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Standing for Christian truth

Christians are called to be salt and light. Often this is not easy, but believers need to be ready to count the cost and stand firm.

We give thanks to God that Kenneth Ferguson and Lancashire Festival of Hope have both been wonderfully vindicated for their willingness to defend the biblical view of marriage. These cases will help protect other Christians from unlawful discrimination. Cornerstone fostering agency has also resolved not to abandon Christian teaching on marriage

and sexual ethics, despite pressure from Ofsted and the courts.

The need for legal action to defend religious freedom on contentious issues such as same-sex marriage highlights the risk from an overly-broad conversion therapy ban. The freedom to faithfully declare the Gospel of Christ should not be endangered by the criminal law. That is why we are spearheading a new campaign – Let Us Pray. The ordinary work of churches needs to be protected.

Christian CEO vindicated after dismissal for marriage beliefs

An Employment Tribunal has ruled that Scotland's biggest grant-making trust unlawfully discriminated against its CEO because of his Christian views on marriage.

The Institute has supported Kenneth Ferguson throughout his battle, including underwriting his legal costs through its Legal Defence Fund.

The Tribunal found Kenneth Ferguson was unfairly dismissed by The Robertson Trust in March 2020. It also found that he had been subjected to religious discrimination by the Trust and its



Unfairly dismissed: Kenneth Ferguson

Chairwoman, Shonaig Macpherson, for believing that marriage is exclusively between a man and a woman.

Following the ruling, Mr Ferguson expressed relief that the ordeal

was over. He said: "I was treated by The Robertson Trust in a way I had never been treated before in my whole professional life. But I'm satisfied that justice has been done.

The Tribunal has ruled that they were wrong to behave that way and I'm grateful."

He added: "I also want to thank those who have supported me and prayed for me, especially those at The Christian Institute who have been such a blessing to me."

The Institute is also helping Stirling Free Church, where Mr Ferguson is an elder, in its legal action against the same trust – also for unlawful discrimination.

Macpherson subsequently stepped down from The Robertson Trust.

Gender self-ID to be legalised in Scottish Government proposals

The Scottish Government intends to make it much easier to change legal sex.

Currently, the option is only available to adults. They are required to have the agreement of two doctors, have lived as if they were the opposite sex for at least two years and make a statutory declaration of their intention to do so for the rest of their life.

But next year ministers are expected to introduce a Bill removing the need for medical evidence, reducing the two-year period to three months and extending 'sex swaps' to 16-year-olds.



Scots will also be able to choose their own gender on the 2022 census. Guidance from the National Records of Scotland (NRS) for the 2022 census states: "If you are transgender the answer you give can be different from what is on your birth certificate.

You do not need a Gender Recognition Certificate".

The Office for Statistics Regulation, an independent UK-wide watchdog, has written to the NRS, raising a series of concerns. It flagged how the guidance could damage data quality, "including

the comparability of data across the rest of the UK".

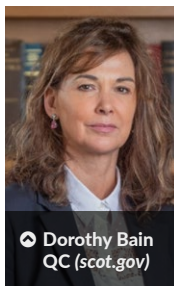
Women's rights campaigners are currently appealing a court ruling allowing the Scottish Government to redefine "woman" to include a man who says he is female.

Scot Govt goes soft on hard drugs

Possession of even the most dangerous drugs, such as cocaine and heroin, will no longer be treated as a serious criminal offence by the Scottish Government.

In September, Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain QC told Holyrood that officers who catch people with Class A drugs can now issue a warning, rather than pursue a prosecution.

Under the new measures, previous guidelines allowing the police to issue a Recorded Police Warning



✪ Dorothy Bain QC (scot.gov)

for possession of Class B and Class C drugs will be extended to Class A.

The Institute's Ciarán Kelly warned: "Drug-related deaths are already reaching record highs in Scotland. This policy is a green light to ruin yet more lives and families."

Former chief superintendent Tom Buchan said: "It will have no



benefits at all and it comes in the middle of a huge drugs emergency".

National Records of Scotland reported

that 1,339 people died of drug misuse last year. This is the highest recorded drug death rate in Europe by far.

Scot Govt backs 4-year-old pupils 'changing sex' in schools guidance

The Christian Institute has criticised new Scottish Government guidance that backs children as young as four 'changing sex' in school whilst allowing parents to be kept in the dark.

Scotland's Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville claimed the Government does not "promote transitioning" despite it using the language of activists throughout the document.

Concerns include rebranding biological sex as "sex assigned at birth", advising teachers to use

false pronouns, and claiming that non-trans-affirming parents damage their children's health and should have their "misconceptions" corrected.

Controversial groups Mermaids, Stonewall, LGBT Youth Scotland and Scottish Trans Alliance are listed as organisations that could provide 'additional resources'.

The Institute's Deputy Director Simon Calvert said: "For the Scottish Government to come down so firmly on the side of trans activists is bad for schools, families and society."



Other concerned groups accused the Scottish Government of eroding the rights of parents and using unreliable statistics.

Leading human rights lawyer Aidan

O'Neill QC said the previous guidance for schools on transgenderism, adopted by around half of local authorities, went against human rights law.

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Hate crime Bill to cost over £1m to implement

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request has revealed that the Scottish Government's controversial hate crime Bill will cost the country around £1.2 million to implement.

The startling price-tag was uncovered through an FOI request from the Institute-backed Free to Disagree group

The costs will impact Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and other "justice partners".

Free to Disagree said the figures showed fears voiced before the Bill's implementation



were well-founded. Scottish Conservatives' justice spokesman Jamie Greene called the costs "astonishing".

Civil servants reject 'pronoun pledge' drive



In July, a survey revealed the majority of civil servants reject the Scottish Government's push for them to use 'preferred pronouns' in their email signatures.

Nearly 60 per cent of the 3,000 respondents to the internal survey set up by supporters of the "pronoun pledge" said they had no intention of doing so. Only 17 per cent said they did so already.

The Scottish Government's Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans called civil servants' concerns about the pledge "disappointing". But For Women Scotland director Trina Budge said the Government's actions were "controlling, illiberal and authoritarian".

She added: "In forging ahead with this or any associated coerced signing of a pledge, the Scottish Government would, potentially, be discriminating against a protected belief and also inviting sex discrimination".

The pledge invites staff to use she/her, he/him, they/them or "zie" or zir" at the end of correspondence.

Christian foster agency to seek Supreme Court ruling on evangelical beliefs

In September, the Court of Appeal in London rejected Cornerstone Fostering and Adoption agency's attempt to overturn a High Court ruling that "evangelical" includes those who reject biblical teaching on sexual ethics.

The agency continues to be supported by The Christian Institute as it seeks leave to appeal to the UK Supreme Court.

Helpfully, the ruling confirmed that an evangelical foster agency can work exclusively with evangelical carers. It also agreed that Cornerstone had suffered a

significant interference with its right to manifest its religious beliefs.

However, the Court sided with Ofsted in its attempt to impose its own definition of "evangelical" on the Christian foster agency.

The Institute's Simon Calvert said the court ruling showed a "fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of Christianity".

In 2019, Ofsted issued a report downgrading the fostering service from "Good" to "Requires Improvement" and demanding that Cornerstone abandon its religious ethos.



Anti-Christian discrimination lands English council with £100,000 bill

A council in north-west England has been ordered to pay £25,000 in damages and £84,000 in costs for discriminating against a local Christian festival involving over 200 churches.

In 2018, adverts for Lancashire Festival of Hope were removed by Blackpool Council over guest speaker Franklin Graham's biblical views on marriage and sexuality.

But Manchester County Court ruled overwhelmingly in favour of festival organisers, stating the Council had shown "wholesale disregard for the right

to freedom of expression".

After also being ordered to apologise, the Leader of Blackpool Council admitted the decision to ban the adverts had unlawfully discriminated against Christians.

Festival Trustee and Director Steve Haskett told The Christian Institute that that he was "satisfied" with the result.





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London's High Court rejects Down's abortion law challenge

Disability campaigner Heidi Crowther has said she won't give up, after London's High Court said it was for Parliament, not the courts, to decide if abortion law is discriminatory.

Abortion is legal up to 24 weeks for most reasons and up to birth for children deemed to have a disability, which includes Down's syndrome.



Council scraps gender-neutral school toilets after complaints

Plans to provide 'gender-neutral' toilets at a secondary school in Inverness have been ditched after families objected.

Highland Council completed the work during the summer break, but reverted to single-sex toilets at Culloden Academy within days of the start of term.

Parents voiced concern about girls as young as eleven having to share toilet blocks with older teenage boys.

It comes as the CEO of Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre has been slammed for implying that



victims who want single-sex spaces to be protected are "bigots" who should expect 'to be challenged on their prejudices'.

In England, the High Court has ruled that men who identify as female are legally permitted to be housed in women's jails,

despite the "significant" psychological impact this can have on female prisoners.

Crimes committed by men who claim to be female are also being recorded as offences perpetrated by women, distorting official statistics.

Methodist Church in Britain abandons biblical marriage

The governing body of the Methodist Church in Great Britain has backed proposals that contradict the Bible's teaching on marriage.

At the Church's annual Conference in June, representatives voted to redefine marriage, conduct same-sex weddings and affirm cohabitation.

Following the move, leading proponent of the change Sam McBratney told the Institute that ministers remained free to teach that marriage is a lifelong union between one man and one woman.

But the Chairman of

Methodist Evangelicals Together, Revd Dr David Hull, said that some evangelicals were already reporting facing opposition to faithful biblical preaching and teaching on sexual ethics.

The Methodist Church is Britain's fourth largest denomination, with approximately 165,000 active members.



Assisted suicide push denounced

A new attempt to legalise assisted suicide in Scotland is attracting fierce criticism.

Liam McArthur MSP proposes to remove legal protections for vulnerable patients who are terminally ill.

But in an open letter to Health Secretary Humza Yousaf, almost two hundred healthcare professionals said they would care for the “safety and wellbeing” of their patients, even if asked to do otherwise.

The medics pleaded for the law to remain unchanged: “for the sake of us all, and for future generations”.



Murdo Fraser MSP said the Bill was “not a step forward” but a return to the cruel values of a pre-Christian world, where suicide was glorified. He feared its adoption would lead to the lives of the elderly and vulnerable

being “regarded as less valued than others, to the extent that they are not even worth living”.

McArthur’s Bill has also been blasted as dangerous and prejudiced by newspaper columnists Andrew McKie and Kevin McKenna. Both

argued in The Herald that the push from politicians to legalise assisted suicide posed a serious threat to vulnerable and disabled people.

Since 2010, two assisted suicide Bills have been defeated in the Scottish Parliament.

After reviewing detailed arguments, the Prime Minister will not support an attempt to remove end-of-life protections for vulnerable people in England and Wales, The Daily Telegraph reports. UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid is also understood to oppose a weaker law.

Hear from the CI



Nigel Kenny,
Scotland Officer

If you would like your church to hear more about our work, please contact: scotland@christian.org.uk

‘Let us pray’, politicians urged amid ‘conversion therapy’ ban

A new campaign has been launched to protect the ordinary work of churches across Britain from an overly-broad ‘conversion therapy’ ban.

Activists are pushing Westminster and Holyrood to ban any prayer, preaching and pastoral guidance which contradicts LGBT theology. Let Us Pray, a campaign spearheaded by The Christian Institute, warns that this would breach human rights law.

Let Us Pray supports tackling

“pseudo-medical abuses” if they are found to be occurring. But it warned politicians to “be wary of activists exploiting concerns about abuse to further their own agendas against Christians”.

The Institute has threatened the UK Government with judicial review if the proposed ban criminalises the ordinary work of churches.



 **Join the campaign:**
letuspray.uk

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