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Standing firm on Christian values

As we head into a new year we can give thanks to God for his blessings in recent months.

The Government has put its plans for extended Sunday trading on hold – at least for now. The Defend Free Speech campaign, spearheaded by The Christian Institute, had a successful Parliamentary launch and the campaign is gathering support across the country.

We also welcome Stormont blocking the latest attempt to redefine marriage in Northern Ireland – the fifth such attempt in three years.

We are alarmed, however, by Government proposals which could see Ofsted start to inspect church youth work.

Looking ahead, we are undertaking landmark legal challenges. In the first few months of 2016 we will be supporting Ashers Baking Company through its appeal process. We will also have our case against Scotland's intrusive Named Person scheme heard in the Supreme Court.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the work of The Christian Institute.

Ofsted may inspect church youth work for “undesirable teaching”

Ofsted could become England's state regulator of religion according to deeply alarming Government proposals.

Under its extremism policy, the Government is consulting on giving Ofsted legal power to assess whether church youth work complies with 'British values'.

It envisages a nationwide registration scheme for any out-of-school setting providing instruction to under 19s for more than 6 hours in any week.

It would specifically encompass one-off events which, for example, only run during school holidays.



Therefore, the plans would include holiday Bible clubs, church weekends and summer camps. Under certain circumstances, youth clubs may be covered.

The consultation paper says teaching deemed to be incompatible with British values is “undesirable” and will be prohibited.

Sanctions would include banning people from working with children and closing premises in order to address “the harm caused by extremism”, including “emotional harm”.

Director of The Christian Institute Colin Hart said the plans were a “panic measure” which

would leave churches “wide open to false accusations”.

“The State should not regulate Church teaching. Unleashing Ofsted inspectors on churches and summer camps is a recipe for disaster.”

“Churches do not radicalise children. In fact Christians are most likely to be the victims of extremist actions around the world. We are law-abiding citizens who support democracy and are taught to love our neighbour. The Government is looking in the wrong place for extremists.”

The consultation closes on Monday 11 January 2016.

Govt backs down on church leader watchlist but EDO concerns remain

At the start of October the Government backtracked on its plans to create a national register of faith leaders. The climbdown came after Christian Institute supporters raised the alarm with MPs. In response, Home Office minister Mike Penning told supporters that the Government has "no plans" to introduce such a measure.

The Counter-Extremism Strategy, which was officially launched on 19 October, made no reference to the watchlist but did include plans for controversial Extremism Disruption Orders (EDOs). However,



Home Office minister Mike Penning MP said the Govt has "no plans" to introduce the Church leader watchlist.

the Strategy failed to address the free speech concerns over EDOS raised by MPs, lawyers, security experts and police officers.

Over 50 influential Christian leaders wrote to The Daily Telegraph

ahead of the strategy being published warning that EDOS threaten democracy and would be a "disaster" for the church. Leaders including Institute Director Colin Hart and the Principal of Oak Hill College Revd Dr

Mike Ovey argued that the stated goal "to tackle 'extremism in all its forms' casts the net so wide that almost anyone could fall into it".

Home Secretary Theresa May has said that the 'anti-extremism' policy involves promoting "acceptance of different faiths". Confusing acceptance of people with acceptance of beliefs has already had repercussions. In September, Warwick University's Students' Union tried to ban a speaker opposed to terrorist group Islamic State as she might cause offence to Muslims.

Defend Free Speech campaign launched at Parliament

The Defend Free Speech campaign, which opposes Extremism Disruption Orders (EDOs), is continuing to gain momentum following its official Parliamentary launch in October.

The event, hosted by former Shadow Home Secretary David Davis MP (pictured), was attended by staff from The Christian Institute, the National Secular Society, homosexual rights campaigner Peter Tatchell and other concerned groups.



Speaking at the launch, the Institute's Simon Calvert likened EDOS to "ASBOs on steroids" and warned against the culture of "you can't say that" becoming "the order of the day".

Join Britain's most unlikely campaign group at defendfreespeech.org.uk to oppose the Government's intolerant counter-extremism plans.

DEFEND FREE SPEECH
.ORG.UK

Are you an extremist?

Take the test and join the campaign at defendfreespeech.org.uk

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'Life sentence' for parents of child wrongly removed



David Parker

A young cohabiting couple had their child forcibly removed from them and given up for adoption after they were wrongly accused of child abuse. Despite being cleared of all charges in October, it is highly unlikely they will get their child back because adoption orders are almost always final.

Richard Carter and Karrissa Cox were charged with child cruelty, but medical evidence eventually showed that bruising had been caused by a blood disorder.

Despite being found innocent, their legal team said the ruling is final and gives the couple a "life sentence" without their child, adding: "This tragic case highlights the real dangers of the government's drive to increase adoption and speed up family proceedings at all costs."

Although the Institute believes that the parents should have married, this would not have changed the outcome. It sets a worrying precedent for children being permanently removed from families on the basis of false allegations.

COMMENT

Will Govt's new adoption approach add fresh obstacles for Christians?

In November the Government announced new adoption measures aimed at introducing tougher regulations on England's councils to avoid children being placed with those it labels as "unsuitable relations". The Government is also concerned that the adoption process takes too long.

What this might mean in practice is still unclear, but the tragic case of Karrissa Cox and Richard Carter (left) demonstrates the danger of the authorities acting too quickly once they have made their minds up about parents.

In recent years there have been a number of reports



Vlad

of fostering and adoption decisions being made on the grounds of political correctness. These included children being taken from one couple because they were members of UKIP. In some areas Christians have also faced difficulties when seeking to adopt, because of their biblical approach – such as

going to church or upholding traditional marriage.

The Institute is concerned that the Government's new stance may provide greater scope for councils to reject Christians who seek parental responsibility for child relatives. We are consulting legal experts.

Unborn babies respond to music at just 16 weeks, new study shows

Unborn children have been shown opening their mouths and sticking their tongues out in response to music at only 16 weeks old. Researchers in Spain found that nearly 90 per cent of babies in the womb moved their heads and limbs when they heard music, while almost half reacted by putting out their tongue.



Instituto Marques

Hundreds turn out for Scottish chapter of 'Faith under fire' tour

Nearly 700 people gathered to hear the testimony of Christians who have suffered for upholding their faith, as part of the Institute's 'Faith under fire' tour in Scotland during the autumn.

Daniel McArthur of Ashers Baking Company and B&B owner Hazelmary Bull spoke to packed venues around Scotland over the course of a week.

Mrs Bull said that she and her husband Peter

had been "overwhelmed" by the turnout, "especially in the Highlands and Islands". The Bulls were sued in 2008 by a same-sex couple over their policy to allow only married couples to share a double bed.

Daniel McArthur, the General Manager of Ashers, spoke movingly of God's faithfulness and thanked the Christians in attendance for their prayers, letters and other expressions of support for the family.



Daniel McArthur, General Manager of Ashers Baking Company, addresses supporters at the 'Faith under fire' meeting in Glasgow.

Ashers appeal date announced

Ashers Baking Company will be back in court in February as it appeals against a ruling that it broke the law. The Christian-run bakery declined to decorate a cake with a pro-gay marriage campaign slogan in 2014. The Court of Appeal in Belfast will hear the case on 3 February.



Guernsey votes to redefine marriage

Lawmakers on Guernsey sadly backed redefining marriage in a vote earlier this month. The island has faced pressure from gay rights campaigners to legalise same-sex marriage.



Guernsey dropped plans earlier this year to replace marriage with civil unions, which would have abolished marriage entirely in law and replaced it with a partnership agreement.

COMMENT

Extremism against Christians

Christians are currently the primary victims of extremism around the world. They face harassment, intimidation and violence at the hands of extremists, both religious and non-religious.

Core freedoms – of speech, religion and the freedom to raise a family – are denied to Christians in numerous countries around the world, including some in receipt of UK aid.

Sadly there is also a noticeable level of anti-Christian extremism already present in the UK. As it seeks to implement its counter-extremism policy here, the Government needs to recognise that Christians are the victims and not the perpetrators of extremism.



◀ To read our briefing visit: christian.org.uk/extremism-against-christians

Govt postpones bid to extend Sunday trading

Plans which could see Sunday trading extended in England and Wales have been put on hold by the Government.

MPs from the Conservatives, the SNP, Labour and the DUP have all spoken out against the idea. Ahead of the Government's decision, a legal opinion commissioned by The Christian Institute warned of "unintended consequences" for Scotland from the move. John Bowers QC also stated that more Christians would be forced to choose between their faith and their job.

The Church of England, the TUC and The Christian Institute have all spoken out against the proposal to empower local authorities to permit large shops in their area to open for more than the current maximum of six hours.

In October, the Institute's Deputy Director Humphrey Dobson met with civil servants and explained the biblical teaching on how a day of rest is of benefit to all. You can watch a special video feature on the meeting at christian.org.uk/sundaytrading

opening hours	
mon	8.30am - 6.30pm
tues	8.30am - 6.30pm
wed	8.30am - 6.30pm
thurs	8.30am - 6.30pm
fri	8.30am - 6.30pm
sat	9.00am - 5.00pm
sun	closed

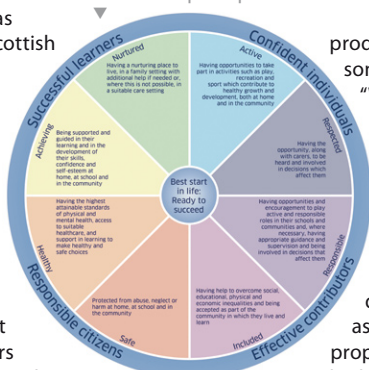
Opposition to named persons boosted ahead of court date

The former head of an association of headteachers has described the Scottish Government's controversial Named Person scheme as a "completely unnecessary interference with parental rights".

Carole Ford, former President of School Leaders Scotland, wrote to The Scotsman in October to say that the scheme "diminishes parental responsibility" and that its implementation was a "direction of travel no sensible society would follow".

She concluded with a warning to the SNP Government that: "Delivering soundbite policies will do nothing for vulnerable children."

"Propaganda": A theatre company is promoting SHANARRI principles of 'wellbeing' in schools.



production – using songs including "We've got the Right" and "SHANARRI song".

The No to Named Persons (NO2NP) campaign described the play as "pro-Government propaganda", highlighting that the SHANARRI principles of 'wellbeing' are foundational to the Named Person role.

In November, it emerged that school children across Scotland are being taught about the principles behind the Named Person scheme by a theatre company. Hopscotch Theatre Company has been touring primary schools with its bizarre "Rights of the Child"

propaganda", highlighting that the SHANARRI principles of 'wellbeing' are foundational to the Named Person role.

The legal case against the Named Person scheme is to go before the Supreme Court on 8 March 2016, seeking to stop the scheme being rolled out later in the year.



Same-sex marriage stopped for a fifth time at Stormont

Attempts to redefine marriage in Northern Ireland have been stopped at Stormont for the fifth time.

In November, Assembly members narrowly backed the motion calling for the Executive to bring in legislation – by just one vote.

But prior to

voting the DUP tabled a 'petition of concern', requiring a majority of MLAs from both the unionist and nationalist communities to approve any change.

Callum Webster, The Christian Institute's Northern Ireland Officer, said: "A small number

of activists might be pushing for this change, but the people of Northern Ireland do not want to see such a fundamental building block of society redefined."



Lillian Ladele (1960-2015): A courageous Christian lady who stood up for marriage

It was with sadness in October that we reported the passing of Lillian Ladele, a courageous Christian lady who stood up for her beliefs about marriage.

Lillian was forced out of her job as a registrar over her conscientious objection to same-sex civil partnerships.

The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund supported



Lillian's long-running legal battle, which went all the way to the European Court of Human Rights.

The Institute's In-house Solicitor Sam Webster, and solicitor Mark Jones who represented Lillian, were

invited by her family to speak at the funeral.

Mr Webster said: "Lillian's case established principles

which are now impacting other cases and situations for good. It is a tribute to Lillian that official guidance now prompts public authorities to explore how they might accommodate those with a conscientious objection, including registrars."

Lillian died at home of natural causes aged 54.

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 would help us plan for the future, and enable us to continue working to preserve Christian freedoms for future generations.



☎ **0191 281 5664**
🌐 **christian.org.uk/support**
✉ **legacy@christian.org.uk**

Institute Patron pushes ahead with Bill to curb Sharia councils

In October, the House of Lords debated a Bill which seeks to restrain the operation of Sharia councils in England and Wales. The Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill was tabled by Baroness Cox (pictured), a Patron of The Christian Institute. Baroness Cox said the suffering of some women oppressed by religiously-sanctioned gender discrimination undermines the principle of one law for all.

The Government confirmed that it would



launch an investigation into Sharia councils. It said there was evidence that Sharia law is, in some cases, being "misused and applied in a way which is incompatible with the law".

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