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All the latest news on Named Persons, Ashers and more

The last few months have been a particularly busy period – especially for our Legal Defence Fund.

Our judicial review against the Named Person scheme in Scotland was backed by the UK Supreme Court. Judges unanimously ruled that the State's attempt to share around private family information without consent was unlawful. This is a historic success.

In the Ashers case, the McArthur family's gracious stand for Christ has won widespread support. They may have lost in the Court of Appeal, but they've won in the court of public opinion.

Elsewhere, we are concerned about the latest push for sex education in primary schools and remain watchful of Government counter-extremism plans involving the inspection of church youth groups.

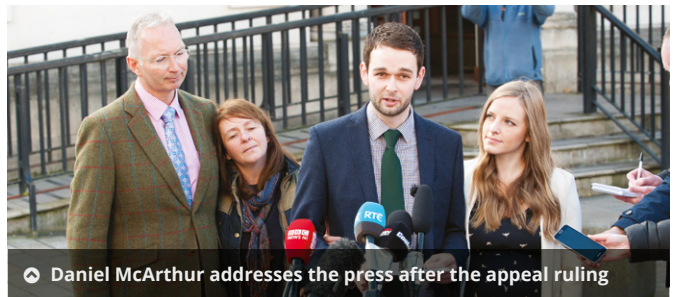
Ashers Baking Company taking legal advice after losing appeal

The owners of Ashers Baking Company are taking legal advice to see what options for appeal remain open after judges at the Court of Appeal in Belfast ruled against them in October.

The McArthur family had appealed against a decision handed down last year, which said they discriminated against customer Gareth Lee by declining to provide a cake with the campaign slogan 'Support Gay Marriage'.

The judges accepted that the family didn't even know that Mr Lee was gay, but nonetheless ruled that refusing the order because of its slogan "was direct discrimination".

The result was strongly criticised by the mainstream media. The Telegraph and The Guardian published editorials



➤ Daniel McArthur addresses the press after the appeal ruling

highlighting the damage to free speech. Gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell was also outspoken in his support for the McArthurs, calling the verdict a "defeat for freedom of expression".

Outside court Daniel McArthur spoke of God's faithfulness and his family's 'extreme disappointment' as he called for a change in the law.

He said: "If equality law means people can be punished for politely refusing to support other people's causes, then equality law needs to change."

Following the court ruling Northern Ireland's First Minister, Arlene Foster, pledged her opposition to any attempt to redefine marriage in the Province.

A letter to fellow believers from Daniel McArthur...

Dear Brother/Sister,

I write to say how thankful we are for your prayerful support at this time.

It has been our joy to take a small stand for Christ and to have opportunities to witness for Him in the public spotlight and we have many people to thank for how they have been an encouragement to us.

Above all we give God thanks for how He has brought us through all our difficulties and spread his wings over us.

Despite the judgment delivered last week, we do not feel defeated or dismayed. We believe that this judgment is part of God's will and through it He will bring glory to Himself. We take comfort in knowing that our God is sovereign and rules over all the earth.

Please continue to pray for us as we look to God for guidance in response to this judgment.

"As I have planned, so shall it be..."
Isaiah 14 v 24



Daniel McArthur

📌 Letter written to supporters in November 2016.



Parents to get say on Welsh law to ban smacking



📌 Carwyn Jones, Welsh First Minister

Parents will be consulted by the Welsh Assembly over plans to ban smacking, ahead of any change in the law.

Currently, parents cannot be prosecuted for the ordinary smacking of children.

Parents obviously know the difference between a loving smack and physical abuse. This distinction is vital.

The most recent poll on the issue - in April 2014 - found 69

per cent of Welsh adults did not think smacking should be banned.

First Minister Carwyn Jones has said the Government will bring in legislation in this Assembly term but not before May 2017.

Govt actively considering demands for primary school sex education



Education Secretary Justine Greening MP

There are growing demands for the Government to make sex education compulsory in primary schools.

Education Secretary Justine Greening told the Education Select Committee that she is "looking at" the issue but has not "reached a final view on it yet".

Currently, primary schools are not required to teach sex education, but local authority maintained secondary schools

are obliged to do so.

Earlier this year, it emerged that David Cameron overruled the previous Education Secretary's intention to make sex education compulsory in primary schools.

According to The Independent, Nicky Morgan 'battled' with David Cameron over his decision to block the proposals. Theresa May, then Home Secretary, is said to have sided with Morgan, and current

Home Secretary Amber Rudd is also reported to be supportive.

The Christian Institute has highlighted the explicit resources already being recommended for primary-aged children by the sex education industry.

A national curriculum for sex education would see control taken away from schools and given to those who have no hesitation about using unacceptably explicit materials.

At a time when there is growing alarm at the sexualisation of children, more sex education at even younger ages will make things far worse.

To view sex ed materials being recommended to schools, read our short briefing *Too much, too young*, available via our website or by emailing info@christian.org.uk



christian.org.uk/TMTY

View your MP's voting record

Do you know how the Prime Minister voted on key ethical issues? Or what about your MP? Find out with our MPs' votes web page. Knowing their voting record could be invaluable in discussions with your elected representatives – whether that's by email, post or face-to-face.

christian.org.uk/mpvotes

Holding Ofsted to account

The Christian Institute is taking legal advice on the widely reported incidents of Ofsted inspectors engaging in inappropriate or intrusive questioning of children and young people in schools in England, without the consent or knowledge of parents.

Ofsted inspectors are required to check a school's compliance with 'British

values'. Some have been doing so by quizzing pupils about their beliefs and

experiences in order to assess whether their school is promoting particular beliefs or lifestyles.

The British values

regulations are used to justify this approach. But Ofsted's questioning of children goes far beyond what is appropriate.



Govt launches review of 'crack cocaine' of gambling



A review of Fixed-Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs), known as the 'crack cocaine' of gambling, has been launched by the Government.

This welcome review will also look at the way gambling is advertised, including on TV.

Currently, gamblers are able to wager up to £100 every 20 seconds on FOBTs, but there have been calls to lower the stakes to £2 a spin. Councillor Simon Blackburn, of the Local Government Association, said the review was long overdue.



“ We need action to help protect communities and those at risk of problem gambling ”

CLLr Simon Blackburn

COMMENT What next for the Named Person scheme?



After the central part of the Named Person scheme was struck down by the Supreme Court, the Scottish Government is desperately trying to salvage something from the wreckage of its plans.

At first it tried to suggest the issues could be fixed quickly, in a month or two, but Deputy First Minister John Swinney has been forced to admit that it will take at least a year. Clearly a wholesale rewriting of the law is in mind.

The original legislation will have to be heavily watered down. The ruling means ministers are only able to introduce an advisory scheme and the court was clear that parents should not be given the impression that they have to accept a named person's advice.

Because of this successful legal challenge, families all across the UK have been protected from unwarranted invasion of their privacy by the state. We are already starting to see the ruling bite.

Families in Scotland whose private lives have already been damagingly intruded upon by officials are bringing legal actions in the wake of key guidance on Named Person data sharing being changed.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) issued advice in 2013 – which featured on the Scottish Government website – stating that the Data Protection Act “should not be viewed as a barrier to proportionate sharing”.

In the wake of our victory against the Named Person scheme, the ICO asked the Government to remove the old advice.

NO2NP campaign wins award



The NO2NP campaign group, which has vigorously opposed Scotland's Named Person scheme, has been given an award for its work. The group, which is supported by The Christian Institute, won Public Campaigner of the Year at The Herald Scottish Politician of the Year Awards in October.

Govt extremism plans still woefully unclear

A parliamentary committee was left “none the wiser” about Government efforts to crack down on extremism after a minister offered up ten different definitions of ‘extremism’ in the space of an hour.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley, the then Home Office minister, appeared before the Joint Committee on Human Rights in July.

But in a scathing assessment, Harriet Harman, who chairs the Committee, said Bradley had provided no clarity over definitions, sanctions, or the timetable for the consultation.

The Committee’s subsequent report went further, warning that religious conservatives could be indiscriminately penalised by the Government’s approach.

It found that the Government offered “no impression of



having a coherent or sufficiently precise definition of either ‘non-violent extremism’ or ‘British values’.”

The Government’s approach it said,

seemed to be based on the false notion “that there is an escalator that starts with religious conservatism and ends with support for jihadism”.


In November, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson QC, told Radio 4’s Law in Action that in his six years in the job, the document that alarmed him the most was a 2015 draft of the Government’s counter-extremism Bill. This was despite him having access to a lot of secret material on surveillance and the operation of terrorism law.

He welcomed the prospect of a consultation but questioned whether additional extremism laws were needed at all.

The little book of non-violent extremists



This popular publication highlights social reformers of global significance who were vilified as extremists in their day but vindicated as heroes by history.

 christian.org.uk/non-violent-extremists

Look out for other recent publications

With repeated calls for all primary schools to be compelled to teach sex education, we’ve revised and updated our booklet: **Too much, too young.**

In **Faith and action**, Dr Peter Saunders discusses false teaching that compromises the biblical call to obedience.

And our **Transsexualism** briefing introduces some of the issues at stake as radical gender ideology becomes increasingly prevalent.

Visit christian.org.uk/publications



2015: Highest drug deaths on record

Drug deaths reached a record high in England and Wales last year.

Office for National Statistics figures for September revealed there were 3,674 deaths from drug poisoning registered in 2015, the highest since comparable records began in 1993.

Deaths involving cocaine have increased for the past four consecutive years, and those involving either heroin, morphine or both have doubled in the last three years.



Approval of new Down's test raises fear of more abortions

At the end of October, the Department of Health confirmed that a new technique for screening unborn babies for Down's syndrome will be rolled out by the NHS.

Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT) is a blood test for expectant mothers that is said to be around 99 per cent accurate in predicting Down's.

In the run up to the announcement, critics warned that the test would drive up the number of Down's abortions – which already stands at 90 per cent of all babies diagnosed with the condition.



▲ Don't Screen Us Out campaign

The 'Don't Screen Us Out' group, which includes people with Down's syndrome, have led the campaign against NIPT. Commenting after the Government announcement, spokeswoman Lynn Murray said the

group were "very disappointed that the Department of Health have approved the NIPT roll-out without consultation with the very group that this is going to have the biggest impact on, people with Down's syndrome and their families".

TV historian: 'I was wrong about Christianity'

TV historian Tom Holland says he had the completely wrong idea about Christianity. Though he has not become a Christian, Holland now recognises the faith as a revolutionary idea which has changed the world for good.

Holland realised that his false ideas about God had been cultivated by enlightenment writers. He said that despite a Christian upbringing he was drawn into the 'glamour' of the Greek and Roman gods. But eventually he came to realise that these societies

invariably promoted cruelty and dominance.

Central to the changes in his thinking about Christianity was the Apostle Paul's statement that "we preach Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:23).

Holland has now concluded that countries once part of Christendom "continue to bear the stamp of the two-millennia-old revolution that Christianity represents". He calls it the "principal reason" that such societies take for granted that "it is nobler to suffer than to inflict suffering".



▲ Tom Holland

BBC criticised for leading the way in push to normalise transsexualism

The BBC's promotion of the new gender ideology has reached such a level that even a leading supporter of transsexual rights believes they've gone over the top.

In September, Radio 4 aired an interview with a 10-year-old girl, whose parents used the internet to help her decide she is 'non-binary' – neither male nor female. The presenter failed to challenge the child's parent, who concluded that she was transsexual because she disliked girls' toys.

Times columnist Janice Turner accused the broadcaster of allowing a "pernicious ideology" to enter the mainstream unquestioned.



In October, the BBC News website declared that the NHS is "not transgender-friendly enough", based on the testimony of one transsexual patient. It also stated as fact that gender is not just about biology but "about how a

person identifies themselves".

The broadcaster came in for fierce criticism again in November over a children's programme about a boy living as a girl.

Even Maria Miller, a leading supporter of trans rights in the Commons, has voiced concerns over the way the BBC is targeting six-year-olds.

To help you give a robust and compassionate response to the damaging gender ideology, read our short briefing *Transsexualism*, available via our website or by emailing info@christian.org.uk



News from around the world...

US

In May, the Federal Government told schools to let transsexual pupils use the toilets and showers of their choice, or face serious funding cuts. Texas judge Reed O'Connor blocked the move after 13 states brought a legal action. In September, religious liberty groups also warned that vulnerable people would be put at risk by rules forcing state-funded homeless shelters to allow transsexuals to use the shelters of their 'acquired sex'.

Switzerland

A nursing home run by The Salvation Army has been ordered to allow assisted suicide to take place on its premises. The home had previously contested a law on the issue, saying it conflicted with its religious beliefs. Federal judges rejected the complaint.

Belgium

A Belgian teenager became the world's first minor to be legally euthanised in September. The 17-year-old was deemed to be terminally ill and in the final stages of life. UK campaign group Care Not Killing described the move as "truly shocking".

Mexico

Over a million Mexicans attended nationwide rallies in support of traditional marriage in September. The marches, calling for marriage and the family to be protected from politically correct ideology, took place across 122 cities.

Hungary

Annual abortions are reported to have fallen by 23 per cent between 2010 and 2015 after the Government promoted pro-life initiatives.

Historic Supreme Court win gives hope to families across the UK

On 28 July the UK Supreme Court ruled the Named Person scheme was illegal – endorsing our concerns and rejecting the Scottish Government's spin. It was an extraordinary day in the long history of The Christian Institute's defence of family freedoms.

The implications of the ruling are far-reaching and will affect public bodies across the UK, from dentists and hospitals to schools and local councils.

Five judges, including two from Scotland, unanimously struck down the



central provisions of the scheme and gave the Government no opportunity to appeal.

It is the first time the Supreme Court has prevented a major piece of legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament from coming into force.

Under the proposals, from 31 August every child in Scotland was to be assigned a state guardian to monitor their 'wellbeing'.

However, the Court stated that the information-sharing provisions of the law

behind the scheme breach the right to a private and family life under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In one devastating line from the judgment, the Supreme Court justices observed:

"The first thing that a totalitarian regime tries to do is to get at the children, to distance them from the subversive, varied influences of their families, and indoctrinate them in their rulers' view of the world."

[▶ INSIDE: What next for the Named Person scheme?](#)

Your legacy will help Christians to be salt and light

None of our work would be possible without the generosity of our supporters. Leaving a gift in your will to The Christian Institute would enable us to continue working to preserve Christian freedoms for future generations.

 0191 281 5664
 legacy@christian.org.uk
 christian.org.uk/support

Peter Bull 1939-2016: He finished his race

It was with sadness that we reported in August the death of Peter Bull, the guesthouse owner whose legal battle to defend biblical marriage went all the way to the Supreme Court. Peter died peacefully in hospital aged 76.

Although Peter and his wife



Hazelmury Bull lost the legal case, their Christian witness has challenged people across the UK to remain faithful to the Lord

Jesus in their own workplaces.

The couple recognised that their faith required obedience to Christ in every area of life. They were gracious towards those who opposed their stand and demonstrated God's love to those who treated them with hostility.

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