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Defending the ordinary work of churches across the UK

The UK Government says its proposed 'conversion therapy' ban is not intended to impact "everyday religious practice".

But activists are unhappy and are putting pressure on Government ministers. They want to impose their LGBT theology on Bible-believing churches using the force of the criminal law. They want a Gospel without repentance and without the need for Christ's death on the cross in our place. So we will continue

to defend the ordinary work of churches and Christian parenting.

Others seek to undermine God's good design by pushing abortion, assisted suicide and radical transgender ideology. We thank God that there are still so many prepared to oppose them and stand up for what is right.

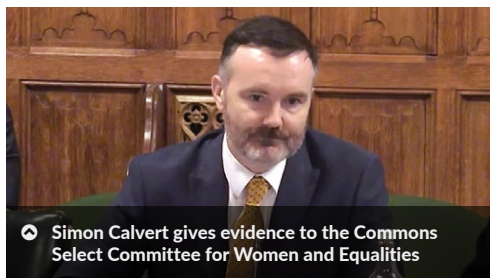
We are particularly thankful for the recent vindication of Stirling Free Church over its stand to uphold biblical marriage.

'Conversion therapy' ban: Institute warns MPs over risk to churches

The Christian Institute has warned MPs that a proposed conversion therapy ban risks "bringing in one of the most religiously repressive laws" the UK has ever seen.

Giving evidence to the Commons Women and Equalities Committee in November, the Institute's Simon Calvert stressed that coercive and abusive behaviour 'should be caught by existing law'. He added that it would be difficult to devise a ban that "does not get used to undermine the ordinary work of churches".

LGBT activists are seeking to restrict parental freedom,



gentle prayer and pastoral advice, but the Institute has warned that such a ban would be a major breach of human rights law.

Ahead of the evidence session, Minister for Equalities Mike Freer wrote to the Institute saying that the Government does not intend to outlaw "everyday religious

practice". He said: "The freedom to express the teachings of any religion will not be affected by the ban, and there should be no doubt that individuals will still be able to access support and counsel from religious leaders."

But Mr Calvert told the Committee that the consultation's proposals are 'confused' and suffer

from a "lack of detail".

The Institute is spearheading the Let Us Pray campaign which seeks to ensure that parents and the ordinary work of churches are not caught by any ban.

The campaign had been critical of the Government for running its consultation for just six weeks rather than the standard twelve. Just before the 10 December deadline, the Government announced an extension to 4 February.



let us pray

Join the campaign:
letuspray.uk

Stonewall's capture of public institutions exposed by Nolan

An 18-month BBC investigation has exposed the widespread influence of Stonewall on UK public institutions.

Stephen Nolan produced the ten-part podcast series with colleague David Thompson. He revealed that "really seasoned people" at the BBC warned him not to report on the issue due to his "career and safety".

The Nolan Investigates duo sent Freedom of Information requests to various public bodies asking for details of their involvement with Stonewall and its discredited 'Diversity Champions' programme.

Nolan said: "we've found examples where Government is essentially paying Stonewall to lobby it. Yes. You've heard that right. I'll say it again. Lobbyists, being paid by the people they are lobbying, to lobby."

Among the public bodies under scrutiny were the Scottish Government and the



Northern Ireland Office, which were advised by Stonewall to remove 'gendered language' from maternity and paternity policies.

The BBC subsequently announced its withdrawal from 'Diversity Champions', citing concerns over impartiality. It is the latest in a long line of organisations to leave the programme in recent months and has been publicly accused of parroting Stonewall's radical gender ideology.

The scheme costs organisations a minimum yearly membership of £2,500 plus VAT and rewards employers for promoting LGBT ideology inside and outside the workplace.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office alone has spent almost £1 million of taxpayers' money on Stonewall schemes in the last four years. The Department for Education has spent almost another £600,000.

Revealed: The abuse and threats pro-life students face from abortion activists

Pro-life students have spoken to The Christian Institute of the criminal damage and online abuse they experience at the hands of abortion activists.

The non-religious group Oxford Students For Life revealed that its materials were binned and its stall pulled down by vandals outraged by its presence at the University freshers' fair.

One student said the confrontation left her feeling "scared and threatened" and

that it had been a "thoroughly unpleasant experience".

The group's President, Anna Fleischer, told the Institute that online attacks continued after the event, with "really, really horrible comments" including activists telling the pro-life students they "should have been aborted".

She acknowledged that the incidents had been "really distressing", but said her members would not back down in the face of the threats.

Oxford University condemned



the activists' actions, with a spokesman saying it "supports the right of all our students and student groups to express views of all persuasions within the law".

'Cruel' Bill could see medics agree assisted suicide for Scots via Zoom

Liam McArthur MSP's plans to legalise assisted suicide in Scotland have been branded cruel and dangerous.

Dr Gordon Macdonald, CEO of the Care Not Killing coalition, criticised McArthur's public consultation document. It proposes that those unable to access two doctors in person could have their death approved via Zoom call instead.

The medical ethics expert blasted McArthur's "brutal proposals" for suggesting that people "would save the country substantial



amounts by being put to death".

MSP Pam Duncan-Glancy, who uses a wheelchair, warned that eroding end of life protections posed "a danger" to disabled people in particular.

But she told BBC Scotland's Debate Night that

the terminally ill also risked being exploited because the term is so vague. She said the evidence from countries where assisted suicide is legal shows there is no clarity on how long or how severely someone had to be ill to be classed as 'terminal'.

Two assisted suicide Bills have already been defeated in the Scottish Parliament since 2010.

Most recently, in 2015, Holyrood rejected Scottish Greens MSP Patrick Harvie's Assisted Suicide (Scotland) Bill by 82 votes to 36.

WATCH 



Dr Joel Zivot exposes myth of 'pain free' assisted suicide
the.ci/joelzivot

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Melvin Tinker, 1955-2021

In November, long-time friend of The Christian Institute Melvin Tinker went to be with the Lord.

Revd Tinker ministered in Hull for over 26 years and leaves behind a flourishing church. He also authored numerous books including the popular 'That Hideous Strength: how the West was lost'.

Christian Institute Director Colin Hart praised Revd Tinker as "a courageous Christian leader with a love for people and a strong desire to equip them to defend the Christian faith".

In his tribute, he added: "Melvin was unafraid to speak out on moral issues and frequently tackled leaders in the



Church of England for failing to uphold biblical truth. He will be greatly missed".

He is survived by his wife and three sons. Michael Tinker said his father would want to be remembered as "a sinner saved by so gracious and merciful a King".

Abortion activists push for buffer zones in UK and Irish Republic

Abortion activists are facing opposition as they push for 'buffer zones' around abortion clinics that would stop vulnerable women being offered assistance to help them keep their babies.

In Scotland, Women's Health Minister Maree Todd recently said that nationwide buffer zones are 'not on the cards'. Todd said legal action could be expected in response to any changes in the law. In response Scottish Greens MSP Gillian Mackay announced she intended to put

forward her own Bill.

In Northern Ireland, MLAs were warned that Clare Bailey MLA's Private Members' Bill would criminalise conversation. Bailey's Bill seeks to criminalise actions deemed to 'influence or alarm' those accessing abortion clinics. Anyone handing out pro-life literature or speaking to anyone about abortion would risk a £500 fine.

And in the Republic of Ireland, people who pray or offer advice to pregnant women near a clinic could face up to six months in prison. The proposed



legislation has been put forward by Sinn Féin senator Paul Gavan.

The Institute's Deputy Director Ciarán Kelly said the Bill was "an unnecessarily restrictive response to legal protest which

will reduce vulnerable women's options on where to seek assistance".

In England, buffer zones already exist in Ealing, Richmond upon Thames and Fallowfield, Manchester.

Queen to CofE: 'Focus on the Gospel'

Her Majesty the Queen has encouraged the Church of England to remain true to its supreme calling: "to bring the people of this country to the knowledge and the love of God".

The speech to the General Synod in November called on the Church to focus on the 'unchanging Gospel of Christ' that brings hope today "as it has done throughout the ages".



Welsh Govt's 'LGBTQ+ Action Plan' influenced by Stonewall

The Welsh Government has held a public consultation on its 'LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales'.

The content of the action plan has been heavily influenced by Stonewall and other LGBT activists.

It includes stated goals of challenging "heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions" and banning "all aspects of LGBTQ+ conversion therapy".

The Institute's Ciarán Kelly expressed particular concern at the lack of a definition for so-called conversion therapy in the Welsh Government's plan.

Urging supporters to respond to the consultation, he warned: "Activists are openly calling for a ban to include praying



with people who ask for prayer about their sexuality. This would be extremely dangerous for religious liberty".



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private matter but deeply
relevant for our society.



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Judge dismisses 28 'copy and paste' divorce applications

A family court judge dismissed 28 'DIY' divorce applications after the claimants presented identical reasons for abandoning their spouses.

The couples all used unregulated website iDivorces to file the online applications on their behalf. Its standard template contained examples of 'unreasonable behaviour' such as a spouse who had become "moody without justification", on "at least a couple of days every week". But the couples



failed to change the wording, prompting Mr Justice Moor to note that it was "quite impossible" for every respondent to have behaved "in exactly the same way". Each petitioner, he said, would "simply have to start again".

Online divorces have been possible

since 2018, but in June last year, MPs voted to introduce 'no-fault' divorce in England and Wales from April 2022. This will allow divorce in just six months and remove the need for divorcing spouses to provide any reason for ending their marriage.

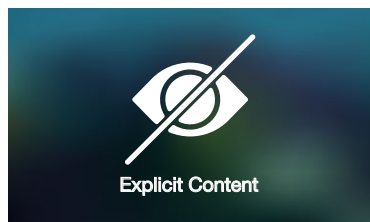
Majority of Brits back tougher restrictions on pornography

A majority of British adults have expressed support for tighter restrictions on online pornography in a YouGov survey for Sky News.

Of the 1,657 people surveyed, 63 per cent – including 80 per cent of women – backed tougher measures. Almost half felt that the availability of online pornography contributes to violence against women.

The UK Government launched its draft Online Safety Bill in May. It does contain some curbs against pornographers, but campaigners are challenging the lack of any age verification checks for online porn.

The checks were approved under the Digital Economy Act



2017, but plans to implement them were abandoned in October 2019. The Government claimed they would be covered by the new Bill.

In November, the High Court in London gave permission for father-of-four Ioannis Dekas and student Ava Vakil to challenge the Government's decision.

Multimillion-pound trust admits religious discrimination against Christian groups

Scotland's largest grant-making trust has apologised to two Christian groups for unlawfully discriminating against them.

The Christian Institute has been assisting Stirling Free Church and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) in separate legal actions against The Robertson Trust for terminating their agreements to use its premises.

The claim hearing began in the Sheriff Court in April and was due to resume on 1 December. A settlement has now been reached



in which the Trust admits it broke equality law and apologises to both organisations. It has also paid a substantial contribution towards legal costs.

The church's minister, Iain Macaskill, said it was "grateful and relieved", adding: "Our legal action was never about financial compensation. It was



about the principle." Equality and human rights law protects the freedom

of Christians to hold and express their beliefs.

In July, an Employment Tribunal ruled that The Robertson Trust had unlawfully discriminated against its CEO Kenneth Ferguson because of his Christian views on marriage. The Tribunal found Mr Ferguson, an elder of Stirling Free Church, was unfairly dismissed in March 2020. The level of his damages is yet to be decided.

BGEA recently settled successfully with three other organisations (see below 📌).

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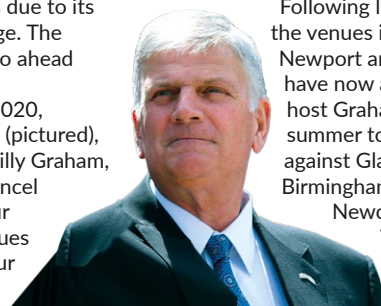
Franklin Graham tour to proceed as venues concede on marriage beliefs

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) has successfully settled legal actions against three venues which cancelled events due to its views on marriage. The rallies will now go ahead in 2022.

In February 2020, Franklin Graham (pictured), son of the late Billy Graham, was forced to cancel the speaking tour when seven venues refused to honour

their contracts. They caved in to LGBT activists who objected to his mainstream Christian belief that same-sex marriage is "a sin".

Following legal action, the venues in Liverpool, Newport and Sheffield have now agreed to host Graham's 2022 summer tour. Claims against Glasgow, Birmingham and Newcastle upon Tyne are ongoing.



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