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Defending biblical truth

The United Kingdom faces a great deal of uncertainty at the present time. Let us give thanks that God remains in control.

In the coming year there will be significant challenges on marriage and religious liberty that could shape our nation for generations to come.

'No-fault' divorce will be a catalyst for further family breakdown. The increasing culture of branding disagreement as 'hate crime' is having a chilling effect on religious freedom.

The principles at stake are clear and Christians are right to be concerned. Christians cannot expect anyone else to take a stand for gospel freedom. It is so important to think through these issues biblically and act accordingly.

As we head into 2019 we give thanks to God for his many blessings on our work.

Thank you too for your support as we seek to equip you to defend biblical truth in our secular world.

Institute fights for marriages amid Govt push for 'divorce on demand'

The Christian Institute's Director Colin Hart has attacked Government plans to make divorce much easier and quicker.

Under the proposals set out in a consultation, a spouse would be able to get a divorce on demand.

Mr Hart called them "the latest in a string of policies over many years targeting marriage, which have left their mark on the younger generation.

"We are already seeing a deeply worrying shift in young people's attitudes, away from Christian marriage and lifelong



➤ A significant minority of 18-24s support temporary marriages and polygamy.

commitment to your husband or wife.

"Forty-two per cent of marriages already end in divorce but the Government is carrying on as if it wants it to be 100 per cent. Its

approach to no-fault divorce is a marriage-wrecker's charter."

He made the remarks after a new poll found nearly one in four 18-24-year-olds in the UK support the idea

of temporary marriage contracts.

Nearly a third support polygamy and 'fluid arrangements'. Bringing incest into the legal definition of marriage was backed by 13 per cent.

The ComRes poll asked 2,000 UK residents about their views on marriage, cohabiting and civil partnerships.

Commenting on the findings, Times columnist Robert Crompton said: "A funky new modern contract honouring a less binding agreement can be called something, but it can't be called a marriage".

Government bows to pressure on addictive betting machines

The Government has agreed to bring forward cuts to the maximum stakes on addictive betting machines from October 2019 to April.

More than 100 MPs backed an amendment to the Finance Bill to implement the cuts to fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs) six months earlier than the Treasury's preferred date.

Announcing the change, Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright said: "The Government has listened and will now implement the reduction in April 2019."

He added that the planned increase in gaming duty for online casinos would be brought forward to April 2019, to offset the Treasury's loss of earnings.

Tracey Crouch, the former Sports Minister who resigned in protest at the delay, said she was "pleased that common sense has



Tracey Crouch MP, who resigned as a Minister in protest at the delay, welcomed the new date for lower maximum stakes.

prevailed" but that more needed to be done.

Her sentiments were echoed by The Christian Institute's Simon Calvert. He welcomed the news on the timing of the cuts but called on politicians to address the problem of children and young people being drawn into gambling. Highlighting the

proliferation of gambling ads and the rise of mobile gaming, he said "we must try to rein back this gambling culture which is taking hold".

Online casino games have no maximum bets and have been slammed by campaigners for providing a dangerous alternative to FOBTs.

Police chief: 'Hate crime focus is wrong'



Chief Constable Sara Thornton

Police should not have to waste time dealing with 'hate incidents' since they are not crimes, a Chief Constable has told senior colleagues.

Sara Thornton expressed her concerns in October after the Law Commission began to consider extending the list of hate crime categories. Personal characteristics already protected include religion, sexual orientation and transgender identity, alongside race and disability.

She said police forces "do not have the resources to do everything" and should work to tackle genuine crime, rather than focusing on 'perceived offences'.

Thornton, Chair of the

National Police Chiefs' Council, expressed her hope "that the Law Commission's review on hate crime takes account of the pressure on forces before suggesting the law is changed."

HATE INCIDENT DEFINITION

“ Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is **perceived** by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate. ”

Dutch court rejects man's age-change bid

A Dutch man, 69, has had his attempt to be legally recognised as age 49 rejected by judges.

Emile Ratelband (below) says his age is holding him back in employment and dating. He said his desire was comparable to transgender people who demand to be recognised as the opposite sex.

In a recent UK poll, 32 per cent of 2,000 people supported self-definition of race, 19 per cent backed choosing your own age and ten per cent self-declaration of species.



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Welsh Govt 'patronising' as it plans to criminalise parents



The Welsh Government has launched a campaign to promote 'positive parenting' ahead of its expected attempt in the next year to criminalise parental smacking.

The Be Reasonable group, backed by The Christian Institute, dismissed 'Parenting. Give it time' as "patronising".

Cardiff mum of four, Sally Gobbett, told ITV Wales that

there was no evidence that smacking is harmful to children.

Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones wants to make it a criminal offence for parents to use 'reasonable chastisement' – which could even include picking up a misbehaving child.

Polling has shown over three quarters of Welsh adults believe parental smacking should not be a criminal offence.

Northern Ireland women ignored on abortion by Wales 'consultation'

The Welsh Government has announced it will offer free abortions to women from Northern Ireland through the NHS despite overwhelming opposition.

Just 14 respondents to a consultation supported the proposal – 1.7 per cent. Opponents included a significant number of women from Northern Ireland. They raised moral objections and concerns about the use of public money to fund abortions.

However, the Welsh Government ignored most of their responses claiming they "contained identical objections".

Ciarán Kelly, Deputy Director of The Christian Institute accused the Welsh Government



of "treating more than 98 per cent of respondents with contempt." Northern Ireland has good laws in this area, he added, because its people "regard abortion as wrong".

Relationships and Sex Ed guidelines risk 'stigmatising' religious students

Proposed guidelines on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) risk "ghettoising" religious beliefs, the Church of England is warning.

From 2020, RSE will be compulsory for all secondary schools in England, with Relationships Education taught in all primaries.

Children as young as four will be taught about "different types of relationships". LGBT activists want to ensure this includes

homosexuality, transsexualism and same-sex marriage. Ministers have denied parents the right to withdraw their children from the classes.

The CofE complained that religious perspectives are not going to be encouraged in the guidance, which will "problematise religion", "exceptionalise people of faith" and could breach the Equality Act 2010.



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