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Putting Christ first

For as long as the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been preached it has also been opposed. Christians in the UK are called 'extremists' simply for holding to God's Word.

Proposals to ban so-called 'conversion therapy' risk criminalising parents, teachers and church leaders. Transgender ideology, the devaluing of life and the undermining of marriage present a constant challenge to putting Christ before the culture of the day.

Our nation is in desperate need of God's mercy. We must pray and take action.

Faithful believers have a vital salt and light role to play in ensuring that legislation, media opposition and hostile court rulings do not drive biblical beliefs from the public square. It makes a huge difference.

Christians have been at the forefront of those upholding the reality of biological sex, protecting children from online pornography, promoting traditional marriage and the sanctity of life, and defending free speech.

Thank you for your continued support as we contend for Christian truth and gospel freedom.

Self-ID Bill blocked by UK Govt

Holyrood's discredited 'choose your own sex' plan has been blocked by the UK Government for being incompatible with GB equality law.

At the end of last year, MSPs voted in favour of the Gender Recognition Reform Bill which would allow 16-year-olds in Scotland to change their legal sex by self-declaration without a medical diagnosis. It later emerged that Scottish Labour had put pressure on its MSPs to vote for the Bill against their conscience.

Within weeks of the vote, Scotland Secretary Alister Jack issued an order prohibiting Holyrood's Presiding



Officer from submitting the Bill for Royal Assent. Jack was exercising powers under Section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998.

In the wake of his announcement, trans activists were seen brandishing signs at a protest in Glasgow threatening to "decapitate" women who uphold the reality of biological sex. But a subsequent poll found

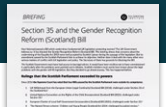
50 per cent of Scots backed the decision, compared to 33 per cent who opposed it. Among SNP voters, nearly one third said Westminster was right to have vetoed the legislation.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon had accused critics of her 'sex-swap' Bill of being "transphobic", "deeply misogynist, often homophobic,

possibly some of them racist as well". But the controversial Bill has been widely acknowledged to be a significant factor in her February resignation.

We briefed MPs on the significance of using Section 35 📌

📌 **Read the briefing: the.ci/s35**



KC: 'Holyrood plan to ban conversion therapy is fundamentally illiberal'

A legal opinion from Aidan O'Neill KC for The Christian Institute has warned that a proposed law to ban so-called conversion therapy is "fundamentally illiberal" and "beyond the powers of the Scottish Parliament to legislate".

It risks criminalising parents and church leaders by outlawing repentance, preaching, 'gentle, non-coercive prayer', pastoral advice and parenting that fails to endorse LGBT theology.

The Institute's Simon Calvert said: "If the Scottish Government follows the advice of its Expert Advisory Group it



will be exceeding its powers and inflicting the most totalitarian conversion therapy ban in the world".

Roman Catholic bishops also accused the Government of "ideological totalitarianism" over the proposals.

They urged Holyrood to reject the controversial proposals.

The Westminster Government has also announced its intention to

introduce a ban in England and Wales.

Equalities Minister Kemi Badenoch has pledged to ensure any law would not infringe on religious freedoms.

But church leaders say they "remain unconvinced" that the Government can "avoid unintended consequences in the passage of the Bill" and have written to the Government asking it to drop the plans altogether.



CofE votes to bless same-sex partners

The Church of England has voted to welcome plans to allow churches to bless those in a same-sex partnership, but claims its doctrine of marriage remains unchanged.

In February, the General Synod supported a bishops' report recommending that "prayers of dedication, thanksgiving and for God's blessing" may be offered for those who have been through a same-sex civil



ceremony. Same-sex weddings will still not be allowed in churches.

The Institute's Ciarán Kelly called it "terribly sad".

"No amount of dancing on pinheads can hide the fact that the truth of Scripture

has been ditched in favour of the culture of the day."

Last year, the Church of Scotland voted to allow its ministers to conduct same-sex weddings. The Recognition of Marriage Services

Act (Act I 1977) was amended to ditch the words "husband and wife", only referring to the parties as "each other".

Twelve out of 41 presbyteries opposed the redefinition of marriage.

Scot Govt flies the flag for LGBT cause

LGBT flags feature prominently in a schedule detailing when various flags should be flown from Government buildings.

Dates singled out for special flag days include the start of LGBT History Month, the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, and Transgender Remembrance Day.

LGBT days are only outnumbered in the calendar by Royal celebrations.



'Time to tackle the gambling industry'

Scottish local authorities have been urged to tackle the growing betting industry by regulating firms and advertisements.

Dr Heather Wardle and Professor Gerda Reith, the co-directors of Gambling Research Glasgow, said Scotland should not wait until the UK Government publishes its long-delayed White Paper on reforming the Gambling Act 2005.



'Silent prayer' pair vindicated



Pro-life campaigners arrested for praying silently near an abortion centre in Birmingham have been fully vindicated.

In February, a magistrate dismissed the cases brought against Isabel Vaughan-Spruce and Roman Catholic priest Sean Gough, after the Crown Prosecution Service offered no evidence of criminal activity and dropped the charges.

The Public Spaces Protection

Order in force around the centre prohibits individuals from "engaging in any act of approval or disapproval" in relation to abortion, including "prayer or counselling".

In December, Women's Health Minister Maree Todd said the proposed 'safe access zones' Bill, which will impose censorship zones across Scotland, will be pushed forward "as soon as possible".

Addicts parked on methadone

Drug addicts in Scotland seeking help to recover are being parked on heroin-substitute methadone instead.

One recovering addict, Cheryl Ferguson, said: "They're not even trying to find out why you took drugs, they're just putting you on a prescription and leaving you." She added: "In my experience, that was a free rein to go and use."

The Scottish Drug Death Taskforce



recommends that 'shooting galleries' – which allow drug addicts to take drugs without fear of arrest – be rolled

out nationwide. But the Institute's Simon Calvert said they had "no place in a responsible and compassionate response to the scourge of addiction".

Westminster has repeatedly rejected calls by Scottish ministers to allow them to roll out such facilities.

Scotland has the highest drug-related death rate recorded in any country in Europe – around 3.7 times that for the UK as a whole.

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Fresh scrutiny of Sandyford after Tavistock clinic exposé

A new book by senior BBC journalist Hannah Barnes on NHS England's controversial Gender Identity Development Service reveals how vulnerable youngsters were routinely pushed onto the 'sex-swap' conveyor belt.

Barnes claims more than 1,000 children were referred for puberty blockers. She also accuses the soon-to-be-closed clinic of ignoring evidence that 97.5 per cent of the children seeking sex changes had autism, depression or other problems.



Time to Think by Hannah Barnes

It has led to increased scrutiny of the Sandyford in Glasgow, Scotland's flagship transgender clinic for children.

Campaigners and politicians have demanded its immediate closure

amid concerns that its clinical model also puts children and young people "at significant risk". Instead, the Scottish Government has ordered a report on the Glasgow clinic by the end of the year.

Free speech threatened by rise in 'non-crime hate incidents'

Police Scotland logged over 900 'non-crime hate incidents' in 2021 where behaviour was "perceived" to be motivated by "malice or ill-will" towards a person because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or 'transgender identity'.

A Freedom of Information request revealed that the force logged 928 incidents in

2021 using the controversial definitions. Separate data showed that 625 incidents were recorded in the first half of 2022 alone. The total number of cases has risen every year since 2017.

The Court of Appeal in London has ruled that applying similar definitions in England and Wales unlawfully interfered with free speech, prompting the College of Policing to release new interim guidance.



Support grows for tougher Online Safety Bill clampdown on porn

Peers have been urging the UK Government to deal more effectively with the problem of children accessing online pornography in its Online Safety Bill.

A recent survey of 16 to 21-year-olds in England found that one in ten had watched pornography before the age of nine and 50 per cent by the age of 13. Current proposals would force pornographic websites and social media channels to apply age-verification checks, but Peers have urged the Government to ensure the new protections are suitably robust.



Lord Bethell and Baroness Bertin argued that the Bill's definition of age verification is too weak and loopholes would allow websites to claim it is too difficult to enforce checks.

Lord Curry likened giving pornography websites the power to apply their own systems to "letting a burglar install the locks

on your home".

Miriam Cates MP echoed the calls. She told BBC Radio 4 the Government has to "create a definition of pornography that applies across the internet, and in fact, corresponds with what's legal and illegal offline as well".

At the end of last year, pressure from Christian Institute

supporters and others saw the Government drop provisions censoring 'legal but harmful' content.

But the climbdown being undone in January when Conservative backbencher Alicia Kearns attempted to hijack the Bill to introduce an online ban on so-called conversion therapy.

The vaguely worded proposal threatened Christians' freedom to share the Gospel online but the amendment was withdrawn when the Government announced its own timeline for a ban.

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Aberdeen quizzes 7-year-olds about 'gender identity'

Schools in Aberdeen have been quizzing seven to nine-year-olds about their 'gender identity'.

In a survey distributed to 59 schools by Aberdeen City Council, children were asked if they were 'male, female, non-binary, transgender or other'.

Douglas Lumsden MSP said: "It is disgraceful that the council are forcing children as young as seven to answer questions about their gender."

He argued it followed the same agenda being promoted by his fellow North



East Scotland MSP, Maggie Chapman.

She has said she would like children as young as eight to be able to change gender.

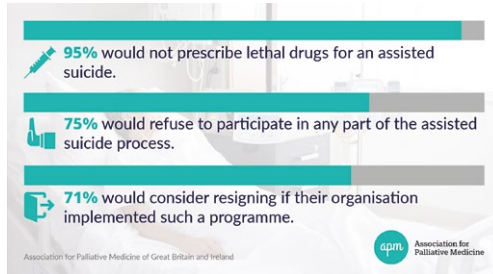
Meghan Gallacher MSP called for the "deeply inappropriate" survey's immediate withdrawal.

Palliative care experts, ethicists and the Kirk all oppose assisted suicide

Palliative care doctors in Scotland would not prescribe life-ending drugs if assisted suicide was legalised, according to a survey by the Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland.

An overwhelming 95 per cent of respondents said they would not prescribe assisted suicide drugs, with three-quarters refusing to participate in any part of the process.

Liam McArthur MSP's proposed



assisted suicide Bill would allow anyone aged 16 or over deemed terminally ill who has been resident in Scotland for twelve months to receive help to kill themselves.

In an interview with The Christian Institute, Dr Calum MacKellar of the Scottish Council on Human Bioethics warned: "If society agrees that some lives are unworthy of life,

that some lives no longer have any worth or value, I believe we are on a very dangerous path".

The Church of Scotland added that the relationship between the vulnerable and those with a duty of care would be "irredeemably altered". Its Moderator, Rt Revd Dr Iain Greenshields, reaffirmed the Kirk's commitment to the care of "those approaching the end of their lives" and to the "provision of better palliative care".

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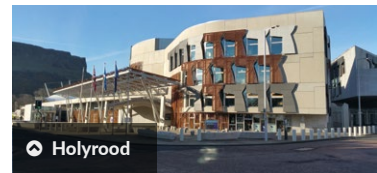
Hate crime Act delayed

The controversial Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act has been delayed until at least 2024 due to "constraints on operational policing resources; training resources and scheduling capacity". Holyrood passed the Bill in March 2021.

Following a lengthy Institute campaign, significant amendments were made to the original Bill to protect evangelism and Christian comment on sexual ethics. However, concerns remain about the impact on free speech, including private conversations in the home. In 2021, the Institute-

backed group Free to Disagree uncovered documents revealing the law would cost the country around £1.2 million to implement.

The costs would be borne by Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and other "justice partners".



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