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Holding out the good news

A year has passed since MPs first gave their backing to Kim Leadbeater's assisted suicide Bill. A good number of them will be regretting their rashness.

Scrutiny that was largely sidestepped in the Commons is well underway in the Lords. But even the 1,000-plus amendments tabled by Peers cannot make this 'licence to kill' fit for the statute book. We

will continue to stand for hope against the despair of assisted suicide, holding out the good news of fullness of life in Christ.

Our Street Preacher's Charter will help protect the freedom to preach this Gospel. But with the threats of a new 'conversion practices' law and vague restrictions against 'Islamophobia', there is still much to do to uphold gospel freedom.

Assisted suicide Bill: House of Lords proposes over 1,000 amendments

More than 1,000 amendments – a near-record number – have been tabled as the House of Lords attempts to address the deficiencies of Kim Leadbeater's dangerous assisted suicide Bill.

There is widespread acceptance that wholesale changes are necessary because of the lack of due diligence and proper scrutiny.

Such is the scale of work still required, the Government has allocated an additional ten days between January and April for further consideration of what has been dubbed a 'licence to kill'.

Medical, legal and charitable sector experts submitted



evidence about the threat to vulnerable people from inadequate palliative care, lack of consent and the high risk of coercion.

The President of the Royal College of Physicians, Prof Mumtaz Patel, warned that lack of adequate care could cause people to consider assisted suicide

out of "desperation". Prof Martin Vernon of the British Geriatrics Society added that the Bill could be seen as a cost-cutting measure and put vulnerable elderly people under systemic pressure to end their lives.

Of 2,071 UK adults surveyed by Whitestone Insight, 70

per cent of those who expressed a view said they would support a decision by the House of Lords to vote down the Bill.

In Scotland, Liam McArthur's assisted suicide Bill passed Stage 2. As at Westminster, attempts to introduce safeguards were roundly rejected.

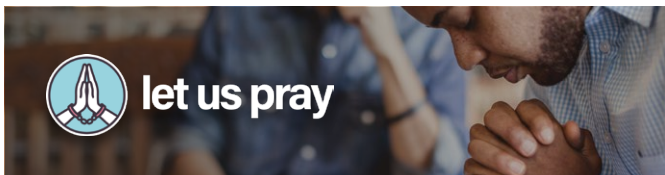
Church leaders criticise proposals for new 'conversion practices' law

More than 1,300 church leaders and pastoral workers are urging the Government to abandon its commitment to a "full, trans-inclusive ban" on so-called conversion practices.

In an open letter organised by The Christian Institute's Let Us Pray campaign, the leaders, pastoral workers and around 5,000 other Christians are warning Equalities Minister Olivia Bailey MP about its potential impact.

They say such a law could "criminalise mainstream, historic Christian teaching on marriage and sexual ethics, and make sharing the Gospel with some people illegal".

The Government has



promised to publish its draft 'conversion practices' Bill for England and Wales "very soon". Signatories to the letter say it will "not be possible to draft legislation in this area that does not infringe on the ordinary work of churches and family life".

They highlight that "lead campaigners for a new law routinely conflate the ordinary work of churches with abuse.

They imply that merely

expressing Christian beliefs on sexuality and gender in prayer and pastoral conversations constitutes 'conversion therapy' and should be outlawed".

In addition, the letter raises concerns that a law could "prevent parents from guiding their children on matters of sexuality and gender, and from urging caution if their child says they want to undergo gender treatment".

Met Police ends investigations into alleged non-crime hate incidents

The Metropolitan Police has confirmed it will no longer investigate allegations of non-crime hate incidents (NCHIs).

The announcement followed news that comedy writer Graham Linehan will face no further action over social media posts rejecting the idea that

men can identify as women.

The force stated: "The commissioner has been clear he doesn't believe officers should be policing toxic culture war debates, with current laws and rules on inciting violence online leaving them in an impossible position. As a result, the Met will

no longer investigate non-crime hate incidents.

"We believe this will provide clearer direction for officers, reduce ambiguity and enable them to focus on matters that meet the threshold for criminal investigations."

However, NCHIs will still be recorded

to "establish potential patterns of behaviour or criminality". They do not appear on a person's criminal record, but can appear on enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks with potentially adverse effects on employment prospects.

In November, former Director of Public Prosecutions Lord Macdonald of River Glaven KC was appointed to lead an independent review of laws on public order and hate crime.



Same-sex blessings: What cost for the Church in Wales?

YR EGLWYS
YNG NGHYMRU



THE CHURCH
IN WALES

The Church in Wales has been urged not to introduce same-sex weddings as its five-year trial of 'blessings' nears an end.

From September, the denomination may take one of a number of courses of action. It can stop blessing couples in same-sex marriages and civil partnerships, make the blessings permanent, or extend the liturgy to introduce same-sex weddings.

During a meeting of the Church's Governing Body, members anonymously submitted their views to the Bench of Bishops.

Revd James Griffiths from Llandaff asked at "what cost" the Church in Wales is willing to push such blessings, adding: "No growing Church has accepted same-sex marriage."



'Islamophobia' won't restrict free speech, Govt pledges

The Communities Secretary has pledged to stop any Islamophobia definition that threatens free speech.

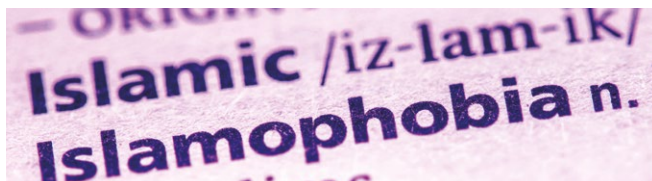
A working group was set up to agree suitable wording, but has been widely criticised. Steve Reed MP stated he was prepared to overrule any definition proposed by the group if he found it amounted to "blasphemy laws by the backdoor".

In its response to the working group's call for evidence, the Institute warned the Government that defining 'Islamophobia' risked undermining healthy debate

"blasphemy laws by the backdoor"

and democratic discussion. We emphasised that laws already protect people of all faiths and none from discrimination, hatred and violence.

The Labour Party's current definition, which has been slammed for being too vague, claims: "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness."



CI Chairman Revd Dr Richard Turnbull promoted to glory

On 26 November, The Christian Institute's Chairman, Revd Dr Richard Turnbull, died of cancer aged 65.

Institute Director Ciarán Kelly said: "Richard's testimony was that of full assurance in the great and precious promises of God in Christ. The reality of his relationship with our risen Saviour has shone through."

His friend and fellow Trustee, Revd James Leggett, added: "We will miss his wisdom, insight, humour and love. Our loss is heaven's gain."

Richard is survived by his wife Caroline, their four adult children and his father, Alan.



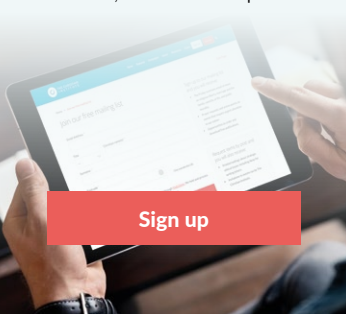
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GAFCON rejects 'revisionist' Archbishop appointment



The Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GAFCON) has broken with the See of Canterbury following Dame Sarah Mullally's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury-designate.

The organisation, which represents 85 per cent of the world's estimated 85 million Anglicans, rejected her leadership and denounced the Church of England's "revisionist" agenda on sexual ethics.

Dame Sarah, the first woman to be appointed to the role in the CoE's near 500-year history, led the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) Next Steps Group. It promoted resources calling into question the

Church's traditional teaching on "identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage". In 2023, she also stated that "stable, faithful relationships" between two men or two women could be blessed.

Opposing her appointment, GAFCON pledged to uphold the plain teaching of "the inerrant word of God" on marriage and sexuality.

The Church's House of Bishops recently conceded that proposals for 'bespoke' services of blessing for same-sex couples cannot simply be imposed. However, activist clergy continue to campaign for change, with some openly offering standalone 'LLF' services in defiance of canon law.

King Charles joins Pope in 'celebration of ecumenism'

A British monarch and Roman Catholic pontiff have shared in prayer and worship for the first time since the Reformation – an event billed by Buckingham Palace as "a celebration of ecumenism".

King Charles III, Supreme Governor of the Church of England, joined Pope Leo XIV


in a Sistine Chapel service that included Bible readings, English prayers and Latin chants.


Editor of Evangelical Times and Institute Trustee Mike Judge branded the act: "a public denial of the Reformation truths for which men and women shed their blood".




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Pray continually

1 Thessalonians 5:17

SUNDAY

PRAY For our Street Preacher's Charter to embolden Christians to share the Gospel.

MONDAY

PRAY That God would protect the UK from the dangers of assisted suicide.

TUESDAY

PRAY Giving thanks that society is turning against gender ideology.

WEDNESDAY

PRAY That parents who give their child a mild smack will not be turned into criminals.

THURSDAY

PRAY Against a 'conversion practices' ban that would outlaw ordinary church activity.

FRIDAY

PRAY That attempts to push Christianity out of education would fail.

SATURDAY

PRAY That the Lord would continue to bless the work of The Christian Institute.

Peers contest plans for secular humanist school assemblies

Proposals to scrap Christian assemblies in non-faith schools and require Religious Education to teach about "non-religious beliefs" have been fiercely contested in the House of Lords.

Lord Weir of Ballyholme expressed his fear that key amendments to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill would almost replace Christian assemblies with secular humanist ones and dilute the religious content in RE.

Lord Jackson highlighted how it was impossible to understand British society and culture "without regard for the religious beliefs



that have shaped its literature, music, art, history and institutions".

Peers also warned of the danger to children from gender ideology, called for sex education materials to be age-appropriate, and backed the right of parents to view Relationships, Sex and Health Education

(RSHE) resources.

A recent poll of British parents revealed that many are concerned about the use of inappropriate content in RSHE and want schools to teach there are only two sexes.

Seven out of ten (71 per cent) believed it is "important that

schools consult with parents in advance about the content of RSE lessons".

However, one-in-three said they "have not always been informed in advance about the content" and nearly a quarter (23 per cent) said their child "has been exposed to inappropriate content".

Whistle blown on BBC trans bias

Evidence that LGBT activists within the BBC censored news coverage critical of transgender ideology has been made public.

Leaked documents reveal that an advisor on the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee had warned

executives of fears that LGBT "staffers" were "keeping other perspectives off-air".

According to The Daily Telegraph, Michael Prescott heard reports of "what sounded like effective censorship by the specialist LGBTQ desk within

News" soon after starting his advisory role.

His 19-page document also refers to findings of "unintended editorial bias", an absence of "significant voices", "little or no coverage" questioning the quality of care given to gender-confused children, and disproportionate coverage of drag queen stories.

The leaked memo also said beliefs on gender identity were often reported as "established fact rather than contested".

Too many staff, it argued, "have never considered the idea of 'gender identity' to be either spurious or offensive to many people".



Street Preacher's Charter: 'A timely shield for those who dare to speak'

The Street Preacher's Charter is our new resource for evangelists, outlining key legal principles as well as good practice.

The Charter, endorsed by Open Air Campaigners GB and Open-Air Mission, seeks to help preachers in England and Wales to engage with the public and the police with confidence.

Using key extracts



from the law combined with real-life scenarios, it sets out how the law

operates, and the rights and responsibilities of police and street

preachers alike.

At its launch in Central London, politicians and church leaders commended the resource.

Baroness Foster thought it would prove a "very useful tool for the police". Mike Judge, pastor and editor of Evangelical Times, called it "a timely shield for those who dare to speak — and a timely corrective for a society tempted to silence them".

CI study shows evidence doesn't back 'mild smacking causes harm' claim

New research from The Christian Institute has debunked the oft-cited claim that mild smacking is abusive and harms children.

The 'Does Smacking Contribute to Negative Outcomes for Children?' report analysed 37 peer-reviewed studies on reasonable chastisement's association with issues such as aggression and low self-esteem.

It found that it is "impossible" to conclude that a mild, loving smack harms children.

The research notes that any negative correlations are often inconsistent and small, and could

well be explained by factors such as family instability, socio-economic status and pre-existing temperament.

The publication of the review raises serious questions about the evidential basis for the smacking bans in Scotland and Wales, and backs investment in parental support, family stability and further research.

The Government has so far resisted pressure to make reasonable chastisement a criminal offence in England.

Speaking for the Institute-backed Be Reasonable campaign, Director Ciarán Kelly told Sky

News: "To put loving parents into the same camp as abusers is going to make it harder for the genuine victims to be helped."



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