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- Weddings revamp 'trivialises marriage'
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Fighting the good fight

When Kim Leadbeater's assisted suicide Bill failed, there was not much of a reprieve. It was swiftly picked up by Lauren Edwards, and the campaign continued. However, it has finally been defeated, and a great many people have been protected from this bad law.

Our most pressing concern now is a 'conversion practices' ban, which could greatly restrict

gospel freedom and criminalise parents and church leaders.

Other challenges we have faced in recent months have included plans to revamp wedding ceremonies, and the accusation that the CI is an 'anti-rights' charity. In fact, the opposite is true, and we continue to advocate for the unborn, the vulnerable, and the freedom for believers to share the love of Christ to a lost world.

Dangerous assisted suicide Bill rejected in the Commons

MPs have voted to reject Lauren Edwards' assisted suicide Bill by 286 votes to 270.

Near identical legislation had been narrowly approved in the House of Commons last year, but failed to progress in the House of Lords due to an unprecedented number of amendments tabled in response to its many flaws.

Supporters of that Bill claimed it was unfairly blocked, and had intended to use the Parliament Acts to force through the legislation, had it received support in the Commons again.

But MPs, recognising the dangers that legalisation would



Lauren Edwards MP

bring, rejected it, with Conservative Mims Davies calling it "not fit for purpose".

Independent Rosie Duffield pointed out that "not a single disabled rights organisation or professional body supports this legislation".

And Labour's Sarah Smith noted that, for

"It was a decisive shift"

the less privileged or vulnerable in society, "the suggestion made by a doctor" to consider assisted suicide "may easily sound like a decision for what is best for them".

Our Director, Ciarán Kelly, gave thanks to God for the result. "It was a decisive shift in view from the Kim Leadbeater Bill through to this Lauren Edwards Bill. And we can be thankful that MPs have been persuaded by the arguments that have been put forward as to why this Bill should not be brought into law."

'Conversion practices' ban could criminalise innocent conversation

The Institute has again warned that Government plans to ban so-called 'conversion practices' in England and Wales threaten free speech, religious liberty and family life.

Published in June, the draft Bill criminalises "emotional pressure" on a person that causes them to believe they have or do not have a particular "sexual orientation" or "transgender identity". Under the proposals, any person found guilty of an offence faces a fine, up to five years in prison, or both.

But our Deputy Director, Simon

Calvert, said: "The Bill would see parents, professionals and pastors having to answer to the police for innocent conversations that LGBT activists claim are 'abusive'. It's wide open to misuse.

"The Government claims its Bill targets abuse, but it's now clear that parents are going to find

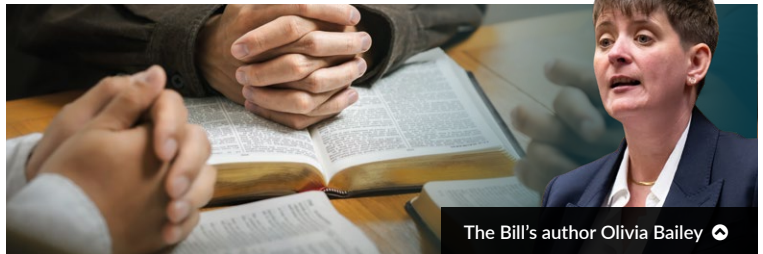
themselves having to answer to police officers and the courts for conversations with their children."

Within days of the Bill's publication, Peers pointed out the risk it presented of "criminalising people who have done nothing wrong".

Independent legal advice from leading

King's Counsels has repeatedly identified significant human rights concerns with previous legislative proposals.

A joint parliamentary committee, including the Bill's author Olivia Bailey, is examining the Bill – a move described as "marking her own homework" – and will report by 22 January.



One in three pregnancies ends in abortion in England and Wales amid sustained rise

One in three pregnancies ends in abortion, latest figures for England and Wales reveal.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that while conception rates in 2023 rose, the increase in abortions has led to

fewer babies being born overall.

The ONS reported that the number of babies aborted in 2023 was 279,970 – an increase of 13 per cent from 2022, and 35 per cent since 2019, having

previously been stable. Abortion now ends 32.1 per cent of conceptions.

During the pandemic, the Government allowed women under ten weeks pregnant to access abortion pills at home without an in-person consultation with a medical professional. The measure was later made permanent.

The data also highlighted the significant impact of marriage on abortion, showing that babies are more than three times less likely to be aborted if their parents are married or in a civil partnership, than if they are single or cohabiting.



'Secular worldviews' to be taught in big RE shake-up

Secular Humanists have welcomed Government plans to introduce Religious Education (RE) into the national curriculum for England.

Currently, RE is mandatory in all state-funded schools. The syllabus for schools with no religious designation is determined locally by a panel that includes representatives of Christian denominations.



This syllabus must "reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian".

However, under these plans, the national curriculum would set new requirements, including the

teaching of non-religious worldviews.

It is not yet clear what the arrangements will be for schools with a religious designation, which currently make up a third of state schools in England.

Govt instructs schools to row back on 'social transitioning'

The Department for Education has ordered schools in England to "take a very careful approach" before allowing children to live as if they were the opposite sex.

Revised *Keeping Children Safe in Education* guidance, which came into force in September, reiterates that pupils must never be allowed "access to toilets, changing rooms or boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex".

Social transition, it states, "should be viewed as an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child or young person". But despite this caution, the guidance still fails to definitively prevent schools from supporting children to 'change sex'.



The Mail on Sunday found hundreds of primary schools were promoting controversial books provided by the pro-LGBT No Outsiders organisation as resources for compulsory Relationships Education lessons.

And The Telegraph reported that a recent Edexcel Spanish revision guide asked teenagers to explain why they "follow" or "admire" someone, with one example answer promoting "transgender rights".



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CI urges PM to reform gambling law

The Institute's Director, Ciarán Kelly, called on Andy Burnham to update gambling law and improve protections for the vulnerable.

In his letter, Mr Kelly called for "quick, effective action" to restrict gambling advertising, stop the industry's grooming of children to gamble, and reduce the stake limit for all online gambling.

An estimated 1.3 million British adults were classed as 'problem gamblers' last year.



Govt trivialises marriage with weddings revamp

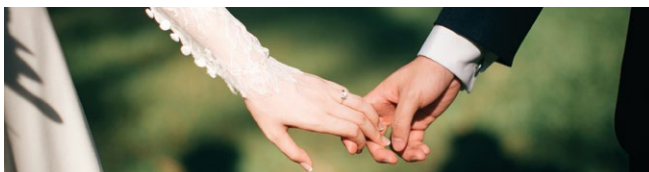
The Government has claimed "outdated" wedding practices and requirements need a 21st century makeover.

The Ministry of Justice is currently consulting on proposals which include ditching 'prescribed words' of consent, allowing couples to marry on beaches or in hot-air balloons, and allowing ceremonies to be carried out behind closed doors.

The Government estimates its plans "may lead to a 3% increase in the number of weddings".

Criticising the proposed reforms, campaign group Coalition for Marriage complained that long-established traditions will be supplanted by "a licensed celebrant industry, a state regulator of ministers, and weddings sold from cruise-ship brochures".

The Institute's Dave Greatorex urged caution, warning that initiatives apparently intended to encourage marriage would actually undermine it if the "seriousness, dignity and public nature of the ceremony" was lost.



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CofE rebrands LLF with new same-sex marriage groups

Church of England bishops have been appointed to lead groups to establish how clergy could legitimately enter same-sex 'marriages'.

A Relationships, Sexuality and Gender Working Group will consider CofE rules and processes to establish quasi-wedding services for same-sex couples and legitimise clergy entering same-sex relationships.



The General Synod agreed to form the group in February when it voted to end the controversial Living in Love and Faith. A Pastoral Consultative Group

will advise on individual cases and will produce an annual report to "inform the ongoing deliberation and discernment" of the working group and the bishops.

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 the.ci/faithinaction



Pray continually

1 Thessalonians 5:17

SUNDAY

PRAY For church leaders to faithfully and boldly preach the Gospel.

MONDAY

PRAY Rejoicing that MPs rejected the dangerous assisted suicide Bill.

TUESDAY

PRAY For greater awareness of the devastation gambling can cause.

WEDNESDAY

PRAY That lawmakers would recognise restrictions a conversion therapy ban would place on Christians.

THURSDAY

PRAY For our education and legal teams as they help believers faithfully stand for Christ.

FRIDAY

PRAY Giving thanks for the freedoms we have to share the Gospel in the UK.

SATURDAY

PRAY For the CI team as we seek to equip believers to influence secular society for Christ.

Carrying a Bible may be a criminal offence in Northern Irish hospitals

Routine hospital pastoral ministry may fall foul of abortion buffer zone laws, according to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

Following the conviction of retired pastor Clive Johnston for preaching the Gospel within one such zone, Chief Constable Jon Boutcher indicated that prayer, Scripture reading and carrying a Bible may also be illegal in censorship zones.

He said that the legislation was not designed to prohibit such behaviour, but that "an offence may be committed" if



someone believes it may 'influence' someone there for the purposes of abortion.

Our Director, Ciarán Kelly, said: "This guidance confirms why Pastor Clive Johnston's case is so important. According to this guidance, a chaplain praying with parents mourning the loss of a child and then reading

the famous words of Psalm 23 – The Lord is my shepherd – could fall foul of the law."

He added: "The very suggestion that consensual prayer or Bible reading could ever become a criminal matter should concern everyone who values basic freedom."

Mr Johnston, who is being supported by The Christian Institute, is appealing his conviction for holding an open-air service on the fringes of the buffer zone around Coleraine's Causeway Hospital.

Pastor Johnston's appeal date is set for **15 October**



NHS Wales pauses referrals for 'sex-swap' surgeries amid safety concerns

The Wales Gender Service has halted referrals for all "masculinising and/or feminising" surgeries, pending a review into a "disproportionately" higher number of patients sent for

operations than other UK nations.

The NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee said the decision was a "precautionary and clinically-led step to ensure that referrals for

gender surgery are supported by robust quality, safety and clinical governance arrangements".

Surgery referral rates in Wales were almost four times as high as in England last year, sparking "concerns regarding referral appropriateness".

The Welsh Conservatives' spokeswoman for health, Natasha Asghar, called for "proper scrutiny" surrounding "irreversible procedures".

The cancellations do not affect services involving sex-swap drugs or psychological support.



Charity Commission told it needs to reaffirm value of faith-based groups

Amnesty International UK has apologised after branding The Christian Institute — along with a host of pro-life, gender-critical, and Christian groups — an ‘anti-rights’ organisation.

In its briefing ‘A growing threat’, Amnesty claimed it had identified a network of groups targeting “the rights of women and LGBT+ people”, and it accused the Institute and other groups of “fostering moral panic” and posing a threat to “human rights protections”.

The charity’s report recommended

greater scrutiny of groups that oppose the Government’s draft Conversion Practices Bill and for the NHS to investigate the activities of crisis pregnancy centres.

It even called on the Charity Commission to review the charitable status of those listed that it said “promote social and legal frameworks” based on traditional beliefs about gender, sexual ethics and family life.

Following widespread criticism, it removed the report from its website and apologised.



In a letter to the Charity Commission, the Institute and ten other organisations named in the report set the record straight on its inaccuracies.

The letter asked the regulator to reaffirm

that “the advancement of religion” is a legitimate charitable aim, and that Christian charities make a valued contribution to society and are entitled to speak into contested areas of moral debate.

Civil servants face investigation over ‘misgendering’, leaked policy reveals

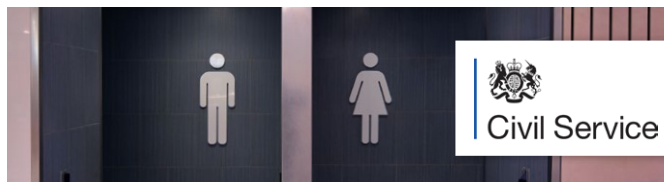
Civil servants who ‘misgender’ or ‘deadname’ colleagues will be investigated for misconduct, if a draft proposal comes into effect.

The Whitehall policy said that invalidating a person’s “trans identity” is “unacceptable”. It does, however, concede that single-sex facilities must be used on the basis of biological sex and not on the basis of “affirmed gender”.

The Institute continues to oppose the promotion of LGBT ideology within the Civil Service, in particular the official participation of civil servants at

‘Pride’ marches. Such behaviour breaches their duty of impartiality and undermines public trust.

Our legal action against the Civil Service is ongoing.



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