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## Defending biblical truth

Scotland 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 religious liberty and education that could shape our nation for generations to come.

An expansion of 'hate crime' laws could greatly restrict gospel freedom. Plans to embed LGBT issues across the curriculum for all state schools will marginalise Christian pupils and teachers.

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.

# Govt hate crime proposals threaten Scots' free speech

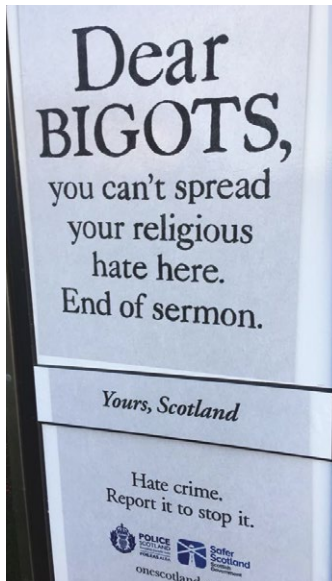
The Scottish public is being asked for its views on expanding 'hate crime' laws, which could damage religious liberty.

The increasing culture of branding disagreement as hate crime is already having a chilling effect on gospel freedom. Changes could further encourage false accusations.

The Government is consulting on altering the threshold for what hate crime is, as well as creating new offences.

It follows a review into existing hate crime legislation published in May by Lord Bracadale QC.

His report recommended laws against "stirring up hatred" on grounds of religion, sexual orientation and transgender identity.



Speaking for The Christian Institute, Deputy Director for Communications Ciarán Kelly said: "All victims of crime should be equally protected.

"We must be wary of ending up in a situation where only one person need say they are offended by something to trigger a hate crime investigation.

"The freedom to speak biblical truth on issues such as marriage and transsexualism must not be put at risk."

The One Scotland consultation was launched in mid-November. Its release followed a publicity campaign which used a series of posters addressed to 'bigots', 'homophobes' and 'transphobes'. It closes on 24 February 2019.

# 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.

## Nearly 1m Scots on 'unlawful' police database

The Named Person scheme fallout continues. Personal details



of almost one million Scots are being held on a Police Scotland database connected to the scheme.

The interim Vulnerable Person's Database (iVPD), which tracks 'wellbeing', was found to be in breach of the Data Protection Act in 2017 but the police still illegally hold the data. They are now due to delete it.

## Rewarding children for 'bigotry' set to become criminal offence

The Scottish Government plans to make emotional abuse of children a criminal offence with a maximum prison sentence of ten years.

Its consultation document indicates that emotional abuse will include those who "expose the child to antisocial role-models" or "reward the child for... bigotry". Such a poorly defined law could see Christians accused of 'emotional harm' for bringing a child up in the Christian faith.

The Government is also considering extending the offence of abuse of trust where adults engage in sexual activity with a child for whom they are

in a position of trust. This is very welcome. For many years the Institute has supported expanding the law to cover sports coaches and youth leaders.



## 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.



## 1 in 4 young people support temporary marriage contracts



Almost one in four 18-24-year-olds in the UK support the idea of temporary marriage contracts, according to a recent poll.

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

Christian Institute Director Colin Hart said "the poll shows

a quarter of youngsters believe getting married should be similar to buying a mobile phone. This is a deeply worrying shift in young people's attitude, away from Christian marriage and lifelong commitment to your husband or wife."

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

## 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 continue working to preserve Christian freedoms for future generations.



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## Prof John Mackay, 1948-2018

Scottish pastor, lecturer and Bible commentator, Prof John L Mackay, died at the end of October, aged 70.

Prof Mackay was a frequent visitor to The Christian Institute for over 20 years. He spoke more than 30 times on topics ranging from the Person of Christ to the Ten Commandments. His talks on the Moral Law and the Dignity of Work were also turned into popular booklets.



The Institute's Colin Hart called him "a great man of God" and said "Christians are greatly in his debt".

The professor was formerly

Principal and Professor of Old Testament Studies at the Free Church of Scotland College, now Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

# Smacking ban consultation underway

A consultation on making smacking a criminal offence was launched in November.

The Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee has asked the public's view as John Finnie's Bill goes through Holyrood.

Finnie has admitted that he smacked his own children, including his daughter Ruth Maguire MSP, and said they turned out "well-rounded".

Maguire co-signed her father's proposal for the Bill and leads



the committee now tasked with scrutinising it. Four others on the committee also signed the proposal.

Be Reasonable, which is campaigning against the ban, said the committee is 'obviously biased'.

A 2017 ComRes poll showed the planned ban was opposed by almost 75 per cent of Scots.

Would you like us to visit your church?



We visit over 250 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: [scotland@christian.org.uk](mailto:scotland@christian.org.uk)

## LGBT issues to be promoted throughout school curriculum

Education Secretary John Swinney has announced that all state schools will be required to promote LGBT issues in every subject.

Activist group Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) said it was "delighted" and looking forward to "continuing our work with the Scottish Government as we progress towards full implementation".

But Christian Institute Deputy Director Simon Calvert warned that children from families who do not subscribe to the state-sanctioned view will be made to feel isolated in their schools.

He said: "LGBT activists are often highly intolerant of Christianity. Many families will be concerned about how far this is going to go."



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