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Standing firm in the faith

Whatever it is right to pray for, it is also right to work for. Christians have mobilised in their thousands in recent months to address major issues of concern.

We can thank God that the Scottish Government has agreed to rethink its promotion of gender ideology to school children. The huge opposition to 'inappropriate' Relationships Education lessons for primary children in England is also welcome.

However, Westminster's imposition of same-sex marriage and abortion on Northern Ireland

is an outrage. At Holyrood, MSPs also seem determined to criminalise parents who smack their children – despite near unanimous opposition from the public.

God's word encourages Christians to engage with the big issues that will shape society for generations. It is right to do this whether we win or lose. It is right to urge our leaders to pass laws which restrain evil and promote good.

Thank you for standing with us in our work.

Smacking ban backed by MSPs

In May MSPs voted in favour of criminalising parents who smack their children. If the ban on reasonable chastisement does become law, thousands of families are expected to be affected, ramping up pressure on police and social services.

Some at Holyrood did warn that John Finnie's Bill is "not fit for purpose" and will waste police time, but it passed by 80 votes to 29. MSPs will consider amendments in September before voting again.

However, the public remains overwhelmingly opposed. A phenomenal 97 per cent of individual respondents to the Scottish Parliament's consultation said they were against a ban.

Legal experts raised concerns both before and after the vote. The Lord Advocate James Wolffe QC reminded MSPs that assaulting children is already illegal and warned the law change



97% of individual respondents to Holyrood's consultation said **'we're against a ban'**

would criminalise parents. Police Scotland confirmed officers would be forced to spend more time investigating parents for behaviour that they noted has been accepted for "generations".

In Wales, where a smacking ban is also being considered,

the Police Liaison Unit revealed it expected to investigate around 1,370 cases of smacking within the first five years. Based on its larger population the figure for Scotland is estimated to be significantly higher, at around 2,370 cases.

Named persons confusion is undermining child protection

Confusion over the role of named persons has created “uncertainty within the system”, according to Scotland’s care watchdog.

The Care Inspectorate found that in 25 significant case reviews where young people were harmed, ten made reference to professional confusion about named persons.

The divisive scheme has been dogged by controversy and officials have admitted there are serious issues with its implementation.

The Inspectorate report suggested that these problems have not been resolved, indicating



there is “ongoing ambiguity” about the circumstances in which it may be appropriate to share information.

The Scottish Government said that its independent panel would address the findings. But the group has previously said

it was “challenging” to make its guidance “simple, concise and accessible”.

In June, a newspaper investigation found local authorities and NHS boards were employing around 3,000 named persons but were highly

inconsistent in how they implemented the controversial policy.

Ciarán Kelly, Deputy Director at The Christian Institute, said: “The professionals are obviously unclear and that’s only going to confuse parents and families even more.”

Westminster imposes abortion and same-sex marriage on N Ireland

Same-sex marriage and abortion will be imposed on Northern Ireland after Parliament voted to change the law.

It will end the Province’s excellent laws protecting marriage and the unborn unless the Assembly at Stormont is restored by 21 October.

The sensitive issues are devolved matters but the Commons and the Lords opted to amend the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Bill in both areas.

Amendments to introduce protections for religious liberty



and free speech on marriage equivalent to those in the rest of the UK were rejected. But without them future regulations will be open to legal challenge. The law must prevent church ministers being compelled to conduct same-sex weddings.

On the abortion changes, Callum Webster, the Institute’s Northern Ireland Officer, noted that current protections have saved an estimated 100,000 lives. He said: “It’s tragic that MPs from outside Northern Ireland actually cheered the passing of this legislation.”

Thousands oppose 'inappropriate' Relationships Education plans

Thousands of parents and teachers have raised concerns over Government plans for mandatory Relationships Education in all schools from September next year.

Some 11,000 people responded to a consultation on teaching Relationships and Sex Education in England. Nearly 60 per cent said the proposed content for primary schools was not "age-appropriate". Almost two-thirds said the same about Relationships and Sex Education in secondary schools.

The Government chose to downplay the level of opposition and in late March, MPs voted overwhelmingly to pass the changes.

Schools will be under a statutory requirement to consult parents over how the changes are implemented. But young children could be taught



about a variety of relationships, including homosexuality, transsexualism and same-sex marriage once Relationships Education is introduced from September 2020.

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools and the right of withdrawal will remain for sex education. However, there will be no

automatic right to opt-out of Relationships Education. This is a fundamental shift in authority from the parent to the state.

At secondary level the longstanding right to withdraw from sex education will also be downgraded. Under the new regulations, headteachers can veto a parent's request to withdraw their child.

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

MSPs support 'presumed consent' for organ donations

MSPs have backed a switch to an opt-out system for organ donation. When the law changes in autumn 2020, deceased Scottish adults will automatically be deemed to have consented to donate their organs, unless they have explicitly objected.

Widespread concerns were raised about the Bill, prompting MSPs to make clear that people have the freedom to opt-out.

A similar system will come into effect in England next year.



UK Govt rejects drug rooms in Scotland

Calls to liberalise drug laws in Scotland have been rejected by the Home Office.

Just under 1,200 people died in Scotland as a result of drug taking last year – the worst rate in Europe. But pro-drugs campaigners are pushing for drug rooms to be made legal here.

The Home Office has said there is no legal framework for drug consumption rooms and no plans to introduce them. UK drugs laws are reserved to Westminster.

In England, the head of the NHS has said the Government's decision to allow some doctors to prescribe medical cannabis risked turning out to be a "big mistake".

Simon Stevens warned it could 'normalise' drug use. Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department of Health and Social Care, added that rushing into cannabis-based medicines risked a "disaster" like the thalidomide scandal.

For the facts, read our new publication **'Going soft on cannabis'**.



Scotland gets set to introduce heterosexual civil partnerships



Heterosexual couples will be able to have a civil partnership, rather than get married, under Scottish Government proposals. It will introduce the legislation after the summer.

Last year judges at the Supreme Court ruled that limiting civil partnerships to same-sex couples breached

the European Convention on Human Rights. This prompted the Westminster Government to pledge to introduce the legislation in England and Wales.

Institute Director Colin Hart has previously described civil partnerships as 'marriage-lite'. He said the changes "profoundly undermine marriage".

'Rigged' process ends doctors' opposition to assisted suicide

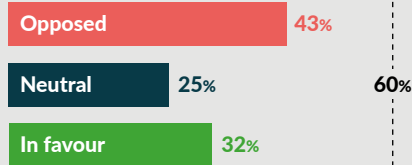
The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) in London has ended its historic opposition to assisted suicide.

The RCP opted to take a 'neutral' stance – the least popular option among members.

The largest group, 43.4 per cent, wanted to continue to oppose assisted suicide. Only 25 per cent supported a neutral position.

However, without consultation, the College decided it would become

Should the RCP support a change in the law to allow assisted suicide?



Royal College of Physicians

Online survey of 6,885 members, 5 February to 1 March 2019.

'neutral' unless another position received 60 per cent of the vote.

The British Medical Association

and Royal College of General Practitioners, which both cover Scotland, plan similar polls for their members.

The Mystery of the Trinity



Watch the Mystery of the Trinity video series on our website: christian.org.uk This six-part series sees the late Dr R C Sproul give an overview of the issue, explain difficult concepts and explore biblical teaching on the Trinity. The series is provided courtesy of Ligonier Ministries.

Going deeper with the CI podcast



The new monthly CI podcast series covers various issues of interest for Christians in Britain's shifting culture.

So far these longer listens have explored no-fault divorce, parental rights, same-sex marriage and abortion.

Coming up we'll examine Relationships and Sex Education, some of the landmark cases the Institute has dealt with over more than 20 years, and 'The Joy of Preaching'.

🔊 Listen at the.ci/podcasts

Good news from the US



🔊 Christian bakers Jack Phillips (left), and Melissa & Aaron Klein.

In the US, Christian businesses have received a boost from the courts and a wave of states have upheld laws to protect the unborn in recent months.

Jack Phillips won a US Supreme Court case over a

same-sex marriage cake last year and another legal action over a 'gender transition' cake has now been dropped.

The Court has also ordered a review of a decision against fellow Christian bakers

Melissa and Aaron Klein.

On abortion, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Mexico and North Dakota have all upheld laws which protect women and the unborn.

'We were living a gay lifestyle, but God changed us'



Sarah Sedgwick 🔊

During the summer months, the Government, public bodies and the corporate world have been falling over themselves to celebrate LGBT lifestyles. In contrast, men and women who refuse to give in to same-sex attraction are often vilified or ignored.

But in an exclusive interview, Sarah Sedgwick told us how she has committed her whole life to God after realising

that the Bible is clear that homosexual practice is wrong. She encourages practising homosexuals to look at the Bible's big picture of God's "design for men and women" – from creation through to the gospels. Sarah is not alone.

To watch Sarah's story, and read of others who found freedom from homosexuality in Jesus, go to: the.ci/sarah-sedgwick

Scots Govt sidelines 'misleading' schools transgender guidance

Highly misleading guidance for schools on transgender ideology has been sidelined by Holyrood ministers. The Christian Institute had threatened legal action over the "glaring errors" in the document.

'Supporting Transgender Young People', produced by LGBT Youth Scotland, ignores exemptions in the Equality Act.

It 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 tells staff and pupils to use a transgender pupil's preferred pronoun, regardless of their personal views, or

risk being regarded as 'transphobic bullies'.

The guidance originally carried the Scottish Government's endorsement but it will now produce its own version.

In England, radical trans activist group Mermaids recently came under fire for exposing the personal details of vulnerable children when confidential emails were left visible online.

A group of academics also accused LGBT lobby group Stonewall of presenting "anti-scientific claims" about gender as "objective fact, without the opportunity for scrutiny".

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Registered office: The Christian Institute, Wilberforce House, 4 Park Road, Gosforth Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8DG
Tel: 0191 281 5664 Fax: 0191 281 4272 Email: info@christian.org.uk Website: www.christian.org.uk
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