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Many challenges for prayer

Earlier this year, we asked our supporters to join us in a Week of Prayer. We were humbled by the response to that initiative and hope to run them more often. There is much for us to be praying about.

There is an assault on the fact that we are created male or female. The relentless promotion of transsexualism has moved so quickly and is so intolerant that it is even facing opposition from within the LGBT movement itself.

Schools are on the frontline in many

ways. Parents must be vigilant about what their children are encountering. We have seen a rise in 'gay pride' events, with pupils expected to donate to LGBT charities to take part in non-uniform days. The parents of over 100 children in Croydon have shown the difference that can be made.

Meanwhile, genuine issues around the availability of cannabis-based medical products are being hijacked by legalisers.

Please continue to pray for the nation.



PM backs swifter sex changes

Theresa May wants to make it much easier for people to change their legal sex.

The Prime Minister launched the plans saying she wants to see a process "that is more streamlined and de-medicalised".

The 16-week consultation was originally set to be launched last year, but was put on hold after being found to be "complex" and "divisive". It closes on 19 October.

Currently, it is necessary to have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria by two doctors, and to have lived as if a member of the opposite sex for



two years. But Theresa May has now backed 'self-declaration' – where a man can legally change sex simply by declaring he is a woman, and vice versa.

But a recent YouGov survey shows that fewer than one in five think people should be able to change legal

sex without a doctor's approval.

In the UK fewer than 5,000 people have obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate to legally change sex.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Government

has backtracked on its endorsement of shocking trans guidance for schools after The Christian Institute warned of possible legal action.

The guidance advises schools not to tell parents if their daughters would have to share a room overnight with a boy who identifies as a girl. It also tries to compel teachers and pupils to use pronouns they may regard as false.

The Scottish Government denied it ever 'formally endorsed' the erstwhile guidance – seven months after it was first published.



Mass parental boycott triggers school LGBT event climbdown

A primary school in London toned down its LGBT celebration event after scores of parents expressed their concerns.

Heavers Farm Primary, in Croydon, was planning an LGBT event featuring a parade at the school watched by families.

But many parents objected, with one saying her son – who is under ten years old – is too young to be taught about homosexuality and transsexualism.

Headteacher Susan Papas responded by saying that because the teaching was not officially part of

Sex and Relationship Education, “we do not need to seek consent from the parents”.

She also claimed it was a key part of promoting fundamental ‘British values’ and suggested those with concerns were guilty of “spreading hateful messages”.

Local MP Steve Reed attended the stripped-back event – which included an assembly and a more low-key outdoor gathering – tweeting he was “very proud” of those children who attended.

It was reported that 110 children did not



attend school at all on the day.

An anonymous parent spoke out in the media ahead of the event, explaining that her Year 4 son was “just far too young to be learning about all of this”.

“He came home the other day talking about lesbians and transgender people and I was so shocked.”

Another parent said “dozens” of concerned people wanted a meeting with the school about the event.

Supreme Court rejects attempt to ditch NI abortion protections

The Supreme Court has dismissed an attempt to overturn Northern Ireland’s pro-life protections.

Judges ruled against an appeal brought

by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC). The court said the NIHRC had no standing to bring its legal challenge.

Some judges took the view that the legal protections for the unborn in cases of rape, incest and severely life-limiting conditions are incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. However, they also acknowledged the court had no basis for making a ruling.

In response, pro-life group Both Lives Matter said: “It is not a moment to celebrate,

but rather to pause and be thankful for the lives this judgment will save.”

Currently in Northern Ireland abortion is legal only to preserve the life of the mother.

As recently as 2016, MLAs in Stormont backed the existing protections. However, pressure has been mounting at Westminster to impose more liberal laws on Northern Ireland.



👁 Baby at around 16 weeks of pregnancy

Parents' rights need protecting



By Ciarán Kelly,
Deputy Director
(Staff and Communications)

The State has the power to use force. It provides defence for the nation, and law and order. In a democracy the State uses force only sparingly, respecting the autonomy of individuals and of key institutions – including the family.

Overriding parental responsibility should be a last resort, such as when a parent is abusing a child.

Attempts to sideline parents come in many forms. The plans to ban

parental smacking in Wales and Scotland are obvious examples.

In England there are fears that a register of parents who homeschool their children could lead to a licensing scheme where State approval is required. But parents are responsible for the education of their children, not the State. Even where schooling is delivered by the State, it is on behalf of parents.

Infamously, the Scottish Government



endorsed an analogy of the named person as the 'Head Gardener', with parents just being gardeners. How glad we are that the Supreme Court backed our case requiring named persons to have only an advisory role.

Recently, we had to warn the Scottish Government of possible legal action again – this time for funding grossly

misleading guidance for schools on transsexualism.

The guidance makes numerous basic legal errors. These include seeking to prevent parents knowing vital information about their children.

The rights of parents throughout the UK are at stake. With your help, we will keep working to safeguard them.

Would you like us to visit your church?



We visit over 300 churches a year to talk about the work of The Christian Institute.

If you would like your church to be one of them, contact us at: development@christian.org.uk

Thank you for praying

We are always grateful for your prayers for the staff and work of The Christian Institute. The commitment of our supporters to pray was particularly evident during our Week of Prayer. It is the first time we have done this but now hope to hold them twice a year.

Many of you have contacted us to say how helpful it has been to have concise, insightful items to pray for, whether alone, in families or in your churches. Thank you for joining with us



to uphold the nation and the Institute in prayer.

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



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



Smacking ban will criminalise parents, FM admits

The Welsh First Minister has admitted his proposed smacking ban will “lead to more prosecutions”.

Carwyn Jones made the admission under questioning from opposition AMs as he announced the ban on reasonable chastisement would be a top priority.

Campaign group Be Reasonable described Mr Jones’s push to criminalise parents as “tragic”.



Court backs church employment rights

A homosexual clergyman disciplined for violating Church of England teaching on marriage has lost his claim of employment discrimination.

Canon Jeremy Pemberton entered into a same-sex marriage in 2014 and his licence as a priest was revoked.

The Court of Appeal said the Church had applied “its sincerely held beliefs in a way expressly permitted” by the Equality Act.



Jews challenge Ofsted over threats to religious values

Girls at a Jewish school have complained after being repeatedly questioned about sex by Ofsted inspectors, leaving them feeling extremely uncomfortable.

One young woman at the school said the process felt “like an attack”, while a parent said their daughters “came home severely shaken”.

In June, some 7,000 Orthodox Jews met in London



to challenge the ‘British values’ ideology used by Ofsted to justify such questioning.

Rabbis, parents and teachers joined together in prayer about the issue.

Community leader Levi Schapiro said it was a “sad reality that in modern Britain we need to lobby Government to protect our traditional religious values”.

Home Secretary rejects calls to legalise casual cannabis



Cannabis will not be legalised for recreational use, the Government says.

Former leader of the Conservatives William Hague and others are pushing to weaken current laws. But Home Secretary Sajid Javid pointed out that cannabis “can harm people’s

mental and physical health, and damage communities”.

Javid said changing the law on medicinal use of cannabis was “in no way a first step to the legalisation of cannabis for recreational use”.

Institute Director Colin Hart explained

in the media that properly tested cannabis-based medicines are already available. This is a very different issue to recreational use of the Class B drug, but campaigners are trying to confuse the two things.

Belfast City Council rejects increased Sunday trading

Belfast City Council has rejected a new proposal to liberalise Sunday trading – just a year after turning down the previous attempt.

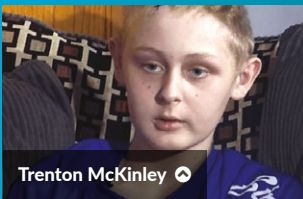
The Christian Institute's Northern Ireland Officer, Callum Webster, said it was the right decision: "Retail staff are already under enough pressure to work on Sundays and extending opening hours would only increase this."



'Dead' boy wakes up as docs prepare to take organs

A US boy astounded doctors when he woke up just before his life support was to be turned off and his organs harvested.

Teenager Trenton McKinley had suffered seven skull fractures after an accident but is now home and walking with assistance. Speaking of his near-death experience, Trenton attributed his recovery to God.



Heterosexual civil partnerships supported by Supreme Court



The Supreme Court has given its support to 'marriage lite' by backing the case of a couple seeking to change the law on heterosexual civil partnerships.

Judges ruled in favour of the case brought by Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan, who argued that not allowing for heterosexual civil partnerships was incompatible with human rights law.

The Institute's Deputy

Director for Staff and Communications, Ciarán Kelly, called the ruling "another attack on marriage".

"The couple who brought this case objected to what they called the 'sexist trappings' of marriage. But that is to fundamentally misrepresent what marriage is about."

The Government will now need to consider whether or how to change the law.

Government to crack down on addictive betting machines

The Government is finally to take action against the "social blight" of fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs).

The Christian Institute, MPs, religious leaders and local councils have long been calling for decisive action on the highly addictive gambling machines.

In May the Government announced that FOBT stakes, which can be as high as £100 every 20

seconds, will be capped at £2.

However, media reports indicate that the change will not come into effect until 2020

following a Treasury 'deal'.

The delay has prompted criticism from local authorities and parliamentarians.



Judgment awaited in Ashers case

The Supreme Court heard the case of Ashers Baking Company in a two-day hearing in May. The Christian Institute continues to support the McArthur family. Ashers is being

sued by the taxpayer-funded Equality Commission for Northern Ireland because the McArthurs declined to make a cake with a pro-gay marriage campaign slogan.

Lawyers for the family reminded judges that the issue was the message on the cake, not the customer who ordered it. They also argued that if Christians have to ditch their faith

while at work they cannot be said to have any real freedom of religion.

Ahead of the hearing, Daniel McArthur – Ashers General Manager – spoke of how hard the four-year process has been for the family, but added that their Christian faith was sustaining them.

A result is not expected before the autumn. Supporters who have asked to receive our email updates will be among the first to receive news on the case.



▶ Daniel and Amy McArthur outside court

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.



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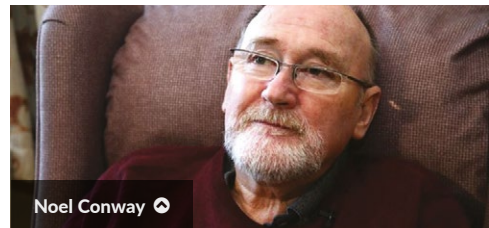
Latest attempt to legalise assisted suicide rejected

Assisted suicide will remain illegal following a ruling from the Court of Appeal. Judges said the existing law achieves a fair balance between the interests of the wider community and those of people like Noel Conway, who brought the case.

Campaign group Care Not Killing said it was now time

for assisted suicide supporters to turn their attention to securing “equality of access to the very best health care for all”.

The ruling upheld an earlier judgment that the current law is compatible with human rights legislation.



▶ Noel Conway

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