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## Defending what is good

Gospel freedom is an issue we have campaigned on since our inception. This liberty is vital and must be preserved.

Pastor Clive Johnston's case should concern any Christian who values the freedoms they have. For preaching John 3:16 in a public place to be deemed a criminal offence is disturbing. We are pleased to be able to help Clive appeal this judgment.

The latest liberalisation of abortion law is tragic. If society is ever to value the lives of the unborn, Christians must increasingly become a voice for the voiceless.

We remain on guard against another assisted suicide Bill being brought forward. It was wonderful to see legislation fail at Westminster and Holyrood but, as with so-called conversion therapy, activists won't give up easily.

# Pastor Clive Johnston to appeal conviction for John 3:16 sermon

Pastor Clive Johnston is appealing his conviction for preaching on John 3:16 within one of Northern Ireland's abortion censorship zones.

He is being supported by The Christian Institute.

The grandfather of seven held an open-air service on the fringes of the buffer zone around Coleraine's Causeway Hospital.

His actions – preaching “For God so loved the world” while standing near a large cross inside the zone – were deemed “reckless” as to whether they would ‘influence’ someone accessing the hospital's abortion services. He did not mention abortion, nor



Clive Johnston speaking outside Coleraine Magistrates' Court

were there banners or placards.

Pastor Clive said: “This ruling sets a deeply troubling precedent. I was not protesting abortion. I was peacefully preaching the Gospel, reading from the Bible, and pointing people to the hope found in Jesus Christ.

“If this conviction is allowed to stand, it

will signal that basic Christian witness and public expressions of faith can be criminalised simply because they take place in the ‘wrong’ location.

“That should concern every person who values freedom of religion and

freedom of expression, regardless of their views on abortion.”

The Institute's Simon Calvert added: “If public authorities can prosecute someone for reading the Bible and preaching on God's love, then fundamental freedoms are at risk.”



# New bid for assisted suicide

## COMMENT

Proposals to enable vulnerable people to seek help from the State to kill themselves will return this year.

In April, Kim Leadbeater's assisted suicide Bill ran out of time in the House of Lords, with Peers unable to finish considering the more than 1,000 amendments intended to counter its fundamental flaws.

Now, Labour's Lauren Edwards, who placed second in the Private Members' Ballot, has brought forward identical legislation to the Bill that narrowly passed the Commons a year ago.

If the legislation is unamended by MPs, she can invoke the Parliament Acts, which would mean that Peers cannot block the legislation from passing when they debate it in the House of Lords.

Pro-assisted suicide activists have done their best to claim that Peers were 'filibustering' to run down the clock on Kim Leadbeater's Bill. In reality, they spoke only for an average of a few minutes on each amendment.

However, a number of MPs have said they would oppose attempts to bypass the House of Lords, and only twelve MPs need change their mind at Second Reading for the new



Bill to fall.

In March, MSPs defeated Liam McArthur's Bill by 69 votes to 57 – the third time in 16 years Holyrood has refused to endorse government-funded suicide.

McArthur said that after five years of campaigning to pass the legislation, he would not do so again, but said he wanted to hand the baton to another MSP.

For nearly two years, we have been briefing lawmakers about these Bills, to help them understand

how dangerous they would be.

Christians have done their bit to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are not put at risk, and that our National Health Service does not become a National Death Service.

Jersey has already made moves to start a death service on the island.

Following a vote, terminally ill adults expected to die within six months – or twelve months if they have a neurodegenerative condition – could

receive help to kill themselves as soon as next year.

The Bill has been sent for Royal Assent, but it could face difficulty after similar proposals recently stalled on the Isle of Man amid human rights concerns.

Justice Secretary David Lammy informed the Manx Government that Alex Allinson's Bill could not receive Royal Assent because it lacked "the necessary protections" to be compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights.



## How do the Parliament Acts work?

The Parliament Acts allow a Bill passed by the House of Commons to automatically become law if it is rejected by the House of Lords. It only applies to a Bill that has been blocked already and is brought forward again in the next parliamentary session

in identical form. Any change of substance would render it ineligible for the Parliament Acts, and it would have to pass through the normal process.

The powers have never before been used to force through a Private Member's Bill.



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## Scottish Govt proposes more drug injection sites

The Scottish Government wants more places for addicts to be able to inject illegal drugs without fear of arrest.

Ahead of the Holyrood election, it pledged in its new Alcohol and Drugs Strategic Plan 'not to delay' opening more shooting galleries. It also said it would explore other 'harm reduction' measures, such as distributing crack cocaine pipes to users for "safer inhalation".

In response, the Institute explained that "harm reduction measures like these only serve to keep people hooked on drugs, rather than providing them with the help they need to get clean.

"The Thistle facility in Glasgow has faced criticism from locals who report used needles littering the streets. The SNP should be shutting up shop, rather than ploughing ahead with this deeply unpopular strategy."



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## No-fault divorce proposals in NI shelved until election

A Bill to allow quicker and easier divorce is not expected before the next Assembly election in 2027.

Following the refusal of the DUP to endorse John O'Dowd's proposal for no-fault divorce, the Finance Minister has been unable to progress his plans.

A DUP spokesman explained that the party was opposed



**"marriage is a serious, lifelong commitment"**

to the introduction of a full no-fault divorce system in Northern Ireland, as it believed the law should reflect the

fact that "marriage is a serious, lifelong commitment".

Last year, a consultation on the proposals revealed little appetite for change, with six out of ten respondents opposed to no-fault divorce.

## We'd love to meet you

We have over 60,000 supporters and visit over 300 churches a year to talk about key issues for Christians.



If you would like your church to be one of them, email us at:  
**[info@christian.org.uk](mailto:info@christian.org.uk)**

# Pray continually

1 Thessalonians 5:17

## SUNDAY

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

## MONDAY

**PRAY** Giving thanks the UK keeps rejecting assisted suicide. Pray Lauren Edwards' Bill would fail too.

## TUESDAY

**PRAY** For society to treasure the lives of the unborn.

## WEDNESDAY

**PRAY** That new home-ed registers would not prove burdensome for families.

## THURSDAY

**PRAY** That Northern Ireland would not follow the rest of the UK into 'no-fault' divorce.

## FRIDAY

**PRAY** That any 'conversion therapy' ban would not restrict ordinary church activity and family life.

## SATURDAY

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

# 'Unutterably grim' abortion measure has become law

Pleas to block controversial legislation decriminalising women in England and Wales who abort their child at any stage of pregnancy have fallen on deaf ears, with the measure now in force.

In March, Peers failed in an attempt to remove Antonia Antoniazzi MP's decriminalisation clause from the Crime and Policing Bill, which had passed with ease in the Commons.

The House of Lords also rejected an amendment to reinstate in-person consultations with a doctor in order to receive abortion pills, which might have



mitigated some of the worst excesses of the legislation.

Following the votes, a group of concerned MPs and Peers urged the Government to halt the legislation, warning that it would be "reckless" for such a significant change to take place without an impact assessment

and the publication of appropriate guidance for healthcare professionals.

However, their pleas were ignored, and the legislation is now law after it received Royal Assent in April.

CI Deputy Director Simon Calvert called the legislation "unutterably grim", and

lamented the decision to dehumanise the unborn and abandon women.

He urged all who care about pregnant mothers and their children to renew their efforts "to expose the consequences of what our politicians have done so that, one day, it can be reversed".

# Government repeats pledge to ban so-called conversion therapy

The Westminster Government has once again pledged to bring forward a draft Bill to ban so-called conversion therapy.

At the State Opening of Parliament, King Charles III announced that a "draft Bill to ban abusive conversion practices" will be

brought forward in England and Wales. This was also pledged in the 2024 King's Speech, but a Bill was never published.

This time, the Government claimed that its proposals are not "intended to interfere with people's right to religious belief and expression".

But the Institute's Senior Public Affairs Officer Joanna Timm said: "There are already robust protections in law against abuse and coercion.

"Legal advice is clear that expanding the current law risks criminalising things that should never be made illegal – such as a mother urging her gender-confused daughter not to have a double mastectomy, or a church leader praying with a member of their congregation who asks for prayer about sexual temptation."



## Definition of 'Islamophobia' must not impact gospel freedom

A new non-statutory definition of anti-Muslim hostility has been adopted by the UK Government.

The guidance, which is not legally binding, defines such 'hostility' as "intentionally engaging in, assisting or encouraging criminal acts" directed against Muslims "because of their religion". It also includes unlawful discrimination and the malicious "prejudicial stereotyping" of Muslims.

Communities Secretary Steve Reed claimed the definition would not interfere with the fundamental right to freedom of speech about religion.

But Institute Director Ciarán Kelly observed that although the new definition does contain a criminal threshold, the 'two-tier policy' is unnecessary.

"The law already protects people of all faiths and none from discrimination, hatred and violence. We will hold the Government to its reassurances that Christians remain free not merely to criticise Islam but to declare Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation".

## Home-ed registers to be mandatory under new law



Home-educating families across England and Wales will be required to register their children with their local authority, under the new Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act.

Once implemented, councils will be

required to keep 'Children Not in School registers'. Early proposals required parents to provide a highly intrusive level of detail about their children. The legislation was subsequently amended to reduce, though not remove, the burden.

John Denning, the Institute's Head of Education, is encouraging parents to help shape the Act's implementation once consultations begin.

"It is because of the concerns expressed that some helpful changes were made to the Bill during its passage through Parliament. It is well worth continuing to speak out - it does make a difference."

## 'Single-sex spaces to be single-sex' as UK Govt accepts EHRC guidance



Single-sex spaces are to be protected, with access restricted to those of the appropriate biological sex, after EHRC guidance was belatedly approved by the Government.

It follows last year's Supreme Court ruling that single-sex spaces are based on biological sex, not gender identity.

Despite the warnings of then EHRC chief Baroness Falkner

that organisations should treat the draft as if it were final, many organisations chose to ignore it.

Freedom of Information requests from Policy Exchange found that 27 per cent of secondary schools in England made no provision for single-sex changing rooms.

Prior to the draft being finalised, Girlguiding announced it will return to being a female-only space.

Only girls have been able to register since December, and from September this year, any boys who remain will have to leave.



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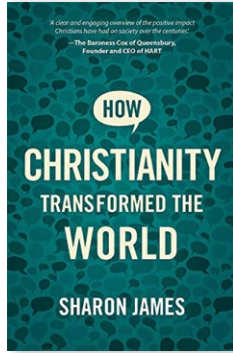
# Politicians welcome Institute gift celebrating Christian influence

The Institute recently sent parliamentarians around the UK a book celebrating the impact of Christians on society.

Dr Sharon James's 'How Christianity Transformed the World' cites numerous examples of believers across the globe who have shaped the world around them for good by faithfully following Christ in the public square.

Dr James, the Institute's Social Policy Analyst, said she was delighted to be able to share the book.

"Without the impact



Sharon James

of Christians following the teachings of Christ in the public square, the world would be less just, less free, less educated, more cruel, and more poor. Above

all, it would be without hope – the ultimate hope of life in Christ."

It comes as a new poll revealed that the majority of the British public believe abandoning our Christian heritage would harm future generations.

More than half of those surveyed

agreed that if Britain "continues to move away from its Christian roots, it will be to the detriment of future generations", while 58 per cent thought Christianity "has something positive to offer the way Britain is governed".

***"The book is excellent and argues well for the impact of Christianity on our society and the wider world."***

**Parliamentarian**

# Parliamentary candidate vindicated after Lib Dems admit discrimination

In a victory for religious liberty, the Liberal Democrats have admitted unlawfully discriminating against a parliamentary candidate over his Christian views.

Award-winning journalist David Campanale had been the party's candidate for swing seat Sutton and Cheam ahead of the 2024 General Election.



David Campanale

He was removed following a campaign by activists within his own party.

Mr Campanale told The Christian Institute: "It does feel good that the Lord has chosen to allow me to see vindication".

He also spoke about religious discrimination, saying: "What these illiberals want to do is to shut Christians up". But, he added, "we continue to need to speak gospel truth into public life as far as we can".

***"It does feel good that the Lord has chosen to allow me to see vindication"***

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