's wedding in the way I would have wished.

"Despite my experiences, I still hope to foster again in the future. I simply enjoy helping young people."

She added: "I am grateful for the backing of the Newcastle-based Christian Institute who supported me at what has been a very difficult time in my life.

"If other people of faith in positions of responsibility find themselves in a similar situation, they should not be frightened of standing up for what they believe."

The Christian Institute's Mike Judge said: "I am delighted that the Council has admitted it acted illegally, but I am disappointed that it took a High Court legal action and this length of time before they held their hands up."

He added: "All local authorities should take a hard look at this case and ensure they do not repeat Gateshead's mistakes."



Legal
Defence
Fund

Crucial registrar case goes to Europe

The long-running legal case of Lillian Ladele – the Christian registrar disciplined over her stance on homosexual civil partnerships – is heading to Europe.

Lawyers will lodge papers with the European Court of Human Rights, arguing that the United Kingdom has failed to protect her rights to religious liberty.

Miss Ladele says she feels her religious rights have been “trampled by another set of rights”.

The case is being financed by The Christian Institute’s Legal Defence Fund.

Earlier this year the UK Supreme Court refused to hear the case, saying the case “does not raise an arguable point of law of general public importance.”

In July 2008 Miss Ladele won an initial employment tribunal claim for discrimination and harassment, but this was overturned on appeal later that year.

In 2009 that ruling was upheld by the Court of Appeal and in March 2010 the UK Supreme Court refused permission

for a further appeal.



Same-sex couples sue B&Bs for not giving them double beds



■ By Mike Judge

In two separate cases, Christian couples who own B&Bs are being sued because they won’t provide double-bed accommodation to homosexual couples.

Mike and Susanne Wilkinson, who own a B&B in Berkshire, are facing a courtroom battle because they wouldn’t provide a double bed to a same-sex couple in March this year.

Peter and Hazelmary Bull from Cornwall are facing a legal action for a similar incident in 2009.

The case against the Wilkinsons is being backed by ‘civil rights’ group, Liberty. The case against the Bulls is being supported by the taxpayer-funded Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The defence in both cases is being financed by The Christian Institute’s Legal Defence Fund.

Both Christian couples are being sued under Sexual Orientation Regulations introduced by the former Labour Government in 2007.

The Regulations, introduced after heavy lobbying by homosexual activists, have been used to shut down or secularise almost all Roman Catholic adoption agencies in England and Wales.

The Regulations have also been used to justify disciplining Lillian Ladele – the Christian registrar who asked not to be forced to carry out civil partnership registrations.

Rather than being a shield to protect homosexuals, the Regulations have become a sword to attack Christians. They have become coercive, penalising those who disagree with homosexual conduct.

The issue of whether B&Bs should be forced to provide double beds to same-sex couples hit the headlines during the General Election campaign when senior Tory Chris Grayling said he thought people’s conscience should be respected.

But he was sharply criticised for his comments by Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

Christian receptionist in settlement with school over prayer email row

■ By Mike Judge

A school receptionist from Devon who had been disciplined by bosses because of a prayer email has received a payment from her employers and settled out of court.

Jennie Cain had launched an employment tribunal claim for religious discrimination against both Lansdown Primary School in Crediton and Devon County Council.

But the matter was settled in April after her employer agreed to pay her an undisclosed amount, accepting that Christians should be treated with sensitivity and respect in the workplace and that people should be free to express their beliefs.

Mrs Cain's case was backed by The Christian Institute and we are pleased that it has been resolved positively.

The dispute began in January last year when Mrs Cain's daughter Jasmine, then aged five, was reprimanded by her class teacher for talking about her Christian faith to another child.

On hearing that her daughter had been reprimanded for expressing her faith, Mrs Cain sent a private email to church friends and family asking them to pray about the incident.

The email was sent from Mrs Cain's own computer, outside work time, using her personal email account.

But the email ended up in the hands of head teacher Gary Read who launched an investigation against Mrs Cain for professional misconduct.

She was told to stay away from

her job for nearly four months before receiving a written warning over the affair.

Mr Read appeared on local BBC TV news, defending the school's decision to reprimand five-year-old Jasmine.

He said he would not allow children in his primary school to speak of Christianity as though it was true.

The Archbishop of York spoke up in support of Mrs Cain and her case was raised in the House of Commons. One MP said it was part of a "systematic and institutional discrimination towards Christians".¹

Mrs Cain's lawyer, Sean Kehoe, senior partner of the law firm Advance Legal, said: "No one ever seemed able to answer the simple question of what exactly Jennie had done wrong."

He said there was an "undercurrent of anti-Christian sentiment" which Mrs Cain came up against.

Following settlement of her legal case, Mrs Cain said: "I am pleased that this matter has been resolved.

"We all agree that Christians should be treated with the same sensitivity and respect that is shown to people of all faiths

and none. My family and I look forward to getting on with our lives and putting this matter behind us."

The Chair of the Governing Body, David Smith, said: "Mrs Cain has undertaken her role as the receptionist at the school very well. We are drawing a line under this matter."

¹ House of Commons, Hansard, 12 February 2009, col. 1527



Jennie Cain

'Video' street preacher takes action against police for wrongful arrest

■ By Mike Judge

A Christian street preacher from Cumbria is taking legal action against the police for wrongful arrest and unlawful imprisonment.

Police arrested Dale Mcalpine in Workington town centre in April for expressing his religious belief that homosexual practice is a sin.

Dramatic video footage of Mr Mcalpine's arrest was captured on a hidden camera and has since been viewed over 23,000 times on the internet.

The video shows Mr Mcalpine behaving calmly and reasonably, appealing for police to consider his free speech rights.

But police officers are heard saying they are "pretty sure" it is a crime to call homosexual conduct a "sin" and wrongfully arrest Mr Mcalpine for a "racially" aggravated public order offence.

Mr Mcalpine made no mention of homosexuality during his public sermon, but was arrested for making the comments during a conversation with a Police Community



The arrest can be watched online at www.youtube.com/christianorguk

Support Officer.

He was held in a police cell for several hours and charged with committing a crime, even though his comments were not illegal.

The charges were dropped after lawyers paid for by The Christian Institute sent a strongly-worded letter to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Supported by The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund, Mr Mcalpine is now bringing a civil action against both the arresting officer and the Chief Constable of Cumbria Police.

Mr Mcalpine says: "As

a Christian man, I forgive the police for their actions. However, I also want to protect others who may face similar problems in the future. This can't just be brushed under the carpet, freedom of speech is too precious for that."

His arrest has been criticised by a wide spectrum of commentators. Homosexual activist Peter Tatchell said Mr Mcalpine should not have been arrested. He said: "Causing offence to others is not a legitimate basis for putting a person on trial. Nearly everyone holds opinions that someone else might find offensive."

And National Secular Society President Terry Sanderson said the police action was "over the top". He said: "Mr Mcalpine has as much right to criticise homosexuals as I should have to call him a crank."

Colin Hart, Director of The Christian Institute, thinks Mr Mcalpine is right to sue the police. He said: "When the Apostle Paul was wrongfully arrested and unlawfully imprisoned in Philippi, the magistrates wanted to release him quietly.

"But Paul made them escort him out publicly. Dale is following Paul's example for the sake of gospel freedom."

Vital vote in House of Lords saves church employment freedoms

■ By Mike Judge

In January the Labour Government lost its attempt to alter the law on who churches and other Christian groups can employ.

Gordon Brown's Government wanted to narrow the right of churches to require their staff to live according to the church's doctrine on sexual behaviour.

The move could have meant churches being sued if they refused to employ a practising homosexual as a church youth worker.

But the attempt was defeated in the House of Lords. Peers voted 216 to 178 in favour of Lady O'Cathain's amendment to keep the current law unchanged.

Then in an extraordinary move the Labour Government broke with House of Lords convention in a bid to damage Lady O'Cathain's victory.

But in two further votes Lady O'Cathain won by 195 votes to 174 and by 177 votes to 172. The Christian Institute backed Lady O'Cathain.

In the debate before the votes, the Government claimed its plans would simply 'clarify' the law.

But churches said the plans would narrow important safeguards designed to help religious employers defend their ethos.

The Government's defeat means no change to the current law, which permits churches and other faith-based employers to protect their ethos by insisting staff live consistently with the religion's doctrine on sexual behaviour.

During the House of Lords debate Lady O'Cathain said:



Peers voted 216 to 178 in favour of Lady O'Cathain's amendment

"Organisations that are based on deeply held beliefs must be free to choose their staff on the basis of whether they share those beliefs.

"It would, for example, be appalling if the Labour Party could be sued for not selecting Conservative candidates and no one would want to see Greenpeace sued for refusing to appoint oil executives to its board of directors."¹

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, said that some people "may feel that many churches and other religious organisations are wrong on matters of sexual ethics.

"But if religious freedom means anything, it must mean that those are matters for the churches and other religious organisations to determine in accordance with their own convictions."²

He also questioned the

Government's argument that the current law is confusing. He said: "Where are the examples of actual abuses that have caused difficulties? Where are the court rulings that have shown that the law, as it is, is defective?"³

The weekend before the Lords debate, bishops from the Church of England wrote to the national press, expressing concern at the Government's plans.

The bishops said the Government has produced words that "create difficulties for churches and religious groups".

They added: "This despite our raising the problem many months ago and offering various ways of resolving the issue."

¹ House of Lords, Hansard, 25 January 2010, col. 1212

² *Ibid.*, col. 1217

³ *Ibid.*, col. 1219

Equality Act's core provisions to begin in October

■ By Humphrey Dobson

The Equality Bill – which contained several measures threatening religious liberty – became law in the final days of the last Parliament. It received Royal Assent on 8 April to become the Equality Act 2010.

The Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats support the Equality Act and the Government Equalities Office says it is working towards commencing the Act's "core provisions" in October 2010 as originally planned.¹

This huge and complex Act, designed by the Labour Government, consolidated all existing discrimination laws. This means it perpetuates laws which unjustly discriminate against Christians: for example, those which have forced religious adoption agencies to close or which allow B&B owners to be sued for operating a married-couples-only policy.

The previous Government originally proposed to use the



Harriet Harman MP was responsible for the Equality Bill

Bill to narrow the employment freedom of churches, but the House of Lords resolutely rejected this (see adjacent article). However, the Equality Act also contains new laws which may interfere with religious liberty.

It introduces a powerful new 'public sector equality duty' which will have widespread impact and is a matter of deep concern.

Public sector bodies are currently under an obligation to

promote non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, race and disability. But the new duty will mean all public bodies (e.g. the police, schools and local councils) will now be forced by law to promote homosexual and transsexual rights too.

The public sector equality duty also includes religion. However, such measures in the past have resulted in Christianity being sidelined from public life in a misguided attempt to avoid offending other religions.

The Government must pass regulations to implement the new duty in detail. The wording of these regulations will be crucial if religious liberty is to be protected.

Under the Act churches are also permitted to opt in to allowing homosexual civil partnership registrations on their premises (see page 22). The Government insists no church will be compelled to opt in to the scheme.

¹ See http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx as at 10 August 2010

International disagreements delay EU Directive

■ By Mike Judge

An EU Directive that has great potential to interfere with religious liberty and free speech is bogged down in disagreements between EU member states.

The Directive seeks to outlaw discrimination on grounds including sexual orientation and religion in the provision of goods and services, and may introduce a

harassment provision which threatens free speech. The previous UK Government opposed the inclusion of harassment in the Directive.

Now a report produced by the Spanish Presidency says the Directive must balance protection from discrimination with the right to religious liberty and free speech.

The report concludes that "there is a clear need

for extensive further work on the proposal."¹

A press release from an EU Council sub-committee states: "Despite some progress, further discussions are needed on numerous issues."²

The UK already has anti-discrimination laws covering the provision of goods and services. Such laws have been used to crush religious adoption agencies that believe

children should be placed with a married couple.

An EU Directive covering similar issues could make matters far worse and it would hand power to Brussels to control important matters of discrimination law.

¹ Council of the European Union, *Progress Report*, 9535/10, 17 May 2010, page 7

² Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council Press Release, 3019th Council Meeting, 10560/10, 7 June 2010

70,000 Election briefings sent out



■ **By Jess Khan**

Ahead of the General Election in May, The Christian Institute produced a manifesto-crunching guide to the big vote.

Our Election Briefing helped Christians understand where the major political parties stood on a range of moral issues.

The briefing provided an in-depth exploration of party policies in many areas where biblical principles, and in particular the Ten Commandments, directly apply.

The briefing also contained a set of six key questions for parliamentary candidates about free speech, abortion, smacking, euthanasia, marginalisation of Christians, and protecting marriage and

the family.

The Christian Institute believes that there were three touchstone issues for Christians in the 2010 election: religious liberty, support for marriage, and protection of the unborn and vulnerable people.

The briefing particularly focussed on the policies that covered these areas and highlighted the stance taken by Labour, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats, the SNP, Plaid Cymru, the UK Independence Party, the Green Party, the Christian Peoples Alliance and the Christian Party.

We produced 40,000 printed copies of this guide which were widely distributed among individuals and churches. The briefing was also downloaded from our website over 30,000 times.

Institute introduces new booklet series

■ **By Dave Hewer**

The Christian Institute has launched a series of booklets that help Christians understand certain key Bible truths. We plan to launch brand new titles soon, but in the meantime some of our popular publications have been repackaged for the series.

The Salt&Light series seeks to reflect the command given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). There

are currently three titles in the series, with more to follow:

The moral law

In this excellent booklet, Professor John L. Mackay shows from the Bible how the moral law still applies and is bound up with God's glory, his nature, his salvation purposes and with the preservation of ordered life following the Fall.

Common grace

Dr Nick Needham explains in this helpful

booklet how 'common grace' (God's favour to all men whether they are Christians or not) is so helpful in understanding the work of The Christian Institute.

God's promise plan and his gracious law

In this thoughtful analysis Professor Walter C. Kaiser defends Evangelical-Reformed theology against two extremes – those who say that Christians can dispense with the Ten Commandments and

'Theonomists' who say that the Old Testament penalties should still apply.

If you would like us to send you a free copy of any of the books in the Salt&Light series then please phone our office on 0191 281 5664. Alternatively they can be downloaded from our website by visiting christian.org.uk/saltandlight

Scots euthanasia Bill fails to gather public support

An independent MSP is failing to convince the public that assisted suicide should be legalised in Scotland.

Margo MacDonald introduced her End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill in January.

A committee of the Scottish Parliament publicly called for reactions to the Bill.

Over 80 per cent of respondents were opposed to it and more than 14,000 people have signed a petition against the proposals.

Healthcare professionals wrote against the Bill in a letter to *The Times* in April. The group of 16 palliative care specialists warned that it could have a devastating effect on some of the most vulnerable people.

They pointed out that disabled people or terminally ill patients may be left feeling that they are of less value to society, putting them under pressure to choose to die.

The British Medical Association has previously expressed its opposition to the Bill. Dr Brian Keighley, Chairman of the BMA in Scotland, said: "If doctors are authorised by law to kill or help kill they are taking on an additional role which we believe is alien to the one of care giver and healer."¹

¹ *The Herald*, 22 January 2010

Euthanasia campaigners use courts in bid to blur the law

■ By Emma Atkinson

The existing law against assisted suicide and euthanasia in England and Wales continues to come under pressure from activists.

Parliament has so far resisted all attempts to change legislation in this area, so campaigners have taken to the courts in a bid to blur the law.

In July a severely paralysed man launched a legal action in the High Court over the issue of full-blown euthanasia.

Tony Nicklinson has what is called 'locked-in syndrome' and he is almost entirely unable to move.

He would not be able to commit suicide even with someone else's assistance and wants to know whether his wife would be prosecuted for murder if she killed him directly.

The Nicklinson challenge comes in the wake of Debbie Purdy's successful case that forced the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to issue guidance on prosecuting policy for assisted



suicide cases. She wanted to know whether her husband would be prosecuted if he helped her to travel to a country where she could legally end her own life.

She won her case and the DPP issued the guidance in February. It said prosecutions will not be automatic, as each case is to be assessed to decide if it is in the "public interest" to prosecute.¹

But critics say the guidance has, in effect, softened the law on assisted suicide without Parliament's consent.

¹ *Assisted Suicide Consultation Summary of Responses*, Crown Prosecution Service, February 2010, para. 10.14

UK tops end-of-life care league

The UK is the best country in the world when it comes to end-of-life care, research published in July shows.

The study by the Economist Intelligence Unit showed that the UK was first out of 40 countries in providing high quality end-of-life care. The UK

performed particularly well at providing pain-relieving drugs to those who are dying.¹

This position stands in stark contrast to Switzerland, where assisted suicide is currently legal and which ranked 19th in the survey.

Critics fear that

legalising assisted suicide in the UK would reduce the incentive to have excellent end-of-life care. Christians pioneered hospice care in the UK.

¹ Economist Intelligence Unit, Press Release, 14 July 2010

Adult stem cell treatments surging ahead of unethical alternative

■ By Emma Atkinson

Doubt continues to be cast on the usefulness of embryonic stem cell research as news of successful treatments using adult stem cells keeps emerging.

Stem cells are prized by scientists because they have the potential to develop into many different cell types in the body and can act as a natural repair system to combat diseased and damaged tissue.

Stem cells can be taken from several sources, but taking stem cells from human embryos involves destroying the embryo. Taking stem cells from other sources, like bone marrow or umbilical cord blood, does not involve the destruction of human life. These non-embryonic stem cells are often called adult stem cells.

Many both inside and outside the scientific community have long argued that the science behind adult stem cell research is much more promising, and they are being vindicated by results.

Adult stem cells have already been used in more than 100 treatments or clinical trials. So far there have been no successful clinical treatments using embryonic stem cells.

Adult neural stem cells have previously been used to repair damaged brain cells in mice, which could help treat Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Stem cells taken from bone marrow have also been used to rebuild the windpipes of a woman in Spain in 2008 and of a ten-year-old British boy in March this year.



There have already been over 100 treatments or clinical trials using adult stem cells but no successful treatments using embryonic cells

Earlier this year researchers at the University of Bristol used patients' own stem cells to treat their multiple sclerosis. In July, US scientists were able to regenerate an entire functioning joint surface in rabbits using the rabbits' own stem cells. Researchers believe that this study could lead to growing new bone and cartilage in humans as an alternative to replacement surgeries.

It has been claimed that embryonic stem cells have a much greater range of potential uses, since they have the ability to develop into any cell in the human body whereas adult stem cells have a more limited capacity for developing into other kinds of tissue.

However, in 2007, Japanese scientists developed 'induced pluripotent stem' (iPS) cells. These cells are adult stem cells which have been reprogrammed to act and perform like an embryonic stem cell – but, crucially, do not involve the destruction of human embryos.

There had been fears that the technique of creating iPS cells carried a risk of triggering cancer. But this problem has been overcome by British and Canadian scientists, clearing the way for iPS cells to be used in treatments.

UK researchers have launched a major study into the potential of using iPS skin cells to replace the brain neurons that die in Parkinson's disease.

Primary school sex education proposals fail but threat remains

■ **By Elizabeth Farquhar**

Attempts to force sex education into some state primary schools in England failed during the summer, but similar proposals may return in the autumn.

Labour tried to amend the coalition Government's Academies Bill so that sex education would be mandatory in all academy schools in England.

The plans, tabled by Labour representatives in both Houses of Parliament, were defeated by over 80 votes in the Lords and more than 100 in the Commons.

If the plans had succeeded, control of sex education in academy schools would have been taken out of the hands of school governors and given to officials in Whitehall.

Academy schools are all-ability state-funded schools which have greater curriculum freedom than other state schools.

The change would have posed a particular threat to primary academies as they do not currently have to teach any sex education.

In the Lords, Conservative Peer Lord Waddington spoke out against the amendment, saying the idea behind academies was that they should have "greater freedom than other schools rather than less".

"Surely academies should be free to choose not to provide sex education for children of primary school age when the school and parents think that it would not be appropriate", he said.¹

However, the defeat of the plans over the summer may only be a temporary reprieve.

The coalition Government has promised to review the entire curriculum, including Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), which covers sex education.

The review is scheduled for the autumn, when proposals to impose compulsory sex education on primary schools may be brought forward again.

¹ House of Lords, Hansard, 7 July 2010, col. 237



Labour sex ed plans blocked

In the run-up to the General Election, the Labour Government was planning a major liberalisation of sex education in England as part of its controversial Children, Schools and Families Bill.

The Bill would have made sex education compulsory for primary schools by creating a new National Curriculum subject, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education.

Control of sex education lessons would have been centralised, stripping schools of their freedoms to decide if and how such lessons should be taught.

The proposals would also have repealed the right of parents to withdraw their child from sex education lessons when the child reached the age of 15.

All schools would have been forced to teach children about civil partnerships and cohabitation alongside marriage, and to tell kids how to access contraception.

The plans were blocked by the Conservatives due to their concerns over restricting parents' opt-out rights.

However, after the provisions were removed from the Bill, the Conservative Party education spokesman admitted: "We would have been happy to discuss PSHE being part of the curriculum"¹.

He said a Conservative Government would "address and consult on" including PSHE in the curriculum.

¹ House of Commons, Hansard, 8 April 2010, col.1229

NI charity guidance suspended after church concerns are raised

■ **By Callum Webster**

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) has been forced to delay its controversial public benefit guidance after concerns were raised over its legality.

The guidance effectively imposed an illegitimate public benefit test on charities, including churches.

In February we wrote to the CCNI, giving notice of the Institute's intention to challenge the guidance in the courts if the problems were not addressed.

In June church leaders and politicians in Northern Ireland warned that the Charity Commission's plans could pose a threat to the charitable status of churches.

Now the widely criticised public benefit guidance has been postponed in the wake of legal advice.

The purpose of the guidance was to explain how the CCNI would

determine whether a body is charitable, in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

But we believe the CCNI is seeking to redefine public benefit in a way that is without any legal basis in case law or under the 2008 Act.

We were also concerned that the CCNI was introducing burdensome requirements that could have interfered with the lawful activities of churches and Christian charities.

A statement on the CCNI website said: "The draft Public Benefit Guidance was issued for public consultation late last year and, after responses had been considered, it was referred to legal counsel for closer scrutiny earlier this year to ensure its robustness.

"As a result of legal advice received, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland has asked the Department for Social Development to examine a technical aspect of the legislation governing the public benefit test.

"Until this examination is completed CCNI can not begin opening of registration.

We had originally planned this would



Chief Charity Commissioner for Northern Ireland Thomas McGrath

happen at the end of June."¹

There have been reports that the legislation may need to go back through the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly.

A spokesman for the CCNI said the regulator was not able to comment on the nature of the technicality at this stage.

The CCNI had planned to begin taking applications for charitable status in June, but now all plans have been postponed. The Chief Executive said that until the problem is resolved, "nothing is happening".²

According to the Church of Ireland website the Chief Executive of CCNI

contacted the Church personally regarding the delay.

¹ See <http://tinyurl.com/3ymejq5> as at 17 August 2010

² See <http://tinyurl.com/3yw6ohp> as at 17 August 2010



Election sees Bill of Rights reach dead end

■ **By Callum Webster**

Plans for a controversial Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland appear to be dead following the General Election result.

The coalition Government in London says the people of Northern Ireland would be better served by being included in a UK-wide Bill of Rights rather than a “stand-alone sideshow”.¹

The proposed Northern Ireland Bill was

deeply contentious. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission recommended that the Bill should include a sexual orientation ‘harassment’ law which could have damaged free speech.

It also argued that smacking should be banned, and that the Government should respond to a UN Committee report calling for a public consultation on abortion.

Last year Shaun Woodward MP, then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, stated that the Commission had gone “well beyond the brief they were given”.²

The UUP and DUP representatives on the Commission at the time formally dissented from the final report.

In 2008 DUP MLAs and the Roman Catholic Church boycotted the launch of recommendations from the Bill of Rights

Forum. One DUP member expressed concern that the document gave more rights to trees than to unborn children.³

Newton Emerson, a commentator with The Irish News, described initial Bill of Rights proposals as a left-wing wish-list.⁴

¹ House of Commons Hansard, 30 June 2010, Col. 850

² *News Letter*, 11 May 2009

³ *The Irish Catholic*, 3 April 2008; *BBC News Online*, 31 March 2008

⁴ *Irish News*, 11 October 2007

Registrars ignored as Republic civil partnership law is pushed through

■ **By Sam Wylie**

The Republic of Ireland has passed a draconian new homosexual civil partnership law that lays out fines of up to €2,000 and/or up to six months in jail for any registrar who refuses to register a same-sex union.

Despite fierce opposition from church leaders, the Irish Government refused to allow room for liberty of conscience and the Bill was signed into law in July by President Mary McAleese.

The Bill’s passage through the Irish senate was shrouded in controversy when a guillotine measure, dramatically cutting time for debate, was used for the first time in decades. Critics said the Irish Government was running away from thorough scrutiny and turning its back on free speech.



British registrar Lillian Ladele was disciplined over her stance on homosexual civil partnerships (see page 11)

The new law is officially called The Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010. It gives marriage-like rights to

homosexual couples who enter a civil partnership. It also contains new rights for cohabiting couples, whether same-sex or heterosexual.

In May a group of 19 church leaders from across Ireland wrote to The Irish Times expressing their profound concern about the Bill. They called the proposed legislation a “direct attack upon freedom of conscience and religion”.

A group of Roman Catholic bishops also hit out at the legislation. They said it represented “a fundamental revolution in our understanding of marriage and the family and cannot go unchallenged”.

Commentator David Quinn has criticised the Bill, saying it would “greatly undermine the special status accorded to marriage”.

Scottish free speech protected thanks to Christian campaign

■ **By Mike Judge**

A new law in Scotland that could have seriously threatened free speech and religious liberty has

been significantly improved following a Christian Institute campaign.

The Scottish Government had originally proposed a law that would have made it a crime to say something, even in private, that may have distressed someone.

It would not have been necessary for prosecutors to prove that someone was distressed, only that distress was likely. No defence

of reasonableness was proposed.

The planned law would have applied to public church services and private pastoral counselling. It carried a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

This meant Scotland was facing the lowest threshold, widest scope, and harshest penalty of any 'speech law' anywhere in the UK. Expert lawyers backed up our analysis.

Following a successful campaign by The Christian Institute, the Justice Committee of the Scottish Parliament raised significant civil liberty concerns.

The Scottish Government agreed to withdraw its proposal and resubmit it with revised wording.

The revised proposal was much narrower in scope and the threshold of breaching the offence was raised.

To breach the new law, a person must have spoken or behaved in a threatening or abusive manner, intentionally or recklessly causing (or likely to cause) a reasonable person to suffer fear or alarm.

A person charged with such an offence will not be found guilty if they can show that their conduct was, in the particular circumstances, reasonable.

On the face of it, such a law holds little fear for Christians who express biblical truth in public or private.

The Christian Institute's Mike Judge said: "We are pleased that the final proposal is an improvement on what was originally put forward.

"It remains to be seen how this new law will be applied on the ground. But in the meantime Christians should feel free to continue reasonably expressing their beliefs."

The Government Minister, Kenny MacAskill, told Parliament that the law ought not to limit reasonable expression of religious belief.

"We are aware of and have taken on board the concerns of some in the Christian community and we have changed what was proposed", he said.¹

¹ Scottish Parliament, Official Report, 30 June 2010, col. 27901

Kenny MacAskill MSP said the Government were "aware of and have taken on board the concerns of some in the Christian community and we have changed what was proposed".

Activists push for same-sex marriage

■ By Humphrey Dobson

Pressure is growing for Britain to legalise full same-sex marriage. Homosexual activists are clamouring for the revolutionary change, which would redefine marriage and impose the new definition on society.

Tony Blair's Labour Government introduced civil partnerships in 2005, but stopped short of introducing full homosexual marriage.

Civil partnership gives homosexuals all the legal rights and privileges of marriage, but it is a separate scheme and those registering do not get a marriage certificate. Like civil marriages, civil partnerships cannot take place in church.

But now the Equality Act 2010 allows churches to 'opt in' to permitting civil partnerships to be registered on their premises. The Government insists that no church will be forced to carry out civil partnerships against its wishes.

The detailed proposals will be contained in regulations, but this legal change narrows the gap between civil partnership and marriage.

Influential politicians are now arguing civil partnerships are not enough. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, Leader of the Lib Dems, said in February: "I support gay marriage. Love is the same, straight or gay, so the civil institution should be the same, too".¹

In July senior Lib Dem Simon Hughes predicted the current Parliament would legalise homosexual marriage.² A campaign group has been set up to lobby the Scottish Parliament for the change.

Leading Conservatives have said they are open to considering



Flickr/Liberal Democrats

Simon Hughes MP has predicted that the current Parliament will legalise homosexual marriage

the idea, but shortly before the General Election David Cameron said publicly he was "not planning" to change the law.³

In June the European Court of Human Rights ruled that there is no universal right to same-sex marriage.⁴

Observers have pointed out that once the law breaks with the historic definition of marriage as one man and one woman there is no logical argument against extending marriage to three or more people.

And the move could cause a surge in litigation against those who hold to the traditional definition of marriage. Religious adoption agencies have already been crushed by 'equality' laws because of their ethical stance on

homosexual behaviour.

Homosexual campaigners have been demanding the imposition of same-sex marriage in other countries, such as the USA. Yet defenders of traditional marriage have been resisting the move.

Referenda have now been held in over 30 American states and homosexual marriage has been rejected by voters each time, including in liberal states such as California and Maine.⁵

It looks likely that the UK Parliament may vote sooner rather than later and Christians must be ready.

¹ *Pink News*, 16 February 2010

² *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 July 2010

³ *Pink News*, 4 May 2010

⁴ *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 July 2010; *BBC News Online*, 25 June 2010

⁵ *Daily Mail*, 5 November 2009

New staff join the Institute team

■ **By Humphrey Dobson**

The Christian Institute has been delighted to welcome several new staff during 2010.

At the start of the year Dave Rea joined us as our Cameraman and Video Editor. Dave, from Northern Ireland, is an experienced cameraman and will play a crucial role in expanding our video output.

Our administration team has been reinforced by the arrival of Judi Coulson, David Boswell and Matthew Brown. Judi has nearly 20 years experience in administrative support work in local government. David has moved to the Institute from Worcester, where most recently he has been working in the admin department of a commercial

company. Matthew joined us from sixth-form where he had a significant Christian influence.

The Finance Department has been very pleased to welcome Jonathan Wood and Frank Oliver, both of whom have backgrounds in financial services. Jonathan assists our Head of Finance (Jon Errington) in supervising the Institute's financial systems, while Frank is our Financial Administrator who works with the Finance Clerks. With an annual turnover of over £1.7 million a year there is no shortage of financial data to be scrutinised and accounted for. Accountant and Institute supporter Tom Young also assisted for three months over the summer in training staff on a new financial system.

Three new members of staff have joined our research team. Research Assistant Emma Atkinson graduated in History of Art from the University of Edinburgh in 2009. Revd Simon Ward and Iain Armour are Legal Researchers. Simon, who is a qualified solicitor and who also has experience as a church minister, assists with religious liberty cases as well as conducting research into legal issues. Iain graduated in law from Lancaster University in the summer of 2010. His older brother Alasdair is a Development Officer for the Institute: so Iain's arrival means the Institute has two brothers working on the staff for the first time!



Thanks to Chris Prest and Matthew Jess

Chris Prest, our Development Officer, retired in July after ten years employment at the Institute.

Formerly Head of Languages at a large comprehensive school, Chris was appointed to the staff in 2001 but he had already been a volunteer researcher for over a year.

He served first as Education Officer for our Faith in Education project. He helped to successfully campaign against a proposed professional code of conduct for teachers that would have limited the religious liberty of Christian teachers.

He also worked to protect school children from inappropriate sex education materials being pushed in schools.

He later became a Development Officer, helping to pioneer our work with supporters. He travelled

throughout the UK, speaking at public meetings to promote our work.

He worked with supporters to oppose at least 100 applications for sex shop licences, successfully resisting 38.

Also departing from the staff in 2010 was Matthew Jess who had been a Researcher at the Institute since June 2007. He specialised in medical ethics and was part of the team that opposed the highly controversial embryology Bill. He conducted research into apologetics and wrote speeches for public meetings.

The staff, trustees and supporters of the Institute thank Chris and Matthew for their service and wish them both well for the future.