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500 years on: Here we stand

Five hundred years after Martin Luther took his famous stand, Christians still need to defend biblical truth.

Today we see the loss of confidence in the authority of the Bible. We can also see the revival of the ancient heresy of Gnosticism in the form of radical gender ideology. This attempts to subvert the truth that we are created male and female in the image of God.

It is vital Christians stand for biblical truth through prayer and

action. In recent weeks, we have once again seen how this can make a significant difference.

Christians have been in the forefront of the opposition to the UK Government's 'non-violent extremism' agenda. The Government now appears to be stepping back from some of its worst proposals.

Read on for more on these issues, as well as news affecting marriage and the family, including a reflection on 50 years of the Abortion Act.

Government shelves new extremism laws

Ofsted will not be sent into churches; equality oath dropped

The Government seems to have shelved plans for controversial new laws against 'non-violent extremism'. They have faced strong opposition.

Three separate initiatives had been announced with attendant fanfare: the state registration and Ofsted inspection of youth work; an equality oath for public sector employees; and extremism disruption orders. The Government appears to have quietly dropped all three. It doesn't have a parliamentary majority and there was a real prospect of a legal challenge over the definition of 'extremism'.



Churches in England would easily have been caught by the state registration of all 'out of school settings' for under 19-year-olds. It would only have taken one youngster to attend church activities for more than six hours in a single week for registration to become mandatory, with inspection by Ofsted.

A public sector 'equality oath' seemed to echo the notorious Test and Corporation Acts used to keep non-Anglican Christians out of public life. And extremism disruption orders have been fiercely opposed by free speech campaigners.

Colin Hart, Director of The Christian Institute, said:

"We are still not convinced by plans for an 'Extremism Commission'. The Government's Prevent programme is partially working, but aspects of it are causing harm. It needs to be urgently reviewed.

"But there's good news on the three proposals that we believe have been shelved. Christians who prayed, contacted politicians and responded to consultations can give thanks. I've not met a single politician who thinks they're going ahead. It would have been nice if the Government had admitted doing a U-turn, but that's not going to happen."

Scottish Govt smacking U-turn will criminalise parents – poll



Be Reasonable Scotland – backed by The Christian Institute – has published a ComRes poll showing that three in four Scottish adults (74 per cent) said parents who smack their own children should not be criminalised.

There was also widespread concern (78 per cent) that police and social workers would be overwhelmed, making it harder for them to deal with genuine cases of abuse.

In April the Scottish

Government said it did “not intend” to bring in a law “which could potentially criminalise parents for lightly smacking their children”.

But it has now promised to “ensure” that John Finnie’s Bill to ban smacking becomes law.

Ciarán Kelly, Deputy Director (Staff and Communications) at The Christian Institute, called this U-turn “the latest example of intrusion into the family” by the Scottish Government.

Referring to the Named

Columnists criticise smacking ban

Scotland’s media commentators have been speaking out against the proposed ban on parental smacking. Kevin McKenna writing in *The Herald* newspaper said the ban was “pandering to the middle-class dilettantes”, and *The Scotsman*’s Tom Peterkin said the SNP should concentrate on education and health, not smacking.

Person scheme, he said: “The Scottish Government seems to have a real problem with trusting parents to bring up their children without State interference.”

It is currently illegal for parents in Scotland to discipline by shaking, to use any implement, or direct any smack at the head.

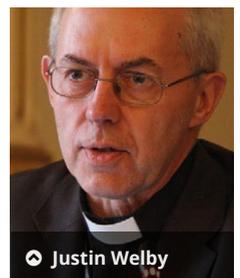
Archbishop of Canterbury admits to avoiding clarity on sinfulness of gay sex

The Archbishop of Canterbury has failed to defend the biblical view of homosexual sex. Justin Welby said he could not give a clear answer on whether gay sex is a sin, because of “irreconcilable” differences in the

worldwide Anglican church. He admitted “copping out” on the question of gay sex in the interview with *GQ* magazine. He said he was seeking an answer on homosexual sex that would satisfy everyone.

He later announced that the Anglican

church in Scotland had been disciplined for dropping the biblical definition of marriage. Earlier this year, the Scottish Episcopal Church stated that its new understanding of marriage was merely “in accordance with the civil law of Scotland”.



New publication: Gnosticism

Our new leaflet lifts the lid on the ancient heresy of Gnosticism. Not many would call themselves Gnostics today. But millions are profoundly influenced by Gnostic ideas. They are central to the transsexualism debate.

Gnosticism was the major heresy faced by the Church in the second and third centuries. As part of their radical anti-Christian message, Gnostics rejected the physical world as evil and false, and denied that Jesus was truly human. They saw salvation as a journey of self-discovery through secret knowledge, leaving the false external world behind.

Gnostic thinking is at the heart of New Age spirituality today. Reaching back to Gnosticism, New Age gurus promise salvation through mystical experiences, looking within. Their self-centred message is totally opposed to the biblical Gospel, which points away from ourselves

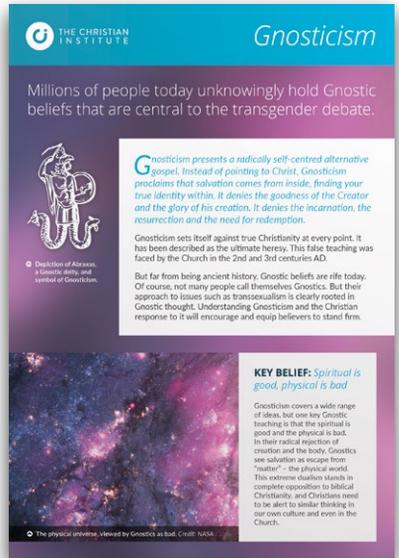
“Gnosticism was successfully rejected by the early Church but never quite went away. It has enjoyed a revival in today’s popular culture, not least in New Age thinking. ... Alister McGrath explains that Gnostic themes ‘chime in with contemporary ideals of self-discovery, self-awareness, self-actualisation, and self-salvation, not to mention a dislike of any kind of authority, especially ecclesiastical.’”

to forgiveness and redemption in Christ.

Gnostic-type thinking also lies behind radical gender ideology. The transgender movement says that a person’s feelings and experience of ‘gender’ override their biological sex. Instead of being created male and female in the image of God, transgenderism says that our true ‘gender identity’ is determined only by our inner self, regardless of physical reality. This is very different from recognising God’s good creation design of male and female.

Read now

Gnosticism is available at christian.org.uk/gnosticism



“Far from being ancient history, Gnostic beliefs are rife today. Of course, not many people call themselves Gnostics. But their approach to issues such as transsexualism is clearly rooted in Gnostic thought. Understanding Gnosticism and the Christian response to it will encourage and equip believers to stand firm.”



The Christian Institute speaks out on radical gender ideology

As transsexualism activists step up their campaigns, The Christian Institute is becoming a trusted source of guidance for Christians and comment for the mainstream press.

Dr Sharon James, our Social Policy Analyst, is speaking to Christian audiences across the UK and beyond, equipping them to stand up to radical gender ideology. Our Solicitor Advocate, Sam Webster, is advising churches and Christian organisations about their legal rights. And John Denning, our Education Officer, is assisting parents concerned about the promotion of gender ideology in schools.



🗨️ Speaking out: Sharon James; John Denning; Sam Webster.

We are also frequently contacted by journalists for comment on the latest news developments in this fast-moving area, being quoted in dozens of major news outlets in recent months.

Our politicians meanwhile continue to bow to the demands of LGBT activists. The Prime Minister recently promised an audience at the PinkNews Awards that she would legislate to allow sex-swaps on demand. And there are clear signs of a potential LGBT takeover of the newly-created classroom subject of "Relationships Education" in England. Campaigners are also pushing the LGBT agenda in Scottish schools.



🗨️ Radical gender ideology is having a concerning impact on children.

But there is widespread anxiety about the impact of gender ideology on the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and at the aggressiveness of transsexual activists.

One shocking attack on a 60-year-old woman was witnessed by Times columnist Janice Turner. She describes Maria MacLachlan being punched and kicked as she tried to attend a meeting to discuss Government plans to allow men to legally self-identify as women. Turner said the attack reveals the lengths to which activists will go to shut down debate.

This was followed by a university blocking research on transsexualism because it was concerned about political correctness. James Caspian wanted to analyse 'detransitioning' - where people are now living in their birth sex after previously identifying as transsexuals. But Bath Spa University's ethics committee said the "potentially politically incorrect piece of research" was too risky for the university.

Professor Miroslav Djordjevic, a prominent 'sex change' surgeon, said the research was needed because of the increasing number of transsexuals wanting to re-embrace their birth sex after experiencing severe depression and contemplating suicide.

In September it was revealed that a GP who claimed a person's gender is "not determined by their chromosomes, genetic make-up or genitals" was under investigation by the General Medical Council. It is claimed Dr Helen Webberley had prescribed cross-sex hormones to children as young as twelve.



🗨️ Prof. Miroslav Djordjevic

Abortion Act: A shameful anniversary

By Dr Sharon James,
Social Policy Analyst

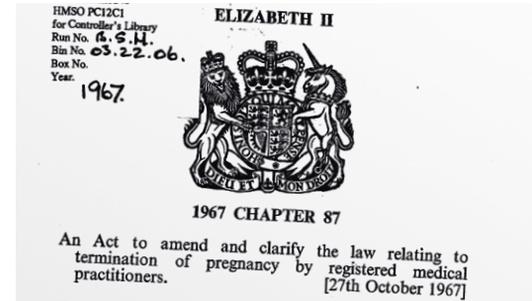
On 27 October 1967 the Abortion Act was passed by Parliament. For 50 years it has been legal in Britain to kill an unborn child in the womb.

Abortions began on an industrial scale. The year after the Act there were a little over 25,000 abortions in Britain, by 1973 almost 175,000. There have now been nearly 9 million abortions in Great Britain since the Act was passed, about

98 per cent of them for social reasons.

Since 1991, The Christian Institute has sought to help Christians understand the biblical truth that all human life is made in the image of God and intrinsically valuable from conception. Because of this, the Institute has also sought to defend the sanctity of human life through campaigns such as our opposition to the 2008 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act.

As we mourn 50



years of the Abortion Act we need to actively encourage others to rediscover the truth that all humans are made in the image of their maker. And we need to pray and work

towards a sea change in public attitudes towards abortion.

Full article online

[christian.org.uk/
abortionact](http://christian.org.uk/abortionact)

Would you like us to visit your church?



We visit over 300 churches a year to talk about the work of The Christian Institute.

If you would like your church to be one of them, contact us at: development@christian.org.uk

Marriage supporters attacked as Australia votes on redefinition



Churches were vandalised in Melbourne, Australia.

Christians who hold a biblical view of marriage are "bigots" and should be 'crucified', according to same-sex marriage supporters who vandalised churches in Australia.

Other stories that have emerged during the postal voting period include a

politician saying the treatment she faced for opposing same-sex marriage is worse than any racism she has had to endure. Karina Okotel said she would still vote against same-sex marriage because the consequences are "too significant to be cast aside".

Remembering the Reformation's birth

October 31st marked 500 years of the Reformation. This was the beginning of the modern era and what has been described as "the greatest revival of the Christian church since Pentecost".

Before this, ordinary people were prevented from reading the Bible for themselves. Faith in Christ alone was not enough for salvation – it also required the church's intimidating system of ritual and penance. The 'spiritual' roles of priests, monks and nuns were elevated above everyday occupations.

The Reformation rediscovered the biblical truths that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. It also recovered the magnificent reality that,

whatever our vocations, all of life is to be lived for the praise and glory of God.

Watch online

Ligonier Ministries' Reformation video series



Twelve episodes presented by Dr Michael Reeves.

The series is available until December 2018 at: christian.org.uk/reformation



🕒 On 31 October 1517, Luther nailed 95 theses – points to prompt debate – to the door of Wittenberg Castle church.

Your legacy would 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.



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Stricken Named Person scheme under fire again

Experts have again turned up the heat on the Scottish Government's controversial Named Person scheme.

In an evidence session at the Scottish Parliament in October, educationalists told MSPs that the scheme creates an "impossible" burden for teachers.

Lawyers also



Kenny Meechan

rubbed a draft code of practice which is supposed to guide named persons on sharing sensitive information.

Solicitor Kenny Meechan, of the Law Society of Scotland, described the proposed code as "misleading at best" and said teachers will "need their lawyer on speed dial".

A spokesman for the No to Named Persons campaign advised the Scottish Government to "rip up the Bill and forget it".

THE LATEST NEWS AND RESOURCES: CHRISTIAN.ORG.UK

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