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Defending the Gospel

The Institute works to ensure that churches and Christians are free to “preach the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

LGBT activists are seeking to exploit concerns over so-called conversion therapy to restrict preaching, pastoral care and prayer. For some here in NI, simply sharing a Christian testimony is grounds to be sacked.

Recent months have seen mixed developments on the sanctity of life. Proposals in the Republic raise the spectre of

assisted suicide for NI residents too. But Paul Givan’s Bill to challenge part of the new liberal abortion regime is welcome.

Removing abortion on the grounds of disability would be a significant step. We can expect this to be opposed by the pro-abortion lobby.

We thank God that he continues to provide us with the resources to equip Christians to be salt and light in our society - especially in these difficult times. Thank you for standing with us.

LGBT activists demand sacking of official for sharing Christian testimony

LGBT activists have called for the Education Authority to sack a board member who shared the testimony of a homosexual man who became a Christian.

Former Executive minister Nelson McCausland shared the testimony of Becket Cook, an American who lived a gay lifestyle until he came to Christ.

Although the article plainly addresses Christian conversion, critics accused Mr McCausland of promoting “conversion therapy practices”.

One activist who is also a local councillor tweeted that conversion therapy is “abuse” and that Mr McCausland



“must resign”. Others urged the Education Authority to remove him “with immediate effect”.

But in an exclusive interview Mr McCausland told The Christian Institute he ‘is not intimidated’ by those seeking to use controversy over ‘conversion therapy’ to restrict gospel freedom.

He was backed by the Education Minister. Peter Weir said, “the conversion of somebody to being a Christian has been equated to conversion therapy, which are two completely different things”.

In England, a Tory MP has called on the Government to include any prayer inconsistent

with LGBT theology in its proposed ban on ‘conversion therapy’. She said ‘abhorrent practices’ must be outlawed - including parents who seek to protect their children from taking harmful ‘sex-swap’ drugs.

In Victoria, Australia, pastoral advice and prayer which upholds the Bible’s teaching on sexual ethics was recently criminalised, after being branded ‘conversion therapy’.

[Watch the interview](#) ▶



the.ci/mccausland

Same-sex marriage disciplinary hearing a “sham”, tribunal hears

A multimillion-pound charitable trust has been accused of conducting a “sham” disciplinary hearing before dismissing its CEO over his beliefs on marriage.

Kenneth Ferguson is suing the Glasgow-based Robertson Trust. He was sacked when chairwoman Shonaig Macpherson objected to Stirling Free Church renting premises owned by the Trust.

Mr Ferguson is an elder of the church but declared his interests in advance and recused himself from all negotiations.



But Macpherson was reported to be “incandescent” when she learned of the church’s agreement to use one of the Trust’s venues for its Sunday services, because it does not believe in same-sex marriage.

Mr Ferguson’s lawyer Thomas Cordrey pointed out that prior to the disciplinary hearing, Macpherson told a trustee

Ferguson’s action equalled “gross misconduct leading to dismissal”.

Mr Cordrey said: “It was all a sham, wasn’t it? You were just ticking boxes to get you to the position you needed to be in to get rid of Mr Ferguson.”

Kenneth Ferguson is being supported by The Christian Institute. The hearing will resume on 10 May.

BBC pulls ‘100 genders’ video for kids

The BBC has removed a resource for children aged nine to twelve which told them there are over 100 ‘gender identities’.

‘Understanding Sexual and Gender Identities’, part of The Big Talk series, had been available from its BBC Teach website. It claimed that gender is “who you are inside”, but that sex is whether you are born a boy or a girl.

On the video, a Relationships and Sex



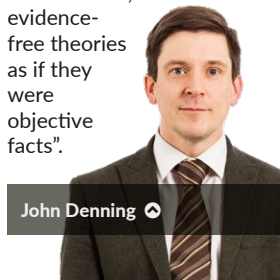
Education teacher said: “There are so many gender identities. So we know we’ve got male and female, but there are over 100, if not more, gender

identities now.”

Following complaints, the BBC first claimed the resource was being “wilfully misinterpreted”, but

then announced it had decided “to retire this film”.

The Christian Institute’s John Denning said the BBC should not have used its teaching materials “to peddle controversial, evidence-free theories as if they were objective facts”.



Scottish Govt forced to bolster free speech safeguards in hate crime Bill

The Scottish Government has conceded several key changes to its hate crime Bill following unprecedented pressure from free speech campaigners – including Christian Institute supporters.

The original Bill posed a major threat to free speech, including evangelism and Christian comment on sexual ethics. Now there are much stronger protections for religious debate and a section criminalising those in possession of ‘inflammatory materials’ has been removed. Critics

noted that such vague wording could have included the Bible.

Importantly, the Bill should also still protect people who uphold the biological understanding of sex, or a traditional understanding of marriage, from facing criminal investigation.

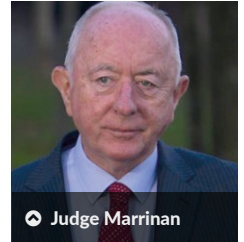
However, the existing ‘dwelling defence’ will be axed. Justice Minister Humza Yousaf refused to specifically protect conversations in the home from criminalisation.

In Northern Ireland, Judge Desmond Marrinan was commissioned by



♻️ Scottish Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf MSP

Stormont to review hate crime legislation. He has recommended major restrictions on free speech, including new offences on ‘stirring up hatred’ covering religion, sexuality and gender identity.



♻️ Judge Marrinan

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Paralympic legend: ‘Ditch blanket DNR orders’

Paralympic legend and disability campaigner Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson has spoken out against people with disabilities being given blanket Do Not Resuscitate orders (DNRs) without their knowledge.

Lady Grey-Thompson told the BBC that the ‘blanket’ orders should not be happening, and said talks need to take place between the NHS and disability groups.

The eleven-time GB & NI gold-medallist said: “There shouldn’t be a blanket Do Not Resuscitate purely because of somebody’s level of impairment.” She added: “It’s

got to be on a more one-to-one level than that.”

In recent months disability charities have revealed that people with learning disabilities were issued with DNR forms during the pandemic because of their conditions.



♻️ Baroness Grey-Thompson

Corrie actress 'delighted' to play pro-lifer

Former Coronation Street actress Kerri Quinn said she is "delighted" to portray a pro-life character in the BBC's upcoming drama 'The Awakening'.

The Belfast actress hopes the programme discussing abortion law in Northern Ireland will lead to helpful conversations around abortion.

Quinn lost her brother when he was three years old and she believes that "life is absolutely precious".

QC won't give in to same-sex marriage abuse



A top barrister has said legal principle requires her to remain on a case defending traditional marriage, despite receiving "pressure in the form of abuse and threats".

Dinah Rose QC is representing the Government of the Cayman Islands as it seeks to uphold the definition of marriage as being only between one man and one woman.

NIHRC launches legal action over 'abortion limitations'



A taxpayer-funded public body in Northern Ireland has launched a legal action against the UK Government, accusing it of providing insufficient abortion facilities.

The NI Human Rights Commission claims the Secretary of State Brandon Lewis is unlawfully denying the right of women in the Province to have an abortion.

It is also taking legal action against the Executive and Department of Health for "failing to commission and fund abortion services".

The Institute's Callum Webster said: "At a time when the health service and the public are working so hard to protect human lives, the Human Rights Commission is squandering taxpayers' money pursuing a legal case to destroy life".

At the end of March last year, a new liberal regime was introduced in the Province. Abortions are now permitted up to twelve weeks for any or no reason, 24 weeks for most reasons, and up to birth if the unborn child is deemed to have a disability.

Coming soon...

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Ofcom chief: 'inappropriate to give platform to gender critics'

Ofcom's Chief Executive has compared people who disagree with transgender ideology to racists, during a discussion about BBC impartiality.

Dame Melanie Dawes told the House of Commons culture committee it would be "extremely inappropriate" for those who recognise biological sex cannot be changed to be included in TV or radio debates on transgenderism.

The quango head likened allowing gender ideology critics to participate in a programme on transgenderism to giving a platform to "people saying that racism is OK".

In the course of her contribution, Dame Melanie said



Ofcom's Chief Executive Dame Melanie Dawes

repeatedly that Ofcom had been taking advice from pro-trans lobby group Stonewall on how to bring 'balance' to debates on transgenderism.

"I've spoken to the chief executive myself – and make sure that we give the right information to our broadcasters so that they can steer their way through these debates without causing offence, and

without bringing inappropriate voices to the table on questions like this."

Committee member Damian Green MP said her suggestion that "anyone who disagrees with any aspect of the current orthodox trans rights position is the equivalent of an old-fashioned racist" was "probably an inappropriate position for a senior regulator".

Abortion the main cause of death in 2020

Abortion accounted for the most deaths worldwide in 2020 – around 55 per cent of all deaths.

The number exceeds fatalities from coronavirus, cancer and heart disease combined.

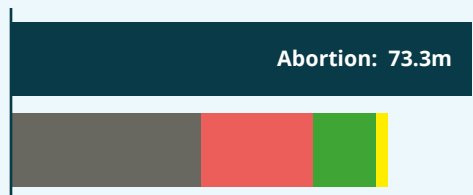
According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), around 73.3 million abortions take place every year. Estimated



deaths from all other causes totalled almost 60m globally last year.

In the UK, abortions became even easier to obtain. DIY home abortions were introduced in Great Britain and a liberal abortion regime imposed on N Ireland.

CAUSES OF DEATH IN 2020 (WORLDWIDE)



- Cardiovascular diseases: ~18m
- Cancers: ~10m | ■ Covid-19: 1.8m
- Other: ~30m

SOURCES: the.ci/deaths2020

NI Bill aims to end disability abortion

A new Bill has been introduced at Stormont to stop children being aborted because they are disabled.

Currently, the law permits abortion up to birth in cases of 'severe foetal impairment'.

In the rest of the UK, similar wording has been used to justify aborting children with Down's syndrome, and even a cleft palate.

The proposed amendment to the Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 has been brought forward by Paul Givan MLA.



▲ Cleft palate has been labelled a 'severe impairment'

Mr Givan described the idea that Down's syndrome should be seen as a "huge problem" to be addressed by abortion as "chilling".

In an exclusive interview he told the Institute's Ciarán Kelly

he wants the Province to have legislation that "respects the dignity of all human life".

"I've spoken to families here in Northern Ireland and they're part of this campaign and they've spoken about how

their son or daughter has Down's syndrome and how they find this legislation offensive".

The Bill has been welcomed by disability campaigners.

Heidi Crowter, who has Down's herself, told the CI: "It's only an extra chromosome!"

"If I was really impaired I wouldn't be able to marry James. I can cook, I can clean. And I wouldn't be able to get the top mark in GCSE French."

Heidi is currently bringing legal action against the UK Government over its abortion policy.

Hear from the CI



▲ Callum Webster, Northern Ireland Officer

If you would like your church to hear more about our work **in person*** or **online** email sandra.mackay@christian.org.uk or call **028 9094 1667**.

**Subject to Covid restrictions*

Irish medics shun euthanasia Bill

Around 2,000 doctors, nurses and geriatricians have signed a petition calling on the Irish Parliament not to legalise euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Members of the Irish Palliative Medicine Consultants' Association are "gravely concerned" by the Dying with Dignity Bill. They warn that changing the law will encourage the vulnerable and



elderly "to end their lives prematurely" to avoid becoming a 'burden'.

If passed, residents of Northern Ireland could also travel to the Republic to be killed by euthanasia or assisted suicide.

The Institute's Callum Webster called the Bill "dangerous and chilling". He stressed that "every human life has a unique inherent value, no matter how old, ill or disabled that person might be".

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