



Do not slumber

The Christian Institute

Annual Review 2026





THE CHRISTIAN
INSTITUTE

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The Christian Institute is a registered charity whose main object is “the furtherance and promotion of the Christian religion in the United Kingdom and elsewhere”.

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Welcome



BY KEN NELSON MBE

Please join with us in praise and thanksgiving to our mighty God and King for all he accomplished through The Christian Institute in 2025.

The year has been another period of transition for the Institute following the unexpected passing of our dear friend and brother Richard Turnbull. It is a humbling responsibility to succeed him as Chairman.

We continue to uphold Richard's wife Caroline and his family in prayer, while greatly missing his extensive contribution to the work.

We are thankful for Richard's legacy through his Christian character, theological awareness, organisational skills and warm pastoral care.

While honouring Richard's memory, we know the work of promoting Christian truth and defending gospel freedoms does not depend on any individual, but on the

Lord God, who is sovereign in all things.

This Annual Review outlines a year of intense activity for the Institute staff, led by the Director Ciarán Kelly. They have been working hard for the good of the nation in areas such as opposing assisted suicide across legislative chambers, and striving to protect the rights of churches, pastors, and ordinary Christians to speak in the public arena and proclaim gospel truths.

With increasing demands on the Education team, we were pleased to welcome David Bromley. The fresh impetus on in-depth research was aided by the recruitment of Daniel Hole and Martha Shillaker, while supporter requests for more AV output will be helped by Video Content Designer Robert Barns. Sadly, we said goodbye to Arghyadeep Chowdhury who left to pursue his studies.

A special note of thanks must also go to Rod Badams and Philip Robinson who have stepped down as Trustees after many years of faithful service. Their practical wisdom and fellowship will be greatly missed.

Your prayers and financial partnerships for the Institute's mission are a vital bulwark for religious liberty in the United Kingdom.

As we look ahead to current and future challenges, we do so with hope and confidence in our faithful God.

Thank you for your prayerful support and encouragement.

Ken Nelson MBE
Chairman

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

Do not slumber



BY CIARÁN KELLY

“Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law. And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”

ROMANS 13:10–11 (NIV 84)

On 26 November 2025, the Institute’s Chairman Revd Dr Richard Turnbull ‘fell asleep’, to use the language of the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–16. In his place, we warmly welcome long-standing trustee Ken Nelson.

As with the ‘falling asleep’ of Colin Hart and John Burn in 2024, we do not grieve for Richard as those “who have no hope”. Rather, with Paul, we declare: “We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.” When those who died in Christ awake, it will be to “everlasting life” in body as well as in spirit (Daniel 12:2).

It is a glorious truth – and one which shaped Richard’s

final weeks. The reality of his relationship with our risen Saviour shone through. His testimony was one of full assurance in the great and precious promises of God in Christ. He trusted that the One who had numbered all his days (Psalm 139) was also watching over his coming and going – both now and for evermore (Psalm 121). With his eternal destination secure, he could with one of his last acts say confidently, “It is time to go to glory”.

In Romans 13:11, quoted above, Scripture speaks of another kind of sleep. Here, Paul is issuing the cry of the watchman to the spiritually slumbering: “Wake up!” If such a call was needed in Paul’s day, how much more in our own?





Richard Turnbull

Chairman 2021–2025

“a profound faith, clarity of thought, a heart for service, and a commitment to God’s people”

“supremely generous”

“Richard’s exemplary service and distinctive witness inspired thousands of people around the world”

FULL OBITUARY the.ci/Richard

We live in a society bent on diminishing our triune God and his image bearers. In 2025, our legal work addressed constant challenges to gospel freedom. Efforts to legalise assisted suicide and further liberalise abortion intensified. Attempts to undermine God’s good gifts of marriage, parental responsibility and what it means to be made ‘male and female’ continued. In a sad irony, those who most proudly promote this anti-Christian worldview see themselves as ‘woke’. We cannot remain tucked up in bed as it were – we need to be awake, alert and actively paying off the “continuing debt to love one another” (Romans 13:8).

The commandments on how to treat others are, says Paul, “summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.” It is impossible to love our neighbours and then stand by as law and culture seek to harm them. Whether it is abortion,

assisted suicide, no-fault divorce, drugs, gambling, prostitution or restrictions on the Gospel, we cannot remain slumbering and silent. We must speak out, we must act – for the glory of God, and for the good of all.

This is true even when people not only don’t want to listen, but would rather celebrate these evils and call them good. We cannot love only those who love us (Luke 6:32). We are to show love to all people – even those who oppose us.

Let us do so gladly and with conviction, in the knowledge that “our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed”. Unless the Lord comes first, we will one day enjoy the sleep of the saints. Until then, there is no excuse to slumber.



Ciarán Kelly, Director

Religious liberty

READ |
Street Preacher's Charter ▶
the.ci/streetpreachers



THE STREET PREACHER'S CHARTER

In November 2025, we were delighted to publish The Street Preacher's Charter. It was endorsed by former Director of Public Prosecutions Lord Macdonald of River Glaven KC, Open Air Campaigners GB and Open-Air Mission.

Drawing on our many years assisting responsible Christian street preachers, this unique resource aims

to help preachers and police officers alike to better understand and uphold the law. It sets out legislation relating to public evangelism and provides guidance on good practice, enabling preachers in England and Wales to engage with the public and police with confidence.

"I think this will be a very useful tool for the police"

Baroness Arlene Foster, speaking at the Charter's launch in Westminster

"Our Charter seeks to remind police and local councils of the freedoms that street preachers have enjoyed in this country for hundreds of years."

Sam Webster, In-house Solicitor

"an invaluable asset for gospel freedom"

Ciarán Kelly, Director

WATCH | Street evangelism: What are my rights?
the.ci/whataremyrights ▶



HATE CRIME, 'ISLAMOPHOBIA', AND GOSPEL FREEDOM

In December 2025, we submitted evidence to the Independent Review of Public Order and Hate Crime Legislation in England and Wales of how the law is misapplied. Citing 20 street preacher cases, we called for references to 'alarm', 'distress' and 'insults' to be removed from public order law,

restrictions on using Public Space Protection Orders and for non-crime hate incidents to be abolished.

The Institute also opposed the UK Government's repeated attempts to create a legal definition of 'Islamophobia'. This was finally dropped, but in March 2026

it adopted a non-statutory definition of "anti-Muslim hostility". It contains vague language that risks opposition to Islam being presented as 'prejudice' and 'hostility'.

This 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.



'CONVERSION THERAPY'

In 2018, banning so-called conversion therapy transitioned from activist wish list to government policy. There remains a stubborn unwillingness to jettison the plans, despite the increasing recognition that they are unwanted, unnecessary and unworkable.



In February 2025, we published the Proving Tricky report. It highlights how a new law could criminalise parents, church leaders and medical professionals, and details how numerous attempts to introduce similar laws across the world have foundered.

It was one part of our response to MLA Eóin Tennyson's plans for Northern Ireland – plans largely copied from those abandoned by the Scottish Government after we raised serious legal concerns. We also revealed that fewer than five complaints even mentioning 'conversion therapy' or 'conversion practices' have ever been received by NI's Health and Social Care Trusts. And in a devastating legal critique commissioned by the Institute, Aidan O'Neill KC concluded that Tennyson's plans were intrusive, incoherent and ultimately unlawful.

Later in the year, more than 6,000 Christians, including



almost 1,400 church leaders and pastoral workers, signed a letter spearheaded by our Let Us Pray campaign. The letter to UK Equalities Minister Olivia Bailey in October opposed plans for a "full, trans-inclusive ban on conversion practices".

The law already protects LGBT people from coercion and abuse. No evidence has been offered to justify demands for restrictions on prayer, pastoral conversations and parenting.

PROTECTING CHURCHES



In February 2025, we presented evidence to Northern Ireland's Committee for the Executive Office showing that, if not

handled correctly, consolidating the Province's patchwork of equality laws could threaten Christians and churches.

Citizens should not have to go all the way to the Supreme Court to defend their religious freedom or free speech.

Legal cases

Did you know? In the last 20 years, our legal team has helped more than 3,700 people – over 200 of them in 2025 alone.

Behind the headlines

Most of what we do never makes the news, as a big media splash is not always in the best interests of those seeking help. We regularly give practical advice to help Christians consistently live out their faith. Some face disciplinary action for expressing Christian beliefs on social media. Others are under pressure to endorse their employer's LGBT 'Pride' celebration or use 'preferred pronouns'.

Among other cases, in 2025 we:



Assisted churches and Christian charities when councils tried to restrict their activities;



Helped charities and churches to remain biblically faithful and comply with equality law;



Stopped a council banning a church from displaying Bible texts on its building;



Advised a bridal shop on how to support female staff if approached by a man for a private dress fitting;



Enabled an employee to resist a 'Pride' lanyards policy and another to avoid endorsing false pronouns;



Helped a graphic design company that refused to design a 'Pride' logo;



Advised medical students on handling ethical issues;



Advised a Christian charity on its right to recruit a Christian CEO in the face of secularist pressure.

"We are very grateful for all that you have done to achieve this result."

"It is wonderful to know the CI is there to help us."

"so quick and so helpful!"

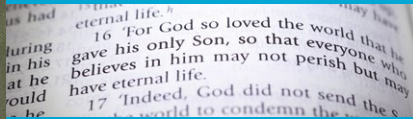
"I could not have done it without you and feel a weight lifted off my shoulders."

"It is good to know where I can find solid legal advice."



Sam Webster,
In-house Solicitor

PASTOR CLIVE JOHNSTON – PROSECUTED FOR PREACHING JOHN 3:16



In early May 2026, Pastor Clive Johnston was convicted of breaching abortion 'buffer zones' legislation when he preached from John 3:16 near a hospital in Coleraine, Northern Ireland in July 2024. The 78-year-old retired church pastor never mentioned

abortion and no abortion placards or banners were present at the open-air service.

The ruling made headlines around the world, with commentators concerned at the selective and creeping censorship of Christianity.

Using the already deeply unjust buffer zone laws to criminalise gospel preaching clearly breaches human rights

law. With the Institute's support, Pastor Clive – a former President of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland – is preparing an appeal.

"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."

Pastor Clive Johnston



GOOD NEWS FOR EVERYONE

After Grace Church Greenwich and Good News for Everyone! (formerly GideonsUK) were banned from

Goldsmiths University's Freshers' Fair, the Institute threatened legal action.

Native, the company responsible for bookings for a number of universities, had said

that religious groups promoting religious teaching were banned from every freshers' fair it organised.

Native suspended its policy with immediate effect after we warned

it was in breach of the Equality Act 2010. To avoid legal action we required it to agree to allow all future bookings from Grace Church, Good News for Everyone! and other Christian groups.



'PRIDE' AND THE CIVIL SERVICE

For years, the UK Civil Service has encouraged and funded civil servants to attend LGBT 'Pride' marches in an official capacity. Such obvious public endorsement

breaches its duty to act impartially, suggesting it has taken sides on a hugely controversial issue.

In August 2025, the Institute launched a major legal challenge against such participation. The case could have ramifications for public sector bodies across the UK.



Sanctity of life



"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made... your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." Psalm 139: 14a, 16

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Throughout 2025, the Institute was at the centre of intense campaigns opposing assisted suicide Bills at Westminster and Holyrood.

National Day of Prayer
Against Assisted Suicide



We inspired thousands of Christians to pray and act, including through

two National Days of Prayer, multiple webinars and touring the country to encourage constituents to contact MPs, MSPs and Peers.

By commissioning Tom Cross KC to review both Bills, we revealed how their woefully inadequate safeguards breached human rights law, leading First Minister John Swinney to publicly acknowledge Scotland's version presented an "unsurmountable risk". Our detailed briefings to key parliamentarians, combined with regular emails and letters

from our supporters, were another vital weapon in the battle to protect the vulnerable.

Wonderfully, in March 2026 the Scottish Parliament voted to reject Liam McArthur's Bill. The House of Lords was unable to formally reject Kim Leadbeater's version after running out of time to consider nearly 1,300 amendments.

Assisted suicide supporters are trying again, with Lauren Edwards MP retabling the Leadbeater Bill. But for now our work has helped protect not only those deemed to be terminally ill, but also the disabled, elderly, lonely, depressed, mentally ill and financially insecure. Human dignity and value do not depend on our circumstances or economic utility. They come from our status as image bearers of Almighty God.



296,947 No. of recorded abortions GB, 2023

ABORTION

More than 10 million human beings have already been killed in Britain since the passing of the Abortion Act in 1967 – an unspeakable tragedy.

But in March 2026, the House of Lords still voted to allow women in England and Wales to kill their unborn children at any stage of pregnancy without criminal sanction. Again, the Institute was in the thick of the opposition, briefing MPs and Peers, and mobilising supporters as we sought to protect mothers and babies alike.

In Scotland, we also urged the Government to reject an official report that demands abortion be recognised as a right "for all pregnant people".

READ | 'Scotland has led the way, Westminster must follow' @ bit.ly/EN-CK



Marriage and the family

NO-FAULT DIVORCE

In September 2025, we challenged plans for no-fault divorce in Northern Ireland and encouraged supporters to respond to the public consultation.

Marriage between one man and one woman for life is given

by God for all mankind. It brings wonderful benefits for adults, children and society at large. Where it is undermined, we see the disastrous effects all around us.

No-fault divorce will lead to many more broken families.

The law should promote reconciliation to help couples stay together, rather than driving them apart.

"Northern Ireland shouldn't make the same tragic mistake as England and Wales."

Director Ciarán Kelly
speaking to BBC Radio Ulster



SMACKING



In November 2025, the Institute published *Does Smacking Contribute to Negative Outcomes for Children?* After analysing 37 high-quality studies, this landmark report found no evidence to support claims

that mild smacking is abusive. The results expose the ideological, rather than evidence-driven, basis for activists' demands to expand smacking bans to the whole of the UK.

The Institute-led Be Reasonable campaign also published an analysis of the effects of the ban in Wales. It revealed that, in the three years after the ban, thousands more families were investigated by social services and hundreds more drawn into contact with the criminal justice system.



TRANSGENDER IDEOLOGY

In April 2025, the UK Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the terms 'sex', 'man' and 'woman' in the Equality Act 2010 refer to biology rather than 'gender identity'. This now calls into question the very existence of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 – legislation which we were almost alone in opposing.

The decision has been strongly resisted by LGBT activists. In September, we exposed their involvement in the future of Northern Ireland's 'gender service' – input that defied the recommendations of the Cass Review.

Transgender ideology rejects God's good design for humanity. We have steadfastly opposed proposals to experiment with puberty blockers on gender confused children. In early 2026, we welcomed the decision to pause the plans and called for them to be abandoned.



Education

Need help?



Email: education@christian.org.uk

Did you know? Since 2019, our team has helped well over a thousand parents, teachers, head teachers and governors from all across the British Isles. We use the experiences of Christian families, teachers and schools to frame policy briefings for politicians and civil servants, as well as in developing general advice.

ADVISING CHRISTIANS

We offer confidential support and advice on:

- Sex education
- LGBT ideology and 'Pride' events
- Transgender pronouns
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity policies
- Maintaining the Christian ethos of a school
- Religious Education and collective worship
- Home education
- Setting up Christian schools

"much needed as vital 'eyes and ears' of the church family" Parent

"Thank you so much for all your support, encouragement and prayers as I've sought to navigate this rather stressful situation. It meant a lot." School Governor

The education systems of the UK are very complicated. Each of the four countries has its own laws, policies and guidance on a whole range of important areas. The team has a lot to keep up to date with.

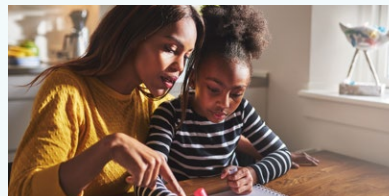
HOME EDUCATION

We worked with MPs and Peers to remove some of the worst aspects of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. It sought to require home-educating parents in England and Wales to provide detailed personal information about their child to local authorities. This may even have included the names and addresses of any Sunday School and holiday Bible club leaders.

This intrusive approach treated parents with suspicion, suggesting that all home-educated children are at risk of harm. We immediately commissioned a legal opinion. It revealed the proposals were likely to breach human rights and data protection laws.

Eventually, the Government agreed to scale back the level of bureaucracy. But while this is

welcome, the registers remain burdensome, and in themselves undermine parents' God-given responsibility to educate their children.



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

In July 2025, the Government finally amended guidance to remove Stonewall-inspired language that had caused some schools to avoid tackling 'social transitioning' among gender-confused children.

The changes to the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance for England were an imperfect but welcome response to our call for the 2024 Cass Report to be taken seriously.

KCSIE now recognises that children risk harming themselves by taking puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones, after previously telling schools "not to be concerned". However, it fails to put an end to gender transitioning, even at primary level, despite acknowledging the harm it causes.



RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION (ENGLAND)

For years, LGBT and other 'sex positive' activists have used Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) to further their agenda in schools.

The Institute pressed the Department for Education to finalise new guidance to end inappropriate sex education, require schools not to teach about 'gender identity', and give greater rights to parents.

This was finally released in July 2025. Encouragingly, it made it clear that all sex education teaching materials should be available to parents, including external resources.

However, it also scraps minimum age limits for explicit content, 'strongly encourages' primary schools to discuss sexual orientation and waters down guidance on not teaching about 'gender identity'.

In a 2025 poll of British parents:

 **71%** believed it is "important that schools consult with parents in advance about the content of RSE lessons".

 **23%** said their child "has been exposed to inappropriate content".

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The UK's deep-rooted Christian heritage rightly extends to emphasising Christianity in assemblies and religious education.

In 2025, this came under renewed attack from secular humanists. The Institute helped

to see off two attempts to replace Christianity with the campaigners' own brand of atheism.

In England, Humanists UK patron Baroness Burt failed in her attempt to scrap Christian assemblies. In Northern Ireland,

activists did persuade judges that RE should have greater emphasis on non-Christian beliefs, but the requirement for it to be "based upon holy scriptures" was unchanged.



Other work

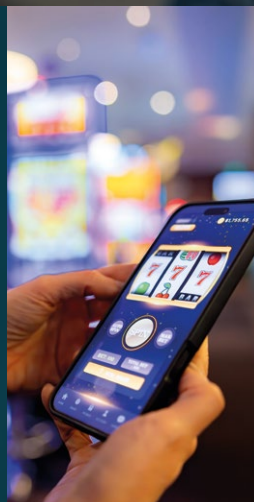
GAMBLING

Mainstream Christian belief has always viewed gambling as incompatible with the Bible's teaching. But it is more widespread, accessible and socially acceptable than ever before. These days, anyone with a smartphone can effectively have a casino in their pocket, making the inherently addictive nature of gambling all the more dangerous.

In response, in 2025, we conducted filming for a documentary to help

expose the enormous harm done by gambling, to the individuals concerned, their families and to wider society.

In a submission to the Government, we called for an urgent replacement for the Gambling Act 2005 that addresses both moral and social harms. We also urged Northern Ireland's MLAs to reject the Lotteries for Communities Bill and instead prioritise protections for those at risk of gambling harm.



DRUGS

The Institute continued to oppose calls to decriminalise drugs in the UK and Ireland. We also opposed plans for drug consumption rooms in Edinburgh, Belfast and Dublin. More liberal drugs laws put more people at risk.



PROSTITUTION

In early 2026, Ash Regan MSP's prostitution Bill was rejected by the Scottish Parliament. The Institute supported the move to criminalise the purchase of sex, but not the attempt to decriminalise its sale.



PORNOGRAPHY

We continued to push for Ofcom to take robust action against online platforms that fail to protect children from pornography, and briefed MPs on the implementation of the Online Safety Act.



Engaging and equipping



THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE EXISTS FOR THE FURTHERANCE AND PROMOTION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ELSEWHERE, AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION.

The Institute seeks to equip Christians to apply their faith to the issues of the day. Our public meetings play a crucial part in this.

Over the course of the year, staff spoke to nearly 18,000 people at 428 events around the UK and Republic of Ireland. Bespoke events for church leaders attracted more than 200 pastors and ministers, and a conversion therapy webinar drew nearly 600 supporters.

Every church meeting sets out biblical principles that underpin our work, and shows how those principles should affect Christian involvement in society today. Many supporters first learn about our work at one of these meetings. In 2025, we particularly encouraged believers to model Christ by speaking with grace and truth at all times, not least on the controversial issues we deal with.

We are always delighted to be asked to speak in churches. We are grateful to those who open their doors to us, although sadly it is not possible to accept every invitation.



The Colin Hart Lectures: Truths in tension?

When considering God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, J I Packer wrote: 'What the Bible does is to assert both truths side by side in the strongest most unambiguous terms as two ultimate facts; this, therefore, is the position we must take in our thinking.'

In this vein, the 2025 Colin Hart Lectures considered pairs of glorious Christian truths often perceived to be held in tension, and encouraged attendees to proclaim both joyfully, fearlessly and without compromise.

Rev'd Prof Gerald Bray opened the series with

Grace and Truth. He was followed by Principal of London Seminary Bill James on Faith and Works, pastor Wyn Hughes on Scripture and Providence, and preacher and teacher Stuart Olyott on Sovereignty and Responsibility. Each speaker showed that asserting one does not require us to sacrifice the other. Institute Trustee Rupert Bentley-Taylor (below) concluded with the genuine 'Now and Not Yet' tension of the Christian walk.



Meet the team

OPERATIONAL STAFF



Ciarán Kelly
Director
Controls the day-to-day running of the Institute.

Kathy Calvert
Personal Assistant to the Director

Jon Errington
Head of Operations
Supervises the efficient operation of the Institute.

Judi Coulson
Head of Staffing and Support Development
Responsible for staff and oversees work with churches and supporters.

Johnny Timm
IT Manager
Oversees our IT systems.

Fiona Rushton
Cleaner

RESEARCH



Dave Greateorex
Head of Policy and Research
Supervises the research work.

Rhys Curnow
Senior Researcher
Conducts general research across a range of issues.

David McPherson, Michael Larbi, Ana Prodan, Daniel Hole and Martha Shillaker
Researchers
Conduct general research across a range of issues.

Jenny Olson
Policy Researcher
Researches public policy issues.

Dr Nathan Wallace
Research Associate
Researches theological issues.

David Gillespie
NI/ROI Researcher
Conducts general research across a range of issues.

Robert Drennan
NI Researcher
Conducts general research across a range of issues.

LEGAL



Sam Webster
In-house Solicitor
Manages religious liberty cases.

Rachel Revell
Assistant to the In-house Solicitor

COMMUNICATIONS



Angus Saul
Head of Communications
Responsible for the Institute's communications.

Marilla Friery, Andrew Wood and Rosalynne Hutchings
Communications Officers
Help with the Institute's communications.

Mark Taylor
Senior Multimedia Designer
Assists with the design of the Institute's various communications.

Janet Davidson and Joshua Towers
Multimedia Designers
Assist with the design of the Institute's various communications.

Robert Barns
Video Content Designer
Assists with the design of the Institute's audio visual communications.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Simon Calvert
Deputy Director
Responsible for public affairs, including our parliamentary work.

Louisa Bratley
Personal Assistant to the Deputy Director

Joanna Timm
Senior Public Affairs Officer
Works with the Deputy Director.

Daniel Friery
Public Affairs Officer
Works with the Deputy Director.

James Kennedy
NI Policy Officer
Works with the Deputy Director.

ADMINISTRATION



Jonny Patterson
Office Manager
Supervises the administration and running of the office.

Dovile Snarskaite
Assistant Office Manager
Assists with the administration and running of the office.

Jonathon Macdonald, Yanjun Bromley and Pratigya Dulal
Administrators
Handle correspondence and calls from supporters.

CHURCH LIAISON



Callum Webster
Northern Ireland Officer
Develops the Institute's work in Northern Ireland.

Sandra Mackay
Personal Assistant to the Northern Ireland Officer

Nigel Kenny
Scotland Officer
Develops the Institute's work in Scotland.

Susan Constable
Personal Assistant to the Scotland Officer

Rhys Roberts
Wales Officer
Develops the Institute's work in Wales.

Matthew Brennan
Church Liaison Officer
Develops the Institute's work in the Republic of Ireland.

James McIntosh
Senior Development Officer
Develops the Institute's work with churches and supporters.

Nathan Jeal
Development Officer
Develops the Institute's work with churches and supporters.

Barbara Elder
Development Administrator
Develops the Institute's work with churches and supporters.

SPECIALIST



Dr Sharon James
Social Policy Analyst
Conducts research on developments in social policy.

Revd Dr Nick Needham
Writer/Editor
Writes and edits the Institute's theological publications.

FINANCE



Sharon Dews
Senior Financial Administrator
Handles the Institute's payments and financial data.

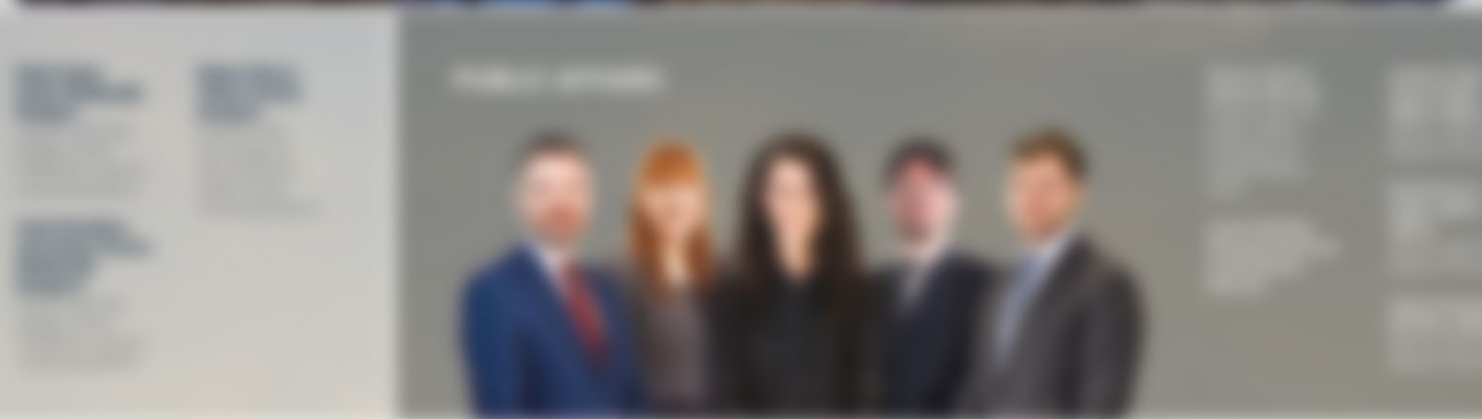
Susannah Daubney, Fungying Koshy and Janet McMaster
Financial Administrators
Handle the Institute's payments and financial data.

EDUCATION



John Denning
Head of Education
Conducts research and advises on education issues.

Alison Bowie and David Bromley
Education Officers
Assist with the work of the Head of Education.



◀ TURN OVER

CI Ireland

CI Ireland, officially called An Institiúid Chríostaí, has appointed Matthew Brennan as Church Liaison Officer – its first employee. Matthew, who retired as a pastor last year, will work to equip churches and Christians in Ireland to speak out for biblical truth. He is married to Barbara and they have two adult sons. He says he is “honoured” to be taking the part-time role.

Due to difficulties with the Charities Regulator, CI Ireland will not pursue charitable status but will continue to operate as a Company Limited by Guarantee.



Developing our people

Dr Sharon James, our Social Policy Analyst, continued her staff training programme with key thinkers from Aquinas to Al Mohler. She was aided by guest speakers, who addressed specialist topics ranging from concupiscence and the attributes of God to online security and quantitative analysis.

Staff also heard from Institute Trustees Rupert Bentley-Taylor, James Leggett and the late Richard Turnbull. They spoke on topics including the appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Wesley, prayer and the character of God.



Prayer

Prayer is vital in everything we do at the Institute. The team meets daily to pray and we encourage our supporters to pray regularly for the work. Twice a year we hold a special week of prayer, where we join together in praying for some of the big moral issues affecting the nation.



Pray with us using the **PrayerMate** app.



"It has been wonderful to begin this day united in prayer with you."

Alison



In 2025...



Nearly **12 million** visits to christian.org.uk



More than **650** articles published

Over **11.6 million** times our posts appeared on social media, leading to more than **540k** interactions



Over **5.1 million** views of more than **800** videos

Well over **100** print and broadcast media requests



135k audio downloads



18k people at **428** events



8 new publications

63k supporters (including almost 5.5k churches)
More than **115k** social media followers



PUBLICATIONS

christian.org.uk/publications



SPEAKING OUT

The Institute's research and public affairs teams enable us to respond in detail to consultations across a wide range of issues.

In 2025, we responded to 16, ranging from the Scottish Government's strategy for palliative care to gambling regulation and from assisted suicide to how the NHS treats gender-confused young people. This diligence requires hundreds of man-hours but is crucial in bringing a Christian understanding to public policy. A thoughtful, evidence-based response can stop a bad idea before it gains momentum.

When we ask our supporters to respond, great care is taken to ensure that the often very complex issues can be easily understood.

EXPLAINERS

Our new short reels aim to explain issues quickly
christian.org.uk/videos



MPS IN CHURCH

Our 'Invite your MP to church' initiative saw lots of MPs respond positively to constituents' invitations to Christmas services.



How we are managed



OUR TRUSTEES

From left to right:

Trevor James (Treasurer)
Revd Rupert Bentley-Taylor
Revd David Holloway
Revd Dr William Philip
Ken Nelson MBE (Chairman)
Revd George Curry
Revd James Leggett
(Vice Chairman)
Mike Judge
Rod Badams
(2010-2025)
Prof Philip Robinson
(2005-2026)

The Institute is governed by its Council, who act as Trustees and are legally responsible for the registered charity.

The Council meets regularly throughout the year. The Trustees' knowledge, skills and support are invaluable to the organisation. They are all current or former church leaders or preachers.

The Director, Ciarán Kelly, is helped by an executive group, comprising the Chairman, Treasurer and Vice Chairman. They meet regularly to discuss the Institute's affairs.

Our charitable work continues because our faithful supporters are willing to give financially to it. Nearly 99 per cent of our income comes through such gifts. We give thanks to God for his continued provision through the generosity of his people.

Giving to our work is split between regular giving, e.g. standing order, and one-off gifts. Giving regularly by standing order is a great help in our planning and budgeting. By faith, we also rely on approximately £30,000 arriving without notice each week through the post or online.

Finance summary

This summary is provided to indicate to supporters how funds were obtained and spent during the years 2024 and 2025.

The summary for 2025 is based on draft and unaudited figures.

The summary for 2024 is based on the audited accounts for that year but does not form part of the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements of The Christian Institute.

Copies of the full audited annual accounts for 2024 and 2025 (when available) can be obtained by contacting our office:

The Christian Institute,
Wilberforce House,
4 Park Road,
Gosforth Business Park,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE12 8DG



Jon Errington,
Head of Operations

Expenditure		2025	2024
General fund			
Staff	54%	£2,177,603	£1,959,708
Operational costs	30%	£1,211,989	£1,199,876
Office and building costs	11%	£442,314	£385,623
Total for the General Fund		£3,831,906	£3,545,207
Legal Defence Fund	3%	£138,807	£91,914
Other restricted and designated expenditure	1%	£41,884	£71,053
Total Expenditure - All Funds		£4,012,597	£3,708,174

Income		2025	2024
General Fund			
Gifts and other unrestricted income	92%	£3,486,824	£3,980,814
Income from sales	<1%	£2,085	£1,893
Total for the General Fund		£3,488,909	£3,982,707
Legal Defence Fund	8%	£305,255	£298,395
Other restricted and designated income	<1%	£15,788	£26,286
Total Income - All Funds		£3,809,952	£4,307,388

What we believe

1. GOVERNMENTS EXIST TO RESTRAIN EVIL

Governments are vital for civilisation; the rule of law is the basis of civic order. Authorities are instituted by God for the good of everyone to restrain evil. The Bible teaches that governments are ordained by God to punish the wrongdoer and to commend those who do right (Romans 13:3–4; 1 Peter 2:14).

The Bible also teaches that it is the duty of every Christian to submit to authority. This includes the payment of taxes: “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established... This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing” (Romans 13:1,6). “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right” (1 Peter 2:13–14).

It is the duty of those in authority to punish those who do wrong. The punishment envisaged in the Bible clearly includes physical force. The Apostle Paul notes that a ruler “does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer” (Romans 13:4).

It is right and proper for the State when deciding on appropriate punishments to consider deterrence and reformation. But desirable though these aims may be, punishment cannot be separated from the concept of just desert or retribution. Justice demands that the guilty are

punished as their deeds deserve. For this reason it is detestable in God’s sight for the guilty to be acquitted or the innocent condemned (Proverbs 17:15).

The New Testament teaching on submission to authorities was given to the Church in the context of corrupt authorities. There may be circumstances where the Christian cannot obey the State: if the State should command what God forbids or forbid what God commands, then the duty of the Christian must be to obey God rather than man (Acts 4:19; 5:29). The supreme example of Jesus Christ teaches that Christians will experience persecution and injustice in this life.

All judgement dispensed on earth is provisional. One day God will dispense perfect justice “so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God” (Romans 3:19). The Bible teaches that “man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement” (Hebrews 9:27). This judgement will be on the basis of works in this life, and is not to be confused with justification, which is solely obtained through the merits of Jesus Christ’s atoning death on the cross.

In a democracy, Christians seek to act as salt and light and use their democratic rights for the good of the Gospel. It is often said today that the law should not be used to enforce morality. This is quoted against Christians, as if we are the only ones who believe the law should be based on a moral position. In reality, everyone has a ‘moral’ position upon which their view of the law is based.

Secularists passionately believe that their assumptions should be the basis of our law and policy. However, Christians have always recognised that the purpose of national laws is to restrain evil. So morality cannot be divorced from the law.

God knows how we are made. He knows what is best for us. We believe the Bible contains the ‘Maker’s instructions’. Only God’s moral law can truly protect people and promote what is good. Christians want to see God’s moral law obeyed. This brings glory to God and is also what is truly best for people. Christians want to see public policy which is consistent with the teaching of Christ and the Ten Commandments. It is because we love our neighbour and want what is best for them that Christians should speak up for what is right.

In a democracy, Christians have the freedom to argue their case like everyone else. Our responsibility is to speak the truth in love. We are not responsible if men and women reject what they have heard.

When Christians do speak up, very often they will find that non-Christians agree with them. Man is fallen, but God’s image has not been entirely eradicated. Men and women still have consciences which can agree with God’s standards (Romans 2:14–15).

Christians believe that, as well as special revelation found only in the Bible, there is general revelation through nature and conscience. Thus there is a higher

universal moral law as distinct from the specific laws of individual states. Because these specific laws can be in defiance of the moral law and what is right, governments and individuals can be held accountable. This happened with the Nazis in the mid-twentieth century, where laws were held to be immoral. This and similar tyrannies resulted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is based on the moral law. If governments, ignoring the moral law, enact immoral legislation giving rise to so-called 'rights', Christians, people of other faiths and people of no faith, seeking to uphold the moral law, have a duty to protest.

2. MARRIAGE IS SACRED

It is now being argued that marriage is no better than any other type of relationship and should not have a special status in law. It is said that marriage is just a piece of paper. But this is not how God sees it. At the beginning of creation God spelled out the importance of marriage to mankind when, after Eve was created for Adam, the Bible records: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Marriage between one man and one woman is a creation ordinance and therefore God's teaching on marriage and sex is relevant to the world as well as to the church. Marriage is meant for the good of all people – not just Christians.

Marriage clearly is different from other types of relationship. Marriage is part of God's 'common grace'. The Bible clearly teaches that the only context for sexual activity is within lifelong monogamous marriage between a man and a woman (1 Corinthians 6:9). Marriage is the proper context for raising children. Even secular research shows that marriage is head and shoulders above other types of human relationships in terms of the benefits it gives to adults and children. In the past marriage was protected in the Western legal tradition because of the unique social benefits it offers. Historically, the definition of marriage in our law was: "the voluntary union for life of

one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others" (Hyde v Hyde and Woodmansee, 1866). This is consistent with the biblical view.

Today marriage has lost much of its unique status in public policy. The Christian Institute is concerned about any legislation, public policy, benefit or tax requirement that undermines marriage and Christian family patterns. For example, it is unfair that a household with a single earner on £50,000 pays more tax than a household with two earners on £25,000 each.

The family is a fundamental carrier of values and is at present being undermined. This is evident not least in the area of divorce. Jesus emphasised that marriage was for life, but successive reforms of the divorce law have fostered a rampant divorce culture. God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) and Jesus clearly aligned himself against easy divorce (Matthew 19:3–9; Mark 10:11–12). Liberalisation of divorce law in Britain has increased both the divorce rate and the number of children born outside marriage. The Institute believes that the legal framework should be reformed so that divorce is discouraged and reconciliation encouraged. Divorce law should not acquit the guilty and condemn the innocent.

When Paul went to Athens he found it was "full of idols". Paul attacked the rampant idolatry (Acts 17:16–34). In our own day there may not be idols on every street corner, but there is the all-pervasive worship of sex. Christians must continue to argue that marriage is between a man and a woman. We also have to be clear that all sex outside marriage is wrong. This means that fornication, adultery and homosexual activity are wrong. Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11).



3. PARENTS HAVE GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY OVER THEIR CHILDREN

In the Bible it is parents who have the responsibility for raising children. Parents have a God-given authority over their children. The fifth commandment requires a child to honour its father and mother (Exodus 20:12). This was quoted by Jesus and by the Apostle Paul.

Child abuse is wrong and entirely incompatible with Scripture. Instead, the Bible expects parents to exercise loving discipline over their children. As part of this, most parents use mild physical chastisement such as smacking. Discipline must not be harsh. Fathers are told to instruct children according to what is good and not to exasperate their children (Ephesians 6:4). That discipline can be painful is clearly accepted in Scripture (e.g. Hebrews 12:7–11). Making the administration of reasonable chastisement a criminal offence is wrong, as are other moves which usurp the authority of parents.

Christians ought particularly to be concerned by any proposals which weaken the moral protections for children. Jesus gave a serious warning of judgment against those who cause children to sin (Matthew 18:6). This is an apt warning in these days when children have their innocence stolen from them.

Parents are ultimately responsible for the education of their children, even where this has been delegated to the State. This is rightly reflected in UK law (e.g. Education Act 1996, Sections 7 and 9). Pupils should be educated in line with their parents' values and the State should not undermine those values, other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

The unique role of parents must also be upheld in decisions about healthcare. The presumption should be that parents make decisions about what is in their child's best interests. The threshold for overturning this presumption should be very high. In several prominent cases, the views of parents have been discounted too readily.

4. DRUG TAKING IS WRONG

The Bible bluntly teaches that drunkenness is wrong: "Do not get drunk on wine" (Ephesians 5:18). Intoxication and loss of control are intrinsic to taking drugs. Intoxication is also wrong because of escapism. People cannot solve their problems by running away from them. Down the ages Christians have been at the forefront of battling against the epidemic of public drunkenness and the personal tragedy of alcoholism. Now Christians must take a stand as it becomes ever more fashionable to argue for the decriminalisation or legalisation of all drugs. Blanket policies not to prosecute certain drug-related offences, such as possession for personal use, effectively decriminalise and normalise such behaviour, and must be resisted.



5. 'HARM REDUCTION' PHILOSOPHY IS UN-CHRISTIAN

For decades the argument has been made that preventative approaches that give strong moral guidance to young people do not work. Telling them to steer clear of drugs and to abstain from sex until marriage is now viewed as 'indoctrination' and a waste of time. Such approaches have been ridiculed as a simplistic 'just say no' message.

Instead, 'harm reduction' approaches have been advocated. It is argued, for example, that telling young people not to take drugs or engage in underage sex will not stop them doing it. It is therefore better to allow them to do it and ensure they do so safely. This has led to young people being told how to have 'safer sex' and how to take drugs 'safely'. This is superficially appealing because reducing harm is a desirable goal. As a result, many people have been taken in by this profoundly naïve philosophy. By opposing restraint, contemporary harm reduction approaches actually increase rather than reduce the number of people involved in a harmful activity.

Harm reduction was originally introduced to help drug addicts who were hooked on a chemical substance. As part of a programme to end their addiction, addicts in danger of killing themselves were given advice on how to take their drugs more safely. But the aim was to end the addiction.

This original approach has now largely been abandoned. Heroin addicts are 'parked' on methadone for years and harm reduction schemes have been extended beyond just those who are addicts.

From a Christian perspective, sinful behaviour is not just wrong because of its consequences. It is inherently wrong because it is a rejection of our

Creator and his good design for all. Scripture is clear that causing people to sin is very serious (Matthew 18:7). But harm reduction greases the tracks of sin, ignoring the intrinsic wrong of the behaviour and simply seeking to mitigate its most obvious harms.

Harm reduction creates an atmosphere of acceptability that encourages more people, particularly young people, to engage in sinful activity and stigmatises those who reject it. It undermines the rule of law and parental authority, leading young people into wrongdoing by sending out the message that taking drugs or engaging in underage sex is acceptable. When 'safer sex' education was introduced, the number of children engaging in underage sex increased. The

levels of sexually transmitted disease also rocketed and it became almost impossible for young people to feel free to say they want to wait until they are married before having sex. 'Harm reduction' has increased harm, not reduced it.

By contrast, preventative approaches have seen success. Take, for example, smoking cigarettes. For many years, successive governments adopted a tough anti-smoking stance, telling people in no uncertain terms: "Don't smoke". Hard-hitting advertising campaigns shared heart-rending stories of people suffering from lung cancer. Smoking is now banned in almost all workplaces and public buildings. The result of the public education programme has been a substantial decline in smoking. According

to the ONS, 10.5% of over-16s in Great Britain were cigarette smokers in 2023, down from 45.6% in 1974.¹

From a Christian perspective, harm reduction greases the tracks of sin. Instead of telling young people that actions inevitably have consequences, harm reduction presents as a paradise what is inherently dangerous.

If we can promote 'just say no' to smoking, we can do the same for activities that are illegal and morally wrong.

¹ *Adult smoking habits in Great Britain*, ONS, October 2024, Table 1 (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/drugusealcoholandsmoking/datasets/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain/2023/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain.xlsx>)

6. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM MUST BE PRESERVED

Christians are to pray for those in authority "that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness". Paul says, "this is good and pleases God our Saviour who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1–4). In other words, we are to pray for freedom to live out the Christian life and to proclaim the Gospel – two things that God requires.

Restrictions on religious liberty make Gospel proclamation and godly living that witnesses to the Gospel more difficult. Jesus warns his followers not to lose their distinctive 'saltiness', lest they become

useless and trampled on by men (Matthew 5:13). He wants us not to be ashamed but rather to put our light on its stand. Christians should therefore firmly oppose any laws or policies that limit our religious freedom.

Christians must submit to the governing authorities except where they require what God forbids or forbid what God requires (Acts 5:29).

The Christian Institute is concerned by any attempt to impose unwarranted restrictions on churches, such as forcing them to employ unbelieving staff or curtailing the freedom to speak against certain sins. Some restrictions

may be intentional, others born out of increasing religious illiteracy. They stem partly from the growing chasm between Christian values and the values of those in public life.

Importantly, religious liberty is not only the freedom to believe certain things in our heads, but the freedom to act in the public sphere according to those beliefs. It is, for example, the liberty to:

- gather with like-minded people, particularly on Sundays;
- form associations with those who share our faith;
- disciple people within those associations,

including Christians' children, to live compatibly with biblical ethics;

- tell other people about our faith and encourage them to convert to Christ (a crucial companion to this being the freedom to change religion); and
- speak up for what we believe to be right and against what we believe to be wrong.

It is this liberty to act on our beliefs that is under attack. Religious liberty is clearly infringed when the governing authorities presume to override Christian values in churches or Christian homes.

7. LIFE IS SACRED FROM CONCEPTION

The Bible clearly teaches that human life is precious and that murder is wrong (Genesis 9:6). Uniquely among all creatures, only man has the capacity for a relationship with God. Only man has a soul. Only man was made in God's image, God's likeness (Genesis 1:26). Our significance, and so the claim to protection, derives not from our 'quality of life' or gifts and abilities, but from our status as being made in God's image.

The Bible talks of God establishing and sustaining a relationship with an individual from conception (Jeremiah 1:5, Psalm 139:13). It follows that the human soul must be present from conception. Body and soul cannot be separated until death.

The incarnation of Christ also has important implications for medical ethics. Jesus Christ reveals not only the nature of deity but also the nature of what is human. The incarnation of the divine Son of God began with the conception, not the manger in Bethlehem – “he was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary” (Apostles'

Creed, see also Matthew 1:20). Since Jesus shared our humanity and was made like us in every way (Hebrews 2:14,17), our own human life must also have begun at conception.

The Christian Institute therefore affirms that human personhood begins at conception and that the human embryo is precisely that – a human embryo. There are enormous practical implications that flow from this belief. The early Church was at the forefront of ending the practice of abortion in the Roman Empire. Not only is abortion wrong, but also any practice which deliberately destroys human embryos. This includes human cloning and embryo experimentation, as well as the use of drugs intended to prevent the implantation of an embryo.

The unique value and worth of every human life also means assisted suicide (often misleadingly called 'assisted dying') and euthanasia must be wholly rejected. The Bible is clear that God is our creator, to whom we owe worship and thanks (Romans 1:21). In that sense, our lives

are not our own. Human life is not our 'property'; we may not just 'dispense' with it. As Job said: “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away” (Job 1:21). Our lives are meant for the service of God. It is not for us to take life, even our own. Moreover, death is not the end. For those who do not know God, neither euthanasia nor assisted suicide is a 'merciful release'.

The law must not affirm the belief that some lives are not worth living. Any change in the law would undoubtedly place pressure on vulnerable people who would feel like a burden to their family or carers. This would especially affect people who are elderly, sick or disabled – analogous to the widow and the orphan for whom Christians, imitating our Father in heaven, should have particular concern (Exodus 22:22–24).

Upholding the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death does not mean making every possible medical intervention that could extend life. There is a clear distinction in medicine between acting with the specific intention of shortening life and withholding medical treatment because it is of no further benefit or is burdensome to the patient.

It is also acceptable to administer pain-relieving drugs when the primary desired effect is to relieve the pain, but where there may be the undesirable 'double effect' of shortening life.

The Bible strongly encourages mankind to care for one another. We are to love our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:37–40). Jesus also taught that a stranger in trouble was our neighbour (Luke 10:25–37). More should be done to support the provision of hospice and palliative care services.



8. BIOLOGICAL SEX IS BINARY AND FIXED

Transgender ideology claims that each person has a 'gender identity' (an internal sense of gender) which may or may not align with their biological sex. According to this ideology, the 'real you' depends on what you feel on the inside, which is not confined to the man-woman binary. There are said to be unlimited 'genders', with people able to move between them fluidly based on how they feel.¹

Underlying such deeply unbiblical thinking is a radical form of self-determination, with its roots in the ancient heresy of Gnosticism.² Subjective feelings override objective, biological, genetic reality. Ultimately, this seeks to completely destroy the distinction between men and women that God in his wisdom has created.

Genesis 1:27 records: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." The Bible teaches that a human person is a mind-body whole, e.g. Genesis 2:7, Mark 12:30. The body as well as the mind determines who a person is. The first Christian heresy was to deny that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (1 John 4.2). An individual deliberately living as if he or she were a member of the opposite biological sex is defying his or her creator. However, it is wrong to use worldly stereotypes to define legitimate male or female behaviour in a way Scripture does not warrant.

Christians are to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), applying biblical principles with compassion but without compromise, ultimately pointing people

to life-changing repentance and faith in Christ. A man cannot become a woman and a woman cannot become a man. It is not loving to affirm the idea that a person is 'trapped in the wrong body', especially when this could encourage them to undergo irreversible medical interventions to deform their healthy body. Biblical Christians hold that 'sex change' surgery desecrates a body made in the image of God.

A person with a male body is a man or boy. If he believes otherwise, this false belief must be the focus of treatment, not his body. Medical intervention aimed at changing a male body to approximate a female body (or vice versa) on the basis of the person's psychological disorder is illogical and futile. It contradicts the approach taken in other situations, such as body dysmorphia, where it is the inaccurate perception of the body that is addressed. Psychological confusion should not be given precedence over unambiguous biological sex.

Children in particular should be protected from the dangerous influence of gender ideology. Its promotion in schools has sown confusion and its application in healthcare has seen young people irreparably harmed.

In various contexts, gender ideology is a threat to women's safety and undermines basic standards of modesty and fairness. This includes toilets and other facilities that should be single-sex, as well as sport.

In a fallen world, an extremely small number of children are born with

physical sex characteristics that do not reflect the genetic male-female binary, including genuinely ambiguous genitalia. This is a matter of biological sex characteristics, not the myth of gender identity. The existence of disorders of sexual development neither denies the normal man-woman binary nor means that perception should be elevated over biology. It does a disservice to such people to categorise them as transgender and/or seek to use their existence to promote the concept of gender identity. People with disorders of sexual development must be treated with dignity and compassion, and in line with best medical advice and practice.

The Bible teaches that the State should validate what is right, not what is wrong (Romans 13:3). The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows adults who meet certain criteria to change their legal sex for many purposes, including on their birth certificate, thereby enshrining a lie in official documentation. The Act should be repealed.³

¹ The belief that one's body does not match one's true identity is sometimes known as 'gender dysphoria' or 'gender incongruence'.

² Gnosticism was strongly condemned by early Christian theologians such as Irenaeus (c 130 -200 AD) and Tertullian (c 155 -220 AD). See Berkhof, L., *The History of Christian Doctrines*, The Banner of Truth Trust, latest edition 2002, pages 45 -51 and 62-63; Elwell, W A (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Paternoster Press, 1999, pages 444-447, 569 and 1078 -1079; <https://www.christian.org.uk/resource/gnosticism/>; <https://www.christian.org.uk/resource/gnosticism-booklet/>

³ There is a case for those with certain disorders of sexual development to be able to change their legal sex.



9. CHRISTIANITY AND THE STATE

Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords “far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the age to come” (Ephesians 1:21).

Scripture clearly teaches that God’s present judgment is a reality for nations which defy Jesus Christ: “Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him” (Psalm 2:10–12).

Christians are to pray for those in authority and for the State to provide freedom for the Gospel to be preached and for men to live “quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:1–3). A ruler in authority is “God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.” (Romans 13:4).

Christ’s kingdom can never be identified with any particular nation or political party. While it is not the role of a state to coerce individual citizens to adhere to particular beliefs, the State can never be neutral as regards values. Christians are to work for the State to adopt Christian values and to implement godly laws.

There are different views among Christian people regarding the establishment of religion.

However, as a matter of fact, the Coronation Oath is an explicit denial of the secularity of the United Kingdom; and the establishment of the Protestant Reformed Christian religion in general, and of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland in particular, still defines the UK as constitutionally a Christian country. These constitutional arrangements will remain in force until there is intentional constitutional change to the contrary.

In promoting the Christian faith, The Christian Institute seeks to affirm the universal Lordship of Christ and to challenge secular humanism, theological liberalism, universalism and other ideologies.

The Institute affirms:

- (1) Salvation solely through the atoning work of Jesus Christ (John 14:6); and
- (2) That biblical Christianity maintains the true basis for tolerance, democracy and human dignity; and
- (3) Its commitment to freedom for, not freedom from religion. There must be freedom for minority faiths and philosophies, except where these are plainly immoral. A state may not compel religious belief. However, no state can be neutral in terms of morality or religion. Given the UK’s constitutional arrangements, there is a privileging of Christianity at certain public ceremonies such as thanksgivings, funerals of public figures, and rituals and prayers at the beginning of Parliaments. There is also State provision for schools with a Christian ethos and emphasis on Christianity in assemblies and religious education, while ensuring opt-outs for those of other faiths and none. The Christian Institute sees this as entirely appropriate. Currently, almost half the UK population claim a Christian allegiance (cf. the National Census 2021 in which 46.2% of all people in England and Wales stated their religion as Christian).

To change our constitutional arrangements establishing the Protestant Reformed faith could be for the State positively to endorse either a secular humanistic philosophy (which results in atheism), or a “multifaith philosophy” (which is opposed by faithful people in all religions).

The Christian Institute is committed to the ideals behind the current Coronation Oath, whatever future form of constitution the UK may have.



10. GAMBLING IS WRONG

Gambling is any activity in which wealth changes hands, mainly on the basis of chance and with risk to the gambler. Such activities include betting, fruit machines, lotteries, casino games, scratchcards, card games and their online equivalents. Creative effort, useful skills, and responsible investment are not integral factors.

There are three legitimate ways in which wealth may change hands – by giving, by working for it, or by genuine exchange (including taxation): anything else is virtual theft and so a breach of the 8th commandment. As has been said: “Gambling is a kind of robbery by mutual agreement; but it is still robbery, just as duelling, which is murder by mutual agreement, is still treated as murder.” Of the three impulses behind gambling – the desire for gain, the desire for a thrill and the desire for competition, the moral and ethical problems are focused on the desire for gain.

- (1) Gambling directly appeals to covetousness and greed “which is idolatry” according to the Apostle Paul (Colossians 3:5). Gambling breaches the 1st, 2nd, 8th and 10th commandments. It enthrones personal desires in place of God. Jesus warned: “you cannot serve both God and Money” (Matthew 6:24). A greedy and unrepentant person is an idolater who cannot obtain salvation (Ephesians 5:5).
- (2) Gambling directly depends on other people incurring financial loss. Jesus said that you should “do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12). But gambling depends on doing to others what we would not have them do to us. At that point, no gambler desires the best for his fellow

man. Instead, he is indifferent to his fellow gamblers or wants them to lose so that he can win. In any honest business transaction it is the intention of both parties to benefit, yet with gambling the intention is to gain but the gain is at the other’s expense. We are called to do good to all people, not to do harm (Galatians 6:10).

- (3) Gambling denies the biblical work ethic which links honest labour with reward. The Apostle Paul said: “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (Ephesians 4:28). Gambling holds out the dream that it is possible to get something for nothing. It can encourage laziness rather than work. Laziness is condemned in Scripture (e.g. 2 Thessalonians 3:10).
- (4) Gambling is a reckless use of resources. It undermines the creation mandate to be stewards of creation and to work (Genesis 1:28; 9:1–2). The Bible teaches that all things belong to God (Psalm 24:1) and that man will have to give an account for his stewardship of all that he has been given (Matthew 25:14–30).
- (5) Rather than facing up to reality, gambling is a form of escapism. The gambling industry trades on people’s vulnerability to temptation and relies on the fact that statistically it is the industry that wins practically every time. Those who gamble often are not thinking rationally about risk. Instead they are thinking about luck and superstition. Chance is glorified and God’s sovereignty denied (Job 42:2; Romans 11:36; Colossians

1:16–17; Hebrews 1:3). Scripture makes clear that trust in God and trust in luck cannot co-exist (Isaiah 65:11).

- (6) There is evidence that gambling disproportionately affects the poor who face particular temptations because of their strained financial circumstances (Proverbs 30:8–9). It is very wrong to exploit this vulnerability.
- (7) Gambling is inherently addictive. As with alcohol or drug addiction, compulsive gamblers lose control of their lives. This is plainly contrary to the teaching of the Bible, which teaches us to be self-controlled (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:22–23; Titus 2:11–12; 1 Peter 5:8). Anyone with a smartphone can effectively have a casino in their pocket, making the addictive nature of gambling all the more dangerous.
- (8) Gambling is the very opposite of contentment (1 Timothy 6:6–10). Man’s duty is to seek first God’s Kingdom and trust that God will meet his needs (Matthew 6:30–34; Philippians 4:19).

Mainstream Christian belief has always viewed gambling as incompatible with the Bible’s teaching. Gambling was strongly opposed by Tertullian, Hugh Latimer, John Wesley, William Wilberforce, C H Spurgeon and William Temple. On this issue, Thomas Aquinas is not representative of mainstream Christian belief.

Gambling does not cease to be wrong because a proportion of the take is devoted to so-called good

causes. Many are misled at this point, and persuaded of the legitimacy of the National Lottery, for example. The end does not justify the means.



Thanks

By God's grace, for 35 years the Institute has been blessed by those who volunteer their time to help staff in the work. My grateful thanks go to all those who did so during 2025. I apologise to any I have inadvertently omitted.

A special note of thanks must go to the Institute's Trustees. The death of Richard, so soon after the passing of Colin Hart and John Burn, placed an additional burden on them. Their dedication has ensured the continued smooth and efficient operation of the charity, within a framework of robust accountability. I thank them all for their wise advice and regular encouragement – not least Rod Badams and Philip Robinson, who have both stepped down as Trustees. I would like to thank them for their greatly valued contributions. Please hold all the Trustees in your prayers – especially our new Chairman Ken Nelson.

Every year we are privileged to welcome exceptional speakers to address the Colin Hart Lectures. This year I am grateful to Gerald Bray, Bill James, Wyn Hughes, Stuart Olyott and Rupert Bentley-Taylor for their involvement. Thanks also go to George and Kathryn Curry, Ruth Shuttler and Judith Sword for their unwavering commitment to the Lectures' continued success. A special

mention is needed for Pat Johnson, who has stepped down from helping at the Lectures after more than 30 years. Thank you Pat.

I am deeply appreciative to the many experts who assisted us in tackling complex issues such as assisted suicide. These include: Dr Laura Anderson, Prof David Galloway, Deanna Greaves, Mike Judge, Dr Gordon Macdonald, Graham Nicholls, Prof Alan Thomas, Chelsea Roff and Dr Gillian Wright.

Thank you to others who gave generously of their time to share their knowledge and experience with the staff: Rupert Bentley-Taylor, Gerald Bray, Tim Bull, Wyn Hughes, James Leggett, Jim McMaster, Chikezie Okike and Matthew Roberts.

We have also been helped at many meetings by a long list of staff spouses and other supporters. There are too many to mention them all, but particular thanks go to former Wales Officer Gareth Edwards and his wife Ceri, Andrew Bowie, Ian Constable, Stephen and Winnie Cuddy, Joel Davidson, Revd Philip Dunwoody, Revd Paul Foster, Karen Gillespie, Bethan Jeal, the Kenny family, Bobby Mackay, Rachel McPherson, Jeff and Sian Pugh and Alison Roberts. My thanks also go to Howard Chapman, Ian Coe, Geoff Hamblar,

Pat and Mike Johnson, Caroline and Malcolm Peters, Peter and Judith Sword, and Michael Waller for their steadfast and enthusiastic help with our larger mailings.

Finally, on behalf of the whole staff, I wish to express my thanks to all our supporters for your prayers and financial support. We count it a great privilege to have been called by God to influence our secular world for Christ through this work.

By his grace, in the coming year we will continue to strive to encourage the weary and rouse the slumbering. New challenges are ahead. Under his direction, we face them with gratitude and confidence. We trust that the one who neither slumbers nor sleeps will continue to watch over us and cause the work to flourish. The glory goes to him.



Ciarán Kelly, Director



Basis of faith

We are committed to the truths of historic, biblical Christianity including:

- A.** The existence of the one, eternal God, Creator and Lord of the universe, who in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both governs all things according to his will and is accomplishing his purposes in the world and in the Church.
- B.** The inspiration of the Holy Scripture in its entirety by God's Spirit through the human authors, and its revelation of God's truth to humanity. The Bible is without error not only when it speaks of salvation, its own origins, values, and religious matters, but it is also without error when it speaks of history and the cosmos. Christians must, therefore, submit to its supreme authority, both individually and corporately, in every matter of belief and conduct.
- C.** The inherent value of all human beings, in consequence of their creation by God in his own image, and their sinfulness and guilt since the Fall. This has rendered them subject to God's wrath and condemnation, and has resulted in their alienation from his life, suppression of his truth, and hostility to his law.
- D.** Salvation from the guilt, penalty and all other consequences of sin solely through the work of Jesus Christ – his perfect obedience, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection and exaltation as Lord. He alone is truly God and truly man, the only mediator between God and man. There is salvation through no other person, creed, process or power. Each sinner is justified before God and reconciled to him only by his grace appropriated through faith alone.
- E.** The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit for the individual's new birth and growth to maturity, and for the Church's constant renewal in truth, wisdom, faith, holiness, love, power and mission.
- F.** The one, holy, universal and apostolic Church, which is the body of Christ, and to which all true believers belong. The Church's calling is to worship and serve God in the world, to proclaim and defend his truth, to exhibit his character and to demonstrate the reality of his new order.
- G.** The personal and visible return in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ to raise the dead and bring salvation and judgment to final completion. Evil-doers will suffer eternal punishment. God will fully establish his kingdom when he creates a new heaven and a new earth from which evil, suffering and death will be excluded, and in which he will be glorified for ever.



THE CHRISTIAN
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“Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law. And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”

Romans 13:10-11

