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Protecting gospel freedom

The thrilling victory at the Supreme Court in the Ashers case creates a UK precedent that should help to protect gospel freedom for years to come. The Court held that compelled speech undermines free speech.

Standing up for God's good design in relation to the sanctity of life, biological sex and traditional marriage requires free speech. Away from the headlines we've been busy addressing a number of deeply worrying proposals coming out

of Westminster and the devolved assemblies.

Christians and others must not be required to use pronouns they regard as false. They must remain free to promote marriage as being only between one man and one woman for life. They must remain free to make the case for the unborn as made in the image of God.

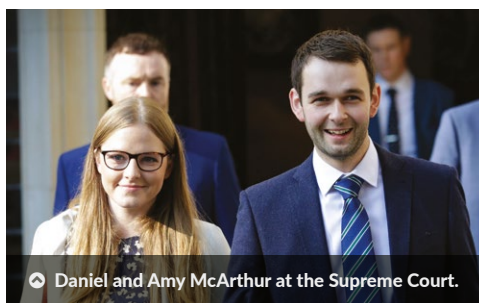
We thank God for the resounding Ashers win but, as you will see, we still have an immense amount of work to do.

Ashers couple thank God after landmark Supreme Court victory

On Wednesday 10 October 2018 Ashers Baking Company was resoundingly vindicated by the UK Supreme Court. The day will live long in the memory of Christians in the UK.

It represents the culmination of a faithful stand lasting nearly four and a half years for the McArthur family.

In 2014 they declined to decorate a cake with the message 'Support Gay Marriage' for an LGBT activist. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland took them to the County Court, where they were fined £500 for discrimination. Helped by The



▶ Daniel and Amy McArthur at the Supreme Court.

Christian Institute, Ashers contested this ruling. They lost in the Court of Appeal. But at the Supreme Court five Justices agreed unanimously that their action was lawful because it was about the message on the cake, not the customer who ordered it.

Speaking after the landmark ruling, Daniel and Amy McArthur gave glory to God.

Daniel said that, despite its difficulties, the lengthy legal battle was 'absolutely worth it'. "We knew we were doing what God wanted us to do and we believe we've been following in

his will the whole time".

Amy added: "God has been good and brought us through the challenges that have come with the court case."

The couple urged other Christians: "Don't be afraid to take your stand".

Since 2006 our Legal Defence Fund has helped to protect Christian religious freedom. Because of your support, we have been able to stand by this brave and humble Christian family throughout their ordeal.



Twofold attack on marriage



Marriage in Great Britain is under attack from the twin threats of no-fault divorce and heterosexual civil partnerships.

The Scottish Government has announced it will consult on whether to scrap civil partnerships or extend them to heterosexual couples.

The 'marriage-lite' unions offer the benefits of marriage

but without the commitment to a lifelong relationship.

Meanwhile in Westminster, the Government has launched a consultation on allowing divorce in England and Wales for no reason, bowing to pressure from The Times newspaper and divorce lawyers.

Under the proposals a spouse would be able

to get a divorce simply by requesting it.

Top family lawyer Baroness Deech called the plans 'deeply flawed'.

The Christian Institute's Ciarán Kelly told The Financial Times that under the current system thousands of couples use the time to change their minds about divorce. He said "no reason' divorce simply

greases the tracks for marriage breakdown".

The divorce news was followed by Theresa May announcing Government support for heterosexual civil partnerships.

In 2013, the then Pensions Minister Steve Webb estimated the cost to taxpayers from such a proposal could run into billions of pounds.



Age of consent downplayed in new sex ed lesson plans

Children in Scottish schools should not worry about breaking the law if they have sex at 13, lesson plans drawn up for the Scottish Government say.

The draft Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) resource suggests teaching pupils aged 12 to 14 that, although sex under the age of 16 is illegal, those aged 13 and over could engage in sexual activity without fear of reprimand.

It tells teachers to say that the age

of consent "is really to protect young people from adults, not make them feel worried or frightened".

Chris McGovern of the Campaign for Real Education said: "The intention of this draft resource is, in effect, to lower the age of consent without a change in legislation."

The Scottish Government said it encourages young people to delay sexual activity "until they are ready".

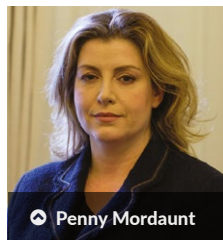
Back page: Rethink on 'choose your own gender' lessons for 5-year-olds

Transgender surge inquiry announced as activists accused of gagging free speech

The rapid rise in referrals of children for 'gender confusion' has prompted UK Equalities Minister Penny Mordaunt to call for an urgent inquiry.

Mordaunt wants to understand why the number of girls being referred has risen 4,400 per cent in the past nine years.

Government officials will look into potential causes, including the influence of social media and the promotion of transgender issues in schools.



📌 Referrals for girls with gender confusion have risen 4,400 per cent since 2009.

The concerns are shared by MPs. A ComRes poll found 59 per cent said the sudden rise in children identifying as transgender is worrying and has not been properly explained or discussed.

MPs also admitted they were scared of openly speaking against radical gender ideology for fear of accusations

of transphobia.

The poll came as LGBT activists and feminists rejected pressure to stifle debate on the issue.

In letters to national newspapers, 195 campaigners said the freedom to discuss controversial Government proposals is being severely limited. Some of Stonewall's own

supporters accused the gay rights group of bullying people who disagree that men can become women.

In September, it was revealed that Guide leaders were told to leave the organisation when they opposed guidance saying boys could share tents, changing areas and shower facilities with girls.

Would you like us to visit your church?

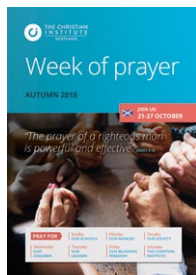
We visit over 300 churches a year – including over 80 in Scotland – to talk about the work of The Christian Institute. If you would like your church to be one of them, contact us at: scotland@christian.org.uk



National Week of Prayer

Thank you for joining with us in prayer for major issues affecting families, churches and schools around the UK. Thank you also for your prayers for all of us here at The Christian Institute.

Don't forget that you can pray with us all year round by using the PrayerMate app.



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



Ashers: the lawyer's view

By Sam Webster,
In-house Solicitor

The judgment of the United Kingdom Supreme Court in *Lee v Ashers Baking Company* has created a precedent which will be followed by courts in all parts of the UK in their future application of discrimination and human rights law.

The principles involved will impact other cases for years to come, and not only in the sphere of goods and services. This is good news.

Obviously it remains unlawful to discriminate on grounds of protected characteristics such as religion or sexual orientation. And the judgments in earlier B&B cases still stand.

The Ashers case was about the proper scope of discrimination law, with particular focus on the issue of compelled speech. It is therefore essential that business owners seek appropriate legal advice for their own particular set of circumstances.

The phrase 'landmark judgment' can often be overused. But in terms of what will surely flow from the Ashers ruling, it is most apt.

Read the full
article online:
[christian.org.uk/
asherscomment](http://christian.org.uk/asherscomment)

Sam Webster

Christian symbols removed from Scottish crematoria

Christian symbols are being hidden or removed at funeral services in Scotland for fear that they will cause offence.

The Scottish Inspector of Crematoria reports that demands for the removal of Bibles and crosses by humanists and others are on the rise.

The Humanist Society of Scotland claimed that failing to remove Christian symbols would leave their members "open



to discrimination" under the Equality Act.

But Ciarán Kelly, a Deputy Director at The Christian Institute, said: "It shouldn't be a surprise that in a

country with our Christian heritage the cross of Christ will be visible in public places. We should be wary of creeping secularisation in the guise of 'equality'."

New poll shows clear majority oppose Scots smacking ban



John Finnie MSP introduced plans to ban smacking at Holyrood.

Less than a third of voters in Scotland support plans to criminalise parents who smack their own children, a new poll has found.

A Bill to introduce a smacking ban has been put forward by Green MSP John Finnie and is backed by the Scottish Government.

Over 1,000 voters took part in the poll for The Sunday Times. Just 30 per cent support Finnie's proposal but over half said

smacking should still be allowed.

Be Reasonable Scotland, a group supported by The Christian Institute, is spearheading opposition to the ban. Its 2017 ComRes poll showed the ban is opposed by almost 75 per cent of Scots. Responding to the new figures, a spokesman said: "The clear evidence is that the vast majority of Scots do not back a ban. Those people need to communicate this to their MSPs before it's too late."

Most vulnerable at risk from court decision

Patients suffering from brain damage lost an important safeguard in July.

Supreme Court judges ruled that food and fluids can be withdrawn, without a court's permission, if families and doctors agree.

Following the judgment, the British Medical Association (BMA) went further, suggesting the ruling should be extended to people with conditions such as dementia.



Government backs Britain's 'proud free speech record'



'Buffer zones' will not be introduced around abortion centres in England and Wales by the Government, Home Secretary Sajid Javid has announced.

His decision followed a consultation which drew over 2,500 responses.

Mr Javid said barring all pro-life activities would "not be a proportionate response", because they nearly always

involve simply "praying, displaying banners and handing out leaflets".

"In this country, it is a long-standing tradition that people are free to gather together and to demonstrate their views. This is something to be rightly proud of", he added.

Despite this, abortion giant BPAS said it would continue to put pressure on local councils to introduce exclusion zones.

Controversy continues to assail Named Person scheme plans

Yet more controversy has surrounded the Scottish Government's Named Person scheme in recent months.

Although it cannot be brought in as originally intended, work continues on implementing a watered-down version.

August saw councils suggest that named persons should be able to step in and help children change legal sex if their parents object.

As part of the Scottish Government's consultation on transgenerism, four



local authorities suggested that named persons should be able to "provide consent" on a child's behalf and help them to legally change gender via the courts.

This is an insult to every parent and child in Scotland. Parents, not state officials, know what's in their

child's best interests.

Then in September it was revealed that the SNP was urged to approach author JK Rowling to give the scheme a PR boost.

Campaign group NO2NP quipped: "It will take more than a trip to Hogwarts to rescue Named Persons".

UK's top judge: CI case 'most important'

The President of the UK Supreme Court, Baroness Hale, has described The Christian Institute's legal victory against the Named Person scheme as a 'most important' case.

Lady Hale made the comments in a June speech to the Scottish Public Law Group in Edinburgh.

Rethink on 'choose your own gender' lessons for 5-year-olds

A draft lesson plan backed by the Scottish Government that promoted radical gender ideology to children as young as five has been changed.

The original version of a Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood lesson plan for five to eight-year-olds told youngsters: "Your gender is what you decide. You might be a boy or a girl, or maybe you don't like to decide that."

This has now been removed in favour of a focus on equality between the sexes.

Scottish Conservative Shadow Education Secretary



Liz Smith MSP said of the first draft that it was right to teach children about gender differences, but "many parents might feel this is too young for their children to learn about it".

The resources can still be changed, with final versions planned for summer 2019. Parents, teachers and students can comment on the materials online at: rshp.scot/get-involved

Your legacy will help Christians to be salt and light

None of our work would be possible without the generosity of our supporters. Leaving a gift in your will to The Christian Institute will help us to continue working to preserve Christian freedoms for future generations.



☎ 0191 281 5664

✉ legacy@christian.org.uk

🌐 christian.org.uk/legacy

CI victory for street preacher

Police have apologised to a Christian street preacher after threatening him with arrest and forcing him to leave Bath city centre.

The Christian Institute supported Dale McAlpine after he was accused of committing a 'hate crime' and police issued a dispersal notice.

Following our intervention, Avon and Somerset Police admitted "there

should have been no threat of arrest" and that freedom of speech is "an essential part of a democratic society".

Institute Director Colin Hart said: "Christians have the freedom

to preach on the streets. That right was hard-won down the centuries and it is important that it is upheld. The law cannot be used to clamp down on legitimate free speech."



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