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Trusting in God's providence

Kim Leadbeater introduced her assisted suicide Bill at Westminster almost 18 months ago. Mercifully, the sheer volume of amendments required for such poorly drafted legislation means it could well fall. The future of the Scottish Bill is less clear.

Other campaigns have brought positive results, with bureaucratic registers for home-educating parents significantly pared back,

and politicians as well as police chiefs ready to scrap non-crime hate incidents. We also helped a church banned from a freshers' fair get its stall back.

But with a court hearing coming up for Pastor Clive Johnston, our judicial review of the Civil Service, and the push to decriminalise women having abortions up to birth, there is still much to do.

Church banned from freshers' fair successfully reinstated with CI help

A church that was banned from a university's freshers' event has successfully defended its right to book stalls after The Christian Institute intervened.

Grace Church Greenwich had been attempting to reserve a place at Goldsmiths University's Freshers' Fair. Native, the external company responsible for the booking process, told co-pastor Andrew Sach that while religious groups working on secular initiatives would be permitted, those promoting religious teaching would not.

Good News for Everyone! (formerly GideonsUK) was also barred. The ban



▶ Grace Church Greenwich defended its right to book a stall thanks to the CI

affected not only the Goldsmiths event, but every freshers' fair organised by Native.

Sach contacted The Christian Institute, and our Solicitor Advocate Sam Webster warned the company it was in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

He said both Grace Church and GNFE! "have grounds for a claim under the Act", but that legal action could be avoided if the company agreed to allow all future bookings from Grace Church and other religious groups.

As a result, Native suspended its policy of restricting bookings from religious organisations with immediate effect.

Both Grace Church and GNFE! are now in the process of booking their Freshers' Fair stalls for September.

Government refuses to block gender transitioning in schools

New guidance for schools on dealing with transgender issues will not put an end to 'gender transitioning', even at primary level, despite acknowledging it has significant effects on children.

Our Head of Education John Denning said: "It is profoundly harmful for a child to reject the reality of their God-given body and to try to live as if they are something they are not.

"Safeguarding guidance should ban schools from ever facilitating this. Sadly, this draft guidance stops short, leaving some children at risk".



There are positive statements. Without exception, children must use the toilets and changing facilities that match their biological sex, which must be accurately recorded by schools. Unless there are safeguarding

concerns, decisions on transitioning should not be made without the involvement of parents, and full social transition should happen "very rarely".

But the guidance does not categorically ban using gender-

affirming pronouns, nor does it address the issue of breast binders, which are known to cause serious side-effects.

Former head of Ofsted Baroness Amanda Spielman said the guidance still gives "too much leeway" for schools to allow a child to transition "while keeping it secret from their parents".

The document will be subject to public consultation, and John Denning encouraged Christians to respond: "It's particularly important that Christian teachers, parents and school governors make their voice heard."

Intrusive and impractical registers for home-educating families pared back

The Christian Institute has given a cautious welcome to the Government's decision to scale back its plans for intrusive and burdensome registration of children not in school.

The Government had proposed highly impractical local authority registers under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. These would have required parents to state the amount of time each child spends "receiving education from each parent", and provide the same information for anyone else who educates their child.

But following an outcry, it tabled amendments to its own

Bill removing the requirement to record such details. The changes were backed by the House of Lords.

The CI has campaigned against the Bill's overreach from

the outset. While the reduction in information required is welcome, the proposed registers themselves risk undermining parents' freedom to educate their children.



Prostitution Bill rejected

The Scottish Parliament has voted against the general principles of a Bill to make buying sex illegal.

Ash Regan's Bill aimed to reduce demand for prostitution in Scotland by criminalising the purchase of sex, but also proposed to decriminalise its sale.

Regan (below) told MSPs: "This 'Unbuyable Bill' recognises prostitution for what it is – a system of exploitation and violence sustained by demand."

The Government did not support the legislation and MSPs voted against it by 64 votes to 54 at Stage 1.



Parents' rights weakened in Scots schools

The Scottish Parliament has passed legislation allowing children of any age to override their parents' decisions on them attending Religious Observance, such as school assemblies.

In addition, the right to withdraw from Religious and Moral Education has been scrapped and pluralistic teaching will become mandatory.

Ministers are required to consult on statutory guidance before the new law is implemented.



Abortions in England and Wales at highest level ever



More abortions are taking place in England and Wales than ever before.

According to the latest Government figures, an estimated 278,740 abortions took place in 2023 – an eleven per cent rise on the previous year.

An estimated nine in ten abortions took place at home without medical supervision.

Over 80 per cent of abortions were performed by 'independent

providers' – primarily the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) and MSI Reproductive Choices UK – overwhelmingly funded by the NHS.

Plans to allow a woman to kill her unborn baby at any stage of pregnancy without sanction were roundly challenged in the House of Lords.

Baroness Monckton called for the clause in the Crime and Policing Bill to be ditched.

Baroness O'Loan feared that if the amendment passed, it risked sending a message that DIY abortions are safe. Consequently, she added, women "may die or face life-changing injuries".

Peers also pressed for the reinstatement of mandatory in-person consultations before abortion pills can be prescribed.

Peers will vote on the issue at Report Stage in mid-March.

Govt criminalises creation of explicit images using AI

Creating explicit deepfake images of people without their consent is now a criminal offence in England and Wales.

The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 was implemented amid Ofcom's investigation into social media platform X after evidence that it allowed its AI tool 'Grok' to digitally undress women and children.

Seeking to share non-consensual intimate images is already illegal. Dedicated 'nudification' tools that enable people to do this are to be



banned under the Crime and Policing Bill.

Baroness Bertin, who led the Government's Independent Review of Pornography, also urged the Government to ban online pornography that "glorifies child sexual abuse".

Puberty blocker trial put on hold

The Institute has welcomed the suspension of NHS England's planned puberty blocker trial.

It follows concerns raised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency about a "potentially significant and, as yet, unquantified risk of long-term biological harms" to the children involved.

An Institute spokesman welcomed the news but added: "It's time to ditch this unethical trial altogether".



COMMENT

Taxpayer-funded 'Pride' celebrations must stop



By Ciarán Kelly, Director



Official taxpayer-funded participation by civil servants in 'Pride' is unlawful. It gives the public the impression that they have taken sides on a hugely controversial issue on which they ought, by law, to be impartial.

So far, the response to our concerns has been inadequate, indicating an unwillingness to recognise the depth of indoctrination in the Civil Service. As a result, we have now lodged legal papers with

the High Court.

Pride London, the one attended by Whitehall-based civil servants, even banned political parties because they don't support political demands such as puberty blockers for kids and gender self-ID. These are positions that the taxpayers who fund the Civil Service increasingly reject.

Our legal action will affect civil servants in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Police leaders call for an end to non-crime hate incidents

The College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council are advising the Government to scrap non-crime hate incidents (NCHIs).

Under the proposals, officers should only log serious incidents as "intelligence" reports.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood acknowledged that the "current position is not acceptable", emphasising that officers should not



officers should not be "policing social media"

be "policing social media".

Police Scotland says it intends to continue recording NCHIs, a decision met with dismay by

Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser.

He was investigated and had an NCHI logged after he said that "choosing to identify as 'non-binary' is as valid as choosing to identify as a cat". The force has apologised for its mishandling of the case.

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Pray continually

1 Thessalonians 5:17

SUNDAY

PRAY That Christian teachers, parents and pupils would have the freedom to express their faith.

MONDAY

PRAY Giving thanks for the recent push to scrap the recording of non-crime hate incidents.

TUESDAY

PRAY For society to treasure the lives of the unborn and the terminally ill.

WEDNESDAY

PRAY That attempts to help women exit prostitution will not result in it being decriminalised.

THURSDAY

PRAY For the media to cover issues of concern to Christians accurately and fairly.

FRIDAY

PRAY For church leaders as they faithfully and boldly preach the Gospel.

SATURDAY

PRAY For the CI, as we seek to influence secular society for Christ.



Assisted suicide



SUPPORTERS FEAR LEADBEATER BILL MAY FALL

Supporters of Kim Leadbeater's assisted suicide Bill are fearful that the proposals may fail due to lack of time. If the Bill has not been passed when the parliamentary session ends in May, it will not become law.

A motion from Lord Falconer for extra time to scrutinise the Bill – in addition to the ten additional days allocated

– was passed without a vote. Committee sessions are now longer, but Government whips have refused



Kim Leadbeater



to allot any days reserved for Government business, meaning it will be very hard for the Bill to pass.

Peers opposing the Bill have rejected accusations of 'filibustering' to delay it, arguing that it is so badly drafted that it needs extensive reworking.

Bill supporters have threatened the use of the Parliament Acts to bypass the House of Lords.

Given the Bill will apply to

Wales, the Senedd has been asked to give its legislative consent, which more than 250 health care professionals called on MSs to withhold.

In an open letter, they highlighted the Bill's failure "to recognise the risks from mistaken diagnosis or misinformation", to "assess suicidality", to provide adequate oversight and "independent scrutiny", and to protect vulnerable patients from coercion.



FINAL VOTE ON MCARTHUR BILL IMMINENT

In mid-March, MSPs will vote on Liam McArthur's assisted suicide Bill at Stage 3.

Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes, Edward Mountain (Con), and Michael Marra (Lab) have all urged MSPs to vote against it, warning of serious flaws in the legislation.

Audrey Nicoll (SNP)



Liam McArthur

announced her withdrawal of support, citing concerns about the potential for coercion. Six more MSPs need to follow suit for the Bill to be rejected.

MSPs are set to vote without knowing what conscience protections will be in place for medics, as Holyrood does not have power to legislate on the issue.



Waiting: A message from Pastor Clive Johnston

I don't know many who like queuing! Whether it's in supermarkets, banks or listening to someone tell us: "Your call is important to us".

Like many people, I'm not patient by nature. Yet the Lord is constantly calling us to 'Wait'. In fact, it is surprising how often this is the very thing God calls us to do.

It's hard to believe that it all started on 7 July 2024! For Sheila and me, this has been a very special and different season of our lives because God has called us to wait.

So often waiting is good! It teaches us to trust, so that we see in answer to our prayers that delay is not denial, and that the Lord may have something quite different in mind. Remember that the Lord Jesus prayed to the Father: "Not my will but yours be done".

Many folks have said they are praying for an acquittal at the next hearing on 31 March. That would certainly be a real answer to prayer! But I've been prompted more and more to simply pray that

whatever the result, the name of the Lord Jesus would be glorified. This is a battle for freedom of speech and freedom of religion but it's also an opportunity to graciously witness for Jesus. It's all about Him and His Kingdom.

Thank you for your prayers. We cannot do this without the fellowship of the Lord's people, and your prayers are an encouragement to us daily. May the Lord himself bless you.

*Clive and
Sheila Johnston*



Hundreds of parents treated like criminals under smacking ban, Welsh data reveals

More than three hundred parents have been treated like criminals under Wales' smacking ban, according to data analysed by the Christian Institute-led Be Reasonable campaign.

Since reasonable chastisement was outlawed in 2022, the police have referred 365 parents to diversionary 're-education' schemes for smacking their children.

Be Reasonable also highlighted that the initial



cost of implementing the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020 could be double the Government's estimated £7.9 million.

When the Welsh Government released its own figures, it claimed the law was working well, although it admitted the Act has caused "increased workloads" for the police and local authorities.

The Westminster Government intends to review the impact of the bans in Scotland and Wales before considering whether to outlaw reasonable chastisement in England.

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