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## So much to give thanks for

The United Kingdom is going through some choppy waters at the present time. We give thanks that God is always in control.

We are grateful for the good news of recent weeks. It is now clear that Christian pharmacists will not be forced to go against their conscience in their daily work following our legal intervention.

The Scottish Government has also backed down on the most intrusive aspects of its controversial Named Person scheme.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that Christian beliefs on marriage, the family, sexuality, gender and abortion are all under attack.

The Government's plans for the registration and inspection of church youth groups, and the proposed 'Equality Oath', remain a major cause for concern. Christians must continue to stand for God's truth and reject any attempts to equate our beliefs with 'extremism'.

With your help, The Christian Institute will continue to do so.

## Conscience win for Christian pharmacists

Christian pharmacists will remain free to do their jobs in line with their conscience after intervention from The Christian Institute and Christian professionals.

Draft guidance from the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) could have forced Christians to provide access to abortifacient drugs or hormone-blockers for changing sex.

In a marked shift in tone it now states: "Pharmacy professionals have the right to practise in line with their religion, personal values or beliefs". This means they will retain their right to refer people to another pharmacist on grounds of conscience, provided care is not compromised.

The changes were made after The Christian Institute threatened the GPhC with legal action and hundreds of Christian professionals raised objections.



➤ Official guidance has kept conscience protections for pharmacists following a legal intervention by The Christian Institute

Citing the decision of the UK Supreme Court in our landmark Named Person case, we highlighted that freedom of conscience is protected by law. This means that the GPhC has a responsibility to reasonably accommodate different beliefs.

The Christian Institute's Solicitor Advocate Sam Webster

led our Legal Defence Fund's preparations for the legal challenge. He said: "This is a relief for pharmacists. It simply shows a bit of respect for people of faith and by doing so should more or less maintain the status quo for pharmacists and their customers."

# UK Supreme Court to hear arguments on Ashers case



The Ashers Baking Company case is to go before judges at the UK Supreme Court in the coming months. The UK's highest court has listed a hearing to consider a possible appeal by the Belfast-based bakers, over their refusal to bake a cake bearing the campaign slogan 'Support Gay Marriage'.

The Christian Institute continues to support the

company. We understand the Supreme Court will hear initial arguments from which they will then determine if they are to grant a full appeal hearing.

Daniel McArthur, General Manager of Ashers, has welcomed the decision. He said it showed the importance of the issues and the high-profile nature of the case.

Christian printer wins US appeal



A Christian printer who declined to make shirts for a US gay pride event has won his case on appeal.

Blaine Adamson of Hands On Originals was sued after turning down the order because it promoted a message that conflicted with his "sincerely held religious belief".

# Scottish denominations back same-sex unions despite opposition

The biblical definition of marriage has been dropped by the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) and the Church of Scotland has taken steps to allow its ministers to perform same-sex weddings.

The SEC now states that 'marriages' will take place in its churches merely "in accordance with the civil law of Scotland".

Speaking against the move ahead of the June announcement Revd David McCarthy, part of the Scottish Anglican Network, said the decision would have "serious consequences for the Church".

Just two weeks before the SEC change, the Church of Scotland's General Assembly

backed a report encouraging same-sex weddings.

The report, from its own Theological Forum, acknowledged that the Bible condemns same-sex acts, but claimed Scripture was framed by cultural context.

Revd Dale London, a Church of Scotland minister in Angus, said that homosexual acts were against the Word of God. He added: "We cannot call good what God has called evil."

However, Revd Prof Iain Torrance, Convener of the Theological Forum, said everyone in the Assembly was on "a spectrum of interpretation" and suggested that there was no theological reason not to allow ministers to conduct same-sex weddings.

The Kirk will now conduct legal research to determine how same-sex weddings in churches can be allowed. Marriage was redefined in Scottish law in 2014.



# Government needs to “come clean” over Equality Oath

The Government is pressing forward with its plans for an Equality Oath according to news reports, prompting The Christian Institute to speak out on the issue once again.

Cabinet minister Sajid Javid had previously expressed support for an oath which would demand that doctors, teachers and other public office holders swear allegiance to a state-sanctioned view of ‘British values’.

In April, The Sun newspaper reported that the minister’s officials had been holding meetings with interested parties.

In response, Director of The Christian Institute Colin Hart said: “The Government needs to come clean. From what we are hearing the Government’s idea seems to be to get everyone to swear an allegiance to the Equalities Act.”

A Government spokesman declined to comment.

The idea of an Equality Oath was suggested by former integration tsar Dame Louise Casey. She has also called opposition to same-sex marriage ‘un-British and homophobic’.



◉ Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP

## EDITORIAL

# GE2017: Christians must continue to pray



By Colin Hart, Director

June’s General Election resulted in Theresa May forming a minority Government with support from the Democratic Unionist Party.

There has been much talk of the uncertainty that arises from what was, for many Westminster-watchers, an unexpected result. The Brexit process is expected to be long and arduous and the need to combat Islamist terror is a political priority.

At the present time, Christians need to be particularly watchful of plans to register and inspect church youth work and to force public office holders to swear an Equality Oath. They pose great danger to religious liberty and free speech.

We have seen in recent weeks only too clearly how holding biblical beliefs on marriage and abortion is sufficient grounds to be denounced as an ‘extremist’!

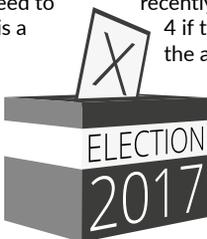
Please take every opportunity to make your MP aware of the pressing

need to ensure that our Christian freedom is protected. They may even be wholly unaware of these draconian proposals. Remind them that Christian citizens are good citizens and not the source of violent extremism, which the Government rightly wants to tackle.

Max Hill QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, was recently asked by BBC Radio 4 if the authorities have all the anti-terror powers they need. His answer was unequivocal – yes they do.

But despite the current turmoil, Christians can remain confident that God is in control. He has not been taken unawares. It is also vital that political uncertainties do not distract us or deter us from doing what we are able to do to make a Christian difference in our nation.

Above all we must pray for “all those in authority” so that we may continue to be allowed the freedom to live godly lives and have liberty to share the Gospel.



## Ofsted chief vows to ramp up 'British values' drive



The new head of Ofsted, Amanda Spielman, has promised to continue the Government's controversial 'British values' drive. The move is expected to encourage Ofsted inspectors to put pressure on or even fail schools based on their own subjective opinions.

Since its introduction in 2014 Ofsted inspectors have caused widespread problems for religious liberty. Teachers and pupils have been aggressively questioned over their beliefs on same-sex marriage and transsexualism.

## Most women want lower abortion limit, poll finds

An overwhelming majority of women – 70 per cent – want the abortion limit lowered, a poll has found.

The poll was commissioned by the 'Where do they stand?' group, which encourages people to find out politicians' views on issues including abortion, assisted suicide and embryo research.

Almost 80 per cent of people



support a five-day 'consideration period' before an abortion, as is the case in the Netherlands. Nearly nine in ten people believe sex-selective abortions should be

explicitly illegal.

In Great Britain, abortions generally can take place up to 24 weeks, or up to birth if it is thought that the child has a disability.

## Warning of BBC liberal bias as numbers of LGBT staff revealed

### EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS: ELECTION BRIEFING 2017

42,170

Sent to supporters

22,191

Downloaded online



The BBC's "liberal and secular" staff are "dangerously out of touch" with religious people, according to Roger Bolton (pictured). The presenter of Radio 4's Feedback programme said the BBC's workforce is "more liberal and secular than the rest of the country", and shares little common ground with communities for whom religion is central to their lives.

His comments came as a Freedom of Information request, seen by The Christian Institute, showed the BBC employs a disproportionate number

of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people.

The information reveals that 11.5 per cent of BBC bosses and 10.6 per cent of staff are LGBT. According to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics only 1.7 per cent of the UK population is lesbian, gay or bisexual.

The number of people who have obtained a gender recognition certificate to change their legal birth sex is only 4,500 – around 0.007 per cent of the UK population.

## Ligonier Ministries' Reformation series

Dr Michael Reeves' 12-part video series on the English Reformation and the Puritans proved to be very popular with Institute supporters.

The series is available until December 2018 at: [christian.org.uk/reformation](http://christian.org.uk/reformation)



## NHS psychiatrist: 'I've seen cannabis ruin lives, don't legalise it'

An NHS psychiatrist and newspaper columnist has warned against the legalisation of cannabis and insisted that the drug "wrecks lives". Dr Max Pemberton said that he had seen many people become psychotic using cannabis. His comments came after police were criticised for not enforcing the law on drugs possession at a pro-cannabis rally.



## Politically correct West won't admit to the war on Christians

There is a war on Christianity and the West is failing to acknowledge it, Daily Telegraph columnist Dr Tim Stanley (pictured) has said. He believes political correctness and an unwillingness to recognise the West's Christian heritage is to blame.

The journalist and historian wrote:



"When Christians are killed for being Christians, politicians overlook it and public interest fades".

He added: "We've forgotten

who we are. No wonder that when we see members of our religious family suffer, we don't realise the responsibility that we have for them."

## 'Teach two-year-olds about transsexualism', says NUT



Two-year-old children should be taught about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual issues, according to the National Union of Teachers (NUT).

At its annual conference in April, delegates passed a motion calling for compulsory teaching of LGBT issues "throughout all phases of state education", including in nurseries.

Kevin Courtney, General Secretary of the NUT, claimed it is "high time" that sex and relationships education and LGBT+ education was "recognised as an essential part

of the school curriculum".

But columnist Sarah Vine said: "With such blatant politicisation, not to mention brain-washing, going on in our schools, is it any wonder that more and more children are declaring themselves confused about their gender?"

Ciarán Kelly, Head of Communications at The Christian Institute, warned: "The NUT's motion is yet another example of adults pursuing a political agenda at the expense of vulnerable children - it's shocking and immoral."



# Teenage pregnancy fall linked to funding cuts, study finds



The fall in teenage pregnancies in the UK can be linked to funding cuts for sexual health services, according to new research.

Funding changes meant less advertising for services and made contraceptives less readily available. The findings have been described as a 'wake-up call' to those who continue to claim such services are needed to reduce teen pregnancies.

The Government spent hundreds of millions of pounds on its Teenage Pregnancy Strategy between 1999 and 2010 before it was axed.

Professor David Paton said: "we found that, if anything, cuts have led to fewer teen pregnancies", adding: "spending on projects related to teenage pregnancy may even be counterproductive".

## 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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## Watered-down Named Person Bill launched by Scottish Govt

A watered-down version of the Named Person legislation has been released in a huge victory for our long-running campaign against the intrusive scheme.

A new Bill was produced because The Christian Institute won its case against the Scottish Government at the UK Supreme Court last year.

Judges declared ministers' plans unlawful and also ruled that the new proposals must make clear that any advice offered by a named person is entirely optional.

The new Bill now repeals key parts of the original legislation and accepts the need for named persons to comply with existing human rights, data protection and confidentiality laws.

The No to Named Persons (NO2NP) campaign said it confirms "one of the most

remarkable, ignominious and expensive U-turns in the history of the Scottish Government and a huge victory for mums, dads and children across the country and those who were prepared to spend time and money fighting the scheme through the courts".



🗣 John Swinney MSP announced the new legislation

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