

institute Update

Issue 6
Summer 2005

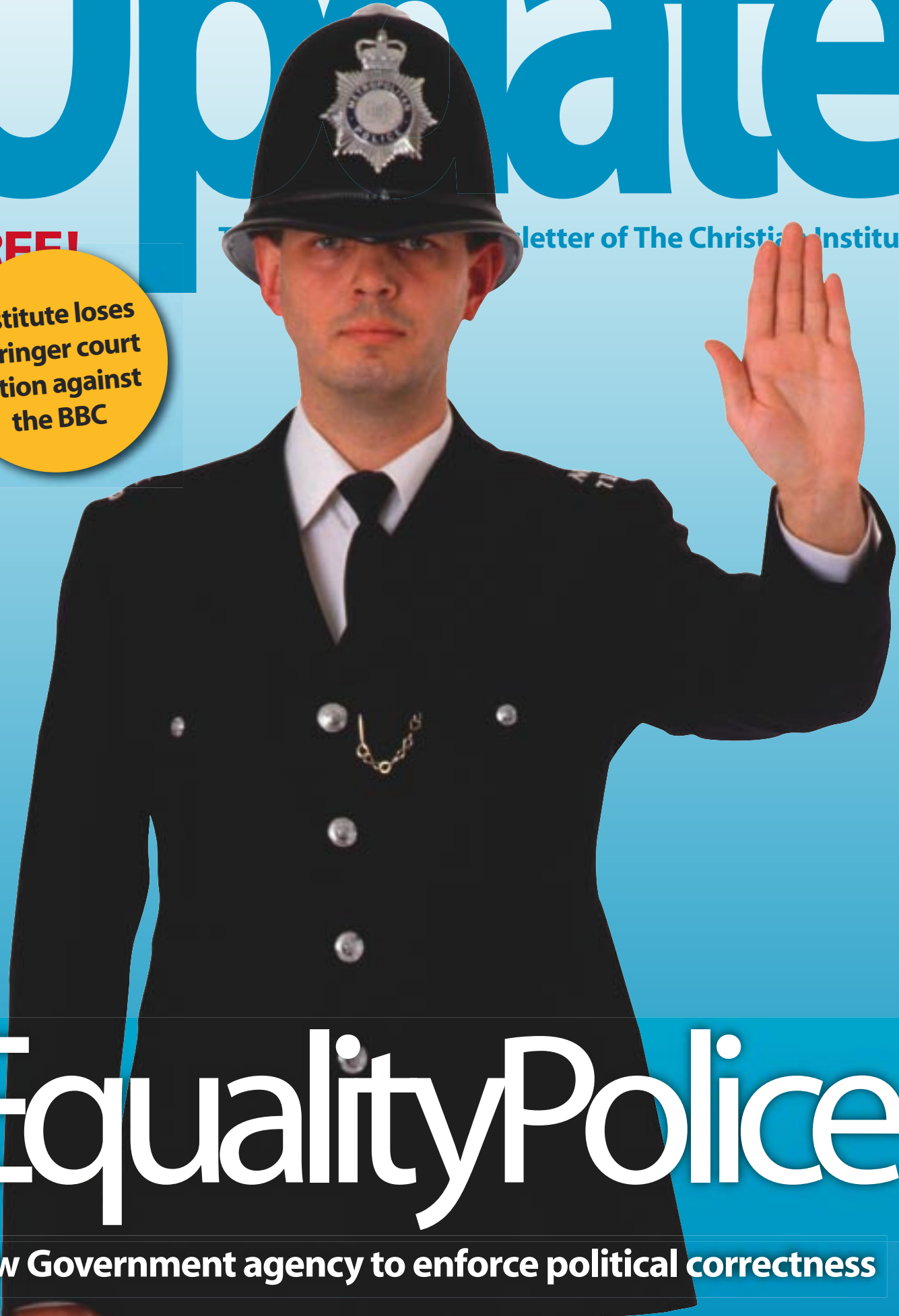
THE
CHRISTIAN
INSTITUTE

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Around the nation

Staff and trustees from The Christian Institute have continued to travel around the nation holding meetings about our work. These meetings give supporters an opportunity to meet staff members and learn more about our work and our campaigns. For people who are unfamiliar with the Institute, the meetings serve as a good introduction. We work hard to make our meetings professional, encouraging and informative.

If you would like The Christian Institute to visit your area, please get in touch. We cannot guarantee to accept every invitation, but we will consider each one carefully.



Meetings held by The Christian Institute and events attended by Institute staff and trustees August 2004 to May 2005



CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN A SECULAR WORLD

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Registered Charity No. 100 4774 Company No. 263 4440

Where the battle rages

All people are created equal. All people are made in the image of God. All people have sinned. All people are in need of a saviour. All people are precious – regardless of race, ethnicity, ability or sex. If that is what ‘equality’ means, then the Bible has long since proclaimed these truths.

But all ideas are not equal. Not all behaviour is equal. Not all religions are equal. We say that because we believe in right and wrong, we believe in saying good is good and bad is bad. The trouble is, the crusaders of political correctness don’t agree (although they seem quite willing to say our views are ‘wrong’ and ‘bad’). They want to push their distorted view of ‘equality’ on us. They want everyone to view the world as they view it – and they are prepared to use the force of law to do so.

The Government – which is dominated by a humanistic worldview – has introduced an Equality Bill to Parliament (*see article on page 7*). The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats also back the plans. Amongst other things, this Bill will propose the setting up of a new Government agency with police-like powers to ensure that politically correct laws are being followed.

The Bill also proposes to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of religion in the provision of goods or services. Whilst there are some protections for religious believers and organisations in the plans, woe betide any business which provides practical support for missionaries or Church leaders. They will be held to be discriminating against atheists. Perhaps the same will be said about hospitals which have Gideon Bibles by the beds of patients. The Government is also considering extending the plans to cover sexual orientation. The idea behind such laws is that a traditional Christian view of right and wrong is no longer acceptable. Such overarching ‘equality’ legislation is effectively forcing a humanistic view of morality onto the public.

The Government also seems determined to introduce an ‘incitement to religious hatred’ offence. This is such an unguided missile that even secular humanists oppose it as they believe that it could be used against them. Such an offence could criminalise ordinary criticism of other religions. Jesus commanded us not to hate our enemies, but love them (Matthew 5: 43-44). So what could be wrong with a law against religious hatred? Well, the problem is the law catches far more than ‘hatred’. It could outlaw ordinary criticism of false religions, wrong

ideas or immoral behaviour. This is not just our view. It is a view supported by leading lawyers, many politicians and secular journalists. The Christian Institute will oppose the introduction of this law because it goes way beyond ‘religious hatred’. There is also another important fact. If an incitement to religious hatred law goes through, gay rights groups will say it should be a crime to criticise homosexuality. Government ministers are already sympathetic to the idea. Given the grip the gay rights agenda now has on the powers that be in the UK this would be even more serious than an incitement to religious hatred offence.

There are today real threats to our freedom to speak of Christ as the only way of salvation. And we must strongly defend this freedom. But this is not where most ‘Christian casualties’ are to be found in Britain today. Christians are losing their jobs, being visited by police and being convicted of criminal offences because of their beliefs on moral issues. It is not just the moral views we hold, but also our liberty to act according to those views which is under attack. There are, of course, other battles raging – inside and outside the visible church. For example, Steve Chalke’s denial of the doctrine of penal substitution needs to be strongly contested. But in terms of Christian casualties the battle over moral issues is one of the fiercest.

The battle over moral issues is fierce at the moment because we live in a culture which rejects moral absolutes. Two social workers and a paediatrician have been hounded from their jobs because of their opposition to gay couples being allowed to adopt children. A church in South Wales was sued because it refused to allow a transsexual man to join the ladies meetings. A Bishop was criticised by the Police for saying that homosexuals can reorientate. And Magistrates convicted a street preacher of harassment for having a sign saying homosexuality was immoral. These cases are on the front line of persecution in Britain today.

Of course the secular stranglehold we are experiencing in Britain falls a long way short of the sort of persecution endured by believers in many other parts of the world. The danger of what we are experiencing is that Christians go quiet about their faith. They will self-censor themselves and say nothing when they ought to speak out.

Jesus warned us, “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of

him...” (Mark 8:38). This means *all* the words and teaching of Christ. If we ‘bravely’ declare those truths that no one finds objectionable and keep silent about those things which are presently unpalatable then we are not declaring all of Christ and all of his words. As Martin Luther famously said, “If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God *except* precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I maybe professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefields besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”

Some Christians look at the repeated attempts to introduce a ‘religious hatred’ law, they look at the sweeping ‘equality’ rules being brought in, and they get battle-weary. “What is the point of protesting? These things will happen in any case,” some people say.

I believe there is every point in protesting: imagine how bad things would be if we put up no resistance at all. We are suffering now because of a lack of Christian resistance in the past. Are we going to do the same thing now and make it harder for the next generation of Christians? And even if we don’t succeed in stopping the proposals altogether, if nothing else, delay is a good thing. We have been free of a ‘religious hatred’ law for four years because of opposition from Christians and others. That’s four years without that particular stick to beat Christians with. We should also be aware that there remains a sizable resistance in Parliament and in the media to a ‘religious hatred’ law. The battle to oppose such a law is winnable, so we should do all we can to win. We should also be prepared to put our heads far above the parapet – it’s the safest place to be. Most importantly, God is glorified when we do what is right and true – regardless of whether we win or lose. We may not succeed with every campaign, but there should at least be a witness to the truth.

So, let us be steady and loyal. Let us not flinch or flee from where the battle is fiercest. With the Lord Jesus Christ as our leader and protector let us contend for our faith and our freedom.



Colin Hart, Director

Institute appoints Northern Ireland Officer



**Our new Northern Ireland Officer,
Callum Webster**

■ **By Humphrey Dobson**

Of all the regions in the UK, Northern Ireland has arguably the strongest Christian presence. It is said that within a 30 mile radius of Belfast there is one of the highest concentrations of evangelical churches in the world. Average church attendance is greater than elsewhere in the British Isles, save perhaps the Hebrides. The positive influence of Christians of a past generation can still be seen in Northern Ireland society.

But sadly the Christian basis of Northern Ireland's culture has been decaying during the past decade. The media has a secularising influence. The human rights agenda is re-shaping legislation in a way that undermines traditional family life and the Christian heritage. Recent laws threaten the freedom to speak out for biblical truth in the Province. The pressure to introduce more godless laws is escalating. Staff in the state sector are coming under increasing pressure to comply with pro-homosexual views.

The Christian Institute has recognised the

need to develop its work in Northern Ireland and to equip local churches in the fight back against secularism. To take forward our work within the Province, the Institute has appointed Callum Webster as Northern Ireland Officer.

Callum will be working in Northern Ireland to promote the Institute's campaigns. He will be supporting local churches as they take a stand on key moral issues, organising meetings with churches and individual Christians throughout the Province. He will also communicate the Institute's concerns to elected representatives and public bodies.

Originally from Scotland, Callum has lived and worked in Belfast for the past 6 years.

He has an honours degree in Modern History & Political Science from Dundee University. Aged 27, Callum has worked for over 3 years in the field of research and policy development in both the political arena and the voluntary and community sector. Having seen the moral slide in the rest of Britain, he is keen to do what he can to defend Northern Ireland. We are delighted that Callum has joined the team.

Dr Hotonu says goodbye to The Christian Institute

■ **By Mike Judge**

Dr Oluseyi Hotonu has left The Christian Institute to take up the post of Specialist Registrar in Genitourinary Medicine at Newcastle General Hospital. For five years Dr Hotonu has been a Research Assistant specialising in medical ethics at the Institute.

During those years, she has conducted research into a number of vital issues including human cloning, abortion, the morning-after pill, sexually transmitted diseases, and cannabis.

She has also represented The Christian Institute on various committees and has spoken to GPs and medical students about vital aspects of medical ethics.

Most recently, The Christian Institute has published a book written by Dr Hotonu examining the pro-life implications of

various types of contraception (*see article on page 5*).

In the five years she has worked at The Christian Institute, Dr Hotonu has seen a number of developments in the sphere of medical ethics. "There is a much higher profile of beginning-of-life and end-of-life issues," she said. "This has been largely due to advances in science raising new ethical questions and some high profile cases which have hit the headlines. For example, a new technology which shows 'live' moving 3D images of babies in the womb has helped refresh the abortion debate." (*see article on p5*).

However, despite a higher profile, Dr Hotonu says medical ethics have deteriorated in the last five years. "The Government licensed human cloning to create cloned embryos to be

experimented on and then destroyed, the morning-after pill has been made available without prescription to women over 16, the new Mental Capacity Act has weakened the law against euthanasia," she said.

Dr Hotonu believes it is vital that Christians engage in these debates. "There needs to be a witness to the truth. This requires accurate research and reasoned argument. That is what The Christian Institute is about. It has been a privilege to work with the staff of the Institute for these past five years."



Law against Euthanasia weakened

■ By Humphrey Dobson

A law allowing euthanasia by omission (e.g. by withdrawing food and water) in England and Wales has been passed by Parliament.

The Mental Capacity Act allows relatives to stop an incapacitated patient receiving food and water, as in the tragic death of Terry Schiavo in the USA. Dr Peter Saunders (of the Christian Medical Fellowship) has highlighted the “loopholes whereby non-dying mentally incapacitated patients can be starved and dehydrated to death in their ‘best interests’ either on the say so of those given power of attorney, or according to a legally binding advance directive [a ‘living will’].”¹

Euthanasia by acts of *commission* (e.g. by administering a lethal injection) is currently illegal in the UK. But recently a House of Lords Select Committee analysed Lord Joffe’s Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill. Whilst its report did not call for the legalisation of euthanasia, it did urge Parliament to debate the issues raised at an early opportunity.² It conspicuously failed to uphold the conclusion of the earlier 1994 Lords Select Committee which rejected euthanasia. Lord Joffe has promised to continue his campaign in the new Parliament.

In Scotland, Lib Dem MSP Jeremy Purvis has consulted on his plan to introduce a euthanasia Bill to the Scottish Parliament.

¹ See http://www.cmf.org.uk/ethics/mcb_passed.htm as at 3 May 2005

² House of Lords Select Committee on the Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill, HL Paper 86-1, Vol. 1: Report, Abstract

Pro-life groups cautious about calls for abortion law change

■ By Mike Judge

Pro-life groups have cautiously welcomed the partial recognition by political leaders that the abortion law is too lax.

Under the current law, abortions for ‘social’ reasons are allowed up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. But many people think that limit is too high because some babies born as early as 20 weeks have survived outside the womb.

The abortion debate has also been affected by new imaging technology which allows parents to see moving 3D images of their baby inside the womb. Images showed a 12-week old baby ‘walking’ in the womb. Following publicity of the new images, the Prime Minister told Parliament that if there were changes in scientific evidence it would be sensible to consider it.¹ However, prior to the election he refused to commit parliamentary time to lower the abortion limit.²

The Conservative Party leader, Michael Howard, was asked for his views on abortion during the run-up to the General Election in May. He said he favoured reducing the legal limit for abortion from 24 weeks of pregnancy to 20 weeks.³ The Liberal Democrat leader, Charles Kennedy, was also in favour of MPs having an opportunity to reconsider the time limit.⁴

But pro-life groups warn that pro-abortion MPs may try and make abortions earlier than 20 weeks even easier.

Paul Tully, General Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC), said: “Any reduction in the number of abortions would be welcome. However, reducing time limits doesn’t necessarily mean reducing abortions. The last time MPs thought they had a chance to reduce the time limit, they ended up widening the law...”⁵

- ¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3873765.stm as at 19 May 2005
- ² *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 March 2005
- ³ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4344851.stm as at 19 May 2005
- ⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/vote_2005/frontpage/4432923.stm as at 19 May 2005
- ⁵ <http://www.spuc.org.uk/news/releases/2005/march13> as at 19 May 2005



This scan shows a 20-week old baby in the womb

Institute publishes pro-life guide to contraception

■ By Mike Judge

The Christian Institute has published a new book on contraception to show which methods could destroy human embryos and which do not.

The book, *Contraception: a pro-life guide*, is written by Dr O E O Hotonu of The Christian Institute (Dr Hotonu has since taken up a post as Specialist Registrar in Genitourinary Medicine at Newcastle General Hospital, see [article on page 4](#)).

The book starts from the basis that human life is sacred from conception and that the human embryo is a human being.

The aim is to provide background knowledge on how

contraceptives work. It seeks to help Christian couples understand the difference between those contraceptives which can act to destroy a human embryo and those which, according to the best available medical evidence, do not.

The mode of action of barrier methods, IUDs, and the progestogen-only pill has been generally well known. The conclusions of the booklet about those methods will be no surprise.

It has been “received wisdom”

in Christian circles that the combined oral contraceptive pill does not destroy human embryos, but now some pro-life doctors are questioning this because of changes in the chemical

composition of the pill. The

book contains an appendix that explains the issue in detail.

Copies of the 72-page book are available from The Christian Institute at a specially reduced price of £3.50.



Australian pastor appeals against 'religious hate speech' conviction



Daniel Scot and his wife, Mariat, were invited to the UK by The Christian Institute to talk about their case

■ By Mike Judge

An Australian church minister found 'guilty' of vilifying Muslims is appealing against the decision of the court.

In December 2004 Daniel Scot, a former lecturer in Mathematics at the University of Queensland, was held to have broken the State of Victoria's Racial and Religious Tolerance Act after he criticised the teaching of fundamentalist Islam in a church seminar.

Daniel Scot is a Pakistani national who grew up in that Islamic society. He fled his homeland because he faced a death sentence after refusing to convert from Christianity to Islam.

The Christian Institute examined the transcript of the

church seminar in which Daniel criticised Islam. We found Daniel Scot's comments to be fair and reasonable.

The court judgement in Daniel Scot's case is full of factual errors and Daniel Scot is appealing against the decision.

The case shows the dangers of legislating in this area. Whatever the intention of politicians, once the law is in the hands of lawyers and the courts the law takes on a life of its own.

In Daniel Scot's case, three Australian Muslim converts were sent to his church seminar by the Muslim Council of Victoria with the intention of taking offence and making a complaint. This occurred just two months after the law against religious

vilification was introduced.

The Christian Institute invited Daniel Scot to come to the UK to help us oppose plans by the UK Government to introduce an 'incitement to religious hatred' offence. He met with politicians, journalists, lawyers and church leaders. He also addressed several public meetings including a meeting of 850 people in Chessington.

His case was covered in the national press and mentioned by several Peers in the House of Lords.

His visit to the UK was an important part of the pressure put on the Government to drop the incitement plans ahead of the General Election (*see article, right*).

'Religious hate' law will be back

■ By Jonathan Phillips

In April the Government was forced to drop the proposed offence of 'incitement to religious hatred' from the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill.

This proposed offence was very badly worded and had all the likelihood of catching normal criticism of other religions. It carried a maximum seven-year prison sentence.

There was heavy opposition from the House of Lords. This opposition, combined with a lack of time before the General Election, meant the Government faced abandoning the offence or losing the entire Bill before the election.

Letters to peers from Christian Institute supporters and others undoubtedly contributed to the firm opposition to the incitement offence during the Bill's Second Reading in the Lords. Several peers have said that they received more letters on this issue than on fox hunting.

The Home Secretary sent a letter to many mosques apologising for not getting the offence on the statute book and blamed the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats for blocking the Government's way.¹

The introduction of a 'religious incitement' offence was a Labour Party manifesto pledge. The Government intends to reintroduce it in the new Parliament.

Press reports reveal that the Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, wants to use the Parliament Acts to force the measure through the Lords.² However, this option may be frustrated by Labour's reduced majority in the Commons.

...now an Australian 'witch' sues the Salvation Army because of material that criticises the occult

A jailed sex abuser and self-proclaimed 'witch' in the State of Victoria, Australia, launched a legal action against organisers of an Alpha course because it contains criticism of the occult.

The prisoner, Robin Fletcher, made the complaint after taking part in an Alpha course run by a Salvation Army chaplain in Ararat jail. The complaint is made under the same 'religious vilification' law that

convicted Daniel Scot for criticising Islam (*see article above*).

Fletcher, who was jailed for ten years in 1998 for sexually abusing teenage girls, has lodged complaints against the Salvation Army, Corrections Victoria (who run the prison system), and CMC Australasia (distributors of the Alpha course materials).

¹ Letter from the Office of Charles Clarke to Muslim leaders, April 2005
² *The Independent*, 18 May 2005

Church ministers brought under sex discrimination law

■ By Simon Calvert

There is uncertainty amongst Christian groups about plans by the Department for Trade and Industry to amend the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA).

The proposals do offer limited conscience opt-outs for churches which oppose female leadership, or which would not employ a divorcee, a transsexual, or a person in a homosexual civil partnership.

However, the changes will bring church

ministers into the ambit of the SDA's employment provisions for the first time.

This marks a further radical shift in the way the law views the relationship between a minister and his church.

The Christian Institute has opposed moves to change the 'office-holder' status of ministers which protects the freedom of conscience of both the minister and his congregation.

There is no scriptural warrant for making the minister a mere employee of his congregation.

The DTI's changes, intended to take effect in

October 2005, are being made because of a 2002 EU directive.

The SDA is not the first piece of legislation to encroach on the long-standing legal principle that a minister is not an employee.

The concern is that it is a further incremental shift towards applying the full range of employment legislation to the legal relationship between a minister and his church.

The Christian Institute, along with other Christian groups, will be making representations to the DTI.

Will the 'equality police' be paying you a visit?

■ By Simon Calvert

The Government is set to bring back its Equality Bill to establish a 'Commission for Equality and Human Rights'

– a powerful body designed to enforce laws on sexual orientation and on religion throughout Great Britain. A previous Equality Bill introduced in March 2005 fell before the General Election. All three main political parties support the Bill and the Government has

already re-introduced it in the new Parliament.

This new agency will have the authority to launch its own investigations regardless of whether a complaint has been made. It will even be free to conduct investigations into Christian organisations and churches. The Commission is intended to clamp down on discrimination in a range of areas, including opposition to gay rights. In the current climate, there is a real risk that the Commission will be manipulated by individuals who want to target evangelicals.

The Equality Bill will also outlaw religious discrimination in the provision of goods and services. There are exemptions for religious groups but it is not yet clear whether these are broad enough to protect all the activities of churches and Christian organisations. There is concern, for example that it could outlaw organisations that provide goods and services for Christian missionaries on preferable terms.

The Bill had also been expected to outlaw goods and services discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. This was absent from the Bill introduced earlier this year. According to press reports, the Government left the measure out to avoid upsetting Muslim voters before the General Election.¹ However, the new Equality Bill introduced in this Parliament may well include sexual orientation.

At present there are no laws prohibiting discrimination in the provision of goods and services in relation to 'sexual orientation'. Churches can refuse to rent out the church hall to a gay rights group. A Christian bed and breakfast can also refuse to allow a homosexual couple to stay in a double room. This could all change unless there are wide-ranging exemptions to protect religious belief.

¹ *The Sunday Times*, 27 February 2005

Institute loses Springer court action



Colin Hart

In May a judge in the High Court firmly refused permission for The Christian Institute's legal action against the BBC for broadcasting the blasphemous musical, Jerry Springer - the Opera.

We are naturally very disappointed by the news. It is a tragedy for our nation that such a blasphemous anti-Christian show has been deemed to comply with broadcasting regulations. What a decadent culture we live in! I would like to assure supporters that nothing more could have been done to fight the case. We had a very strong legal team (headed by Richard Gordon QC). The BBC engaged David Pannick QC to put up a robust defence citing the fact that the show had won many theatrical awards and arguing that the BBC had the right to screen the opera because of "Freedom of Expression". The judge sided with the BBC.



The BBC cited artistic merit in its defence

We sought a declaration from the High court that the BBC acted illegally when it broadcast the show. There were two grounds for the Institute's action. First, the broadcast broke the 'taste and decency' provisions of the BBC's royal charter (the legal document which establishes the BBC). Second, the broadcast discriminated against Christians by mocking the Christian faith in a way that no other faith has been, or would be, mocked.

The broadcast of Jerry Springer - the Opera contained hundreds of swear words and systematically ridiculed Christianity. It presented the Lord Jesus Christ as a childish, foul-mouthed woman-beater who declares himself to be "a bit gay". Mary is said to have been "raped by God" and Eve attempts to fondle Jesus.

The BBC received a record-breaking 55,000 complaints prior to the broadcast, yet went ahead.

After the broadcast, the Board of Governors voted 4-1 to reject the complaints, claiming that the 'artistic significance' of the opera outweighed the offence that may have been caused.

In May, the broadcast regulator, Ofcom, also rejected almost 17,000 complaints – again saying the artistic merit outweighed the offence caused. Later in May Ofcom scrapped its broadcasting rules on taste and decency replacing them with a much weaker code. Richard Hooper, Ofcom's Deputy Chairman, suggested that the new rules could allow programmes depicting sex with animals if they were broadcast at a sufficiently late hour.¹

Though we are very saddened by these developments, we must go on praying that justice may be done and that evil may be restrained in our land. The act of complaining honours God and is a witness to the truth. We fight on.

¹ *The Times*, 26 May 2005

Plans for quick and easy divorce in Scotland

■ By Chris Prest

The Scottish Executive wants to make divorce quicker and easier.

The effect of the Family Law (Scotland) Bill will be to drastically cut the time it takes to get a divorce on the ground of separation, from the current five years to two where one spouse consents, and from two years to one where both consent.

Two important bars would be removed: the "hardship" bar, under which a court could prevent a divorce if it considered it would result in financial hardship, and "collusion" – falsifying an adulterous relationship to secure a quicker divorce.

In a separate measure, unmarried couples who live together will be given financial rights that mimic marriage, allowing them to have equal rights to property and money when they split up.

Remarkably, the Bill will for the first time in Scotland allow a man to marry his daughter-in-law or his mother-in-law.

A similar package of measures was originally introduced in 2000, but it was shelved after many hundreds of Christians opposed the plans.

Thankfully, because of strong opposition from Christians the original proposal to abolish adultery as a specific ground for divorce has not

appeared in the current Bill.

Christians must continue to defend the God-given institution of marriage which even the UK Government is on record as saying is "the surest foundation for raising children and it remains the choice of the majority of people in Britain"¹.

¹ Baroness Ashton of Upholland, House of Lords, Hansard, 17 March 2004, col. 299



Las Vegas-style Gambling laws

■ By Jonathan Phillips

In April the new Gambling Act received Royal Assent. Although there was a great deal of opposition in the media and Parliament to the new 'Las Vegas-style' mega casinos, this was only one part of the massive industry-wide deregulation introduced by the Act. Other parts were virtually unchallenged.

The Government was forced to limit the number of mega casinos to just one (although it could increase this number at any time by secondary legislation and there have already been press reports that this is its intention). This is not much of a climb-down considering the fact that, under the new Act, the smallest of the new casinos will be bigger than anything the law used to allow.

The Act makes it much easier to open new casinos; it repeals the 24-hour cooling-off period between casino membership and play; and it lifts the general ban on all gambling advertising.

In addition, slot machines will be allowed unlimited stakes and prizes. 'Virtual casino' machines, called Fixed Odds Betting Terminals, will be legalised in high-street betting shops. These virtual casino machines have been called the 'crack cocaine' of gambling.

The evidence overwhelmingly shows that removing restrictions on gambling will inevitably increase problem gambling. Yet despite the evidence, the Bill was rushed through Parliament with very little time given for debate.

The Christian Institute produced detailed briefings for MPs and Peers to help them speak out against the proposals. With the Act now affording gambling unprecedented legitimacy, it is vital Christians continue to rationally oppose gambling and highlight the addiction and harm it brings.

Home office reviews prostitution law

■ By Jonathan Johnson

The Government has consulted on alarming and radical changes to the law on prostitution.

The consultation paper, produced by the Home Office, suggested ways of tolerating prostitution.

The paper asked, "Should our response to street-based



prostitution involving adults accept or challenge its existence?"¹ Tolerance zones, registration schemes and legalised brothels were all considered.

The Christian Institute responded by pointing out that such an approach would make the situation

worse, not better; and that prostitution is inherently wrong and exploitative.

Christian belief has always viewed prostitution as degrading and wrong.² It should be challenged through a 'zero tolerance' approach.

¹ *Paying the Price: A Consultation Paper on Prostitution*, Home Office, July 2004, page 87, question 32
² Leviticus 19:29

FEATURE:

Guide to how Westminster makes laws

■ By Jonathan Phillips

When a new piece of legislation is proposed in Parliament it is known as a 'Bill'. It must be agreed by both Houses of Parliament (the Commons and the Lords) and receive Royal Assent before it becomes law and is known as an 'Act'. This process is commonly known as 'the legislative process'.

There are various stages in each House of Parliament for passing a Bill. These stages are largely similar, although there are some differences. A Bill can be introduced in either the House of Commons or House of Lords. The following outlines the stages of a Bill:

1 First Reading: This is a formality to seek permission to introduce and print the Bill. There is no debate at this stage.

2 Second Reading: Usually two weeks after the First Reading, this is the main opportunity to debate and vote on the general principles of the Bill, but not on specific parts of the Bill.

3 Committee Stage: In the Commons a specific group of MPs studies a Bill in detail. This usually starts two weeks after the Second Reading and can

last from one meeting to up to several months. Amendments can be made. At Committee Stage in the Lords, any Peer can participate.

4 Report Stage: This usually takes place two weeks after the Committee Stage. It allows the whole house to further consider the detail of the Bill, along with any amendments or new clauses from Committee Stage. New amendments can be added.

5 Third Reading: In the Commons this usually happens immediately after Report Stage. It is a final chance to debate the Bill as a whole and decide whether or not to pass it.

6 The other House: Once a Bill has completed all the stages in one House, it is passed to the other House. If there is disagreement between Houses, Parliamentary 'ping-pong' can ensue until one House gives way or a compromise is reached. The unelected House of Lords tends to give way to the elected Commons, though this depends on the strength of opposition in the Lords for a given Bill.

7 Royal Assent: If the Bill completes all its stages in both Houses, it is then sent to the Queen to give 'Royal Assent'. This is a formality. The Bill is then law, and becomes an Act of Parliament.



Gay groups press for 'homophobic hatred' law

■ **By Humphrey Dobson**

If 'gay rights' activists have their way, one day soon it could be illegal to say that homosexual practice is morally wrong. They are continuing to push for a new law which would criminalise 'incitement to homophobic hatred'.

During April Lord Alli tabled amendments to extend the law against inciting racial hatred to also cover hatred based on 'sexual orientation'.¹ Whilst the Government did not support this particular attempt, Ministers have said they are "open to considering" whether such an

offence is needed.²

Supporters of this move claim that people are 'born gay' and cannot change – just like someone is born of a particular race. But this is not true. There are many people who abandon a homosexual lifestyle. Homosexual campaigner Peter Tatchell has rejected the 'gay gene' theory as "totally implausible... It is a choice, and we should be glad it's that way and celebrate it for ourselves".³

Christians believe homosexual practice to be sinful according to Scripture (e.g. Romans 1; 1 Corinthians 6). Yet any person, Christian or not, who publicly

states that homosexual practice is immoral will fear being accused of such an offence. A similar law in Sweden saw minister Aake Green sentenced to one month in prison. This was overturned on appeal, but is now set to go all the way to the Supreme Court.⁴

Here in Britain the case of the late Harry Hammond shows that Christians have already been prosecuted under less specific criminal laws. Mild-mannered Mr Hammond was convicted of harassment in 2002 simply for holding up a placard stating that homosexuality is immoral.

Christians would never support violent or intimidating

behaviour against any person. Such behaviour is rightly already a criminal offence. But a 'homophobic hatred' law would be used regularly, via the mere threat of prosecution, to try to silence those whose views on homosexuality are not politically correct.

¹ House of Lords, Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, Revised Marshall List of Amendments to be moved in Committee, 4 April 2005. In the event the amendments were not moved due to lack of parliamentary time.

² Baroness Scotland of Asthal, House of Lords, Hansard, 14 March 2005, cols 1195-1196

³ *The Observer*, 25 April 1999

⁴ *Agence France Presse*, 9 March 2005; *The Washington Post*, 12 February 2005

Government funds 'national gay history month'



Under the programme pupils are told that Florence Nightingale had 'lesbian tendencies'.

■ **By Jonathan Johnson**

In February the Department for Education and Skills promoted and helped fund the first ever 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender history month' for schools.¹

The event organised by 'gay-rights' group 'Schools Out' encouraged schools to 'celebrate' homosexuality and the gay community.²

Under this extraordinary initiative pupils were to be taught that Florence Nightingale had lesbian tendencies.³

Other suggested activities included re-

enacting same-sex church blessings and 'gay-oriented' fashion shows.⁴

One proposed lesson involved asking pupils to repeat "all the unpleasant names that they hear" in the playground. This would "provoke some embarrassment from the pupils as many of the words will be sexual or swear words." If no suggestions were made, the teacher was to offer a homophobic name.⁵

"In other words," Nick Cohen (*The Observer* journalist) noted, "the children must be made to fit the campaign's stereotype and teachers must be encouraged to find prejudice where little or

none exists."⁶

The scheme was not obligatory and it is thought few schools took part.

¹ Derek Twigg MP (then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools), House of Commons, Hansard, 10 January 2005, col. 195 wa

² *Teachers magazine*, Issue 36, Department for Education and Skills, January 2005

³ *The Mail on Sunday*, 23 January 2005; *The Daily Express*, 22 January 2005

⁴ *Daily Mail*, 22 January 2005

⁵ See <http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/resources/plans/lesson1.html> as at 10 May 2005

⁶ *The Observer*, 30 January 2005

Church leaders protected from transsexual 'disclosure' law

■ **By Simon Calvert**

The Government has been persuaded to partially protect church leaders from the effects of new transsexual rights laws. This is a major reversal of the Government's previous position. It represents a terrific achievement for Christian campaigning over more than a year.

The Gender Recognition Act makes it a criminal offence for anyone in an official capacity

(including church leaders and Christian employers) to disclose the true sex of a person who has legally changed their sex and therefore obtained a gender recognition certificate. The offence is punishable by a fine of up to £5,000. The offence covers vicars, curates, church ministers, churchwardens, pastoral workers, elders, deacons and PCC members.

In March 2005 the Government finally agreed to regulations that partially exempt Church ministers

from the disclosure offence.

Whilst the procedures permitting exemption are overly bureaucratic, the regulations do represent a welcome reversal of Government policy. They cover the most obvious scenarios that are likely to arise.

Visits by many church leaders to their MPs helped achieve this protection. It will help churches continue their existing practice without the risk of breaking the criminal law.



Institute's election information is a hit with supporters

With the general election now over, here is a review of the work carried out by the Institute to give accurate and useful information to Christians.

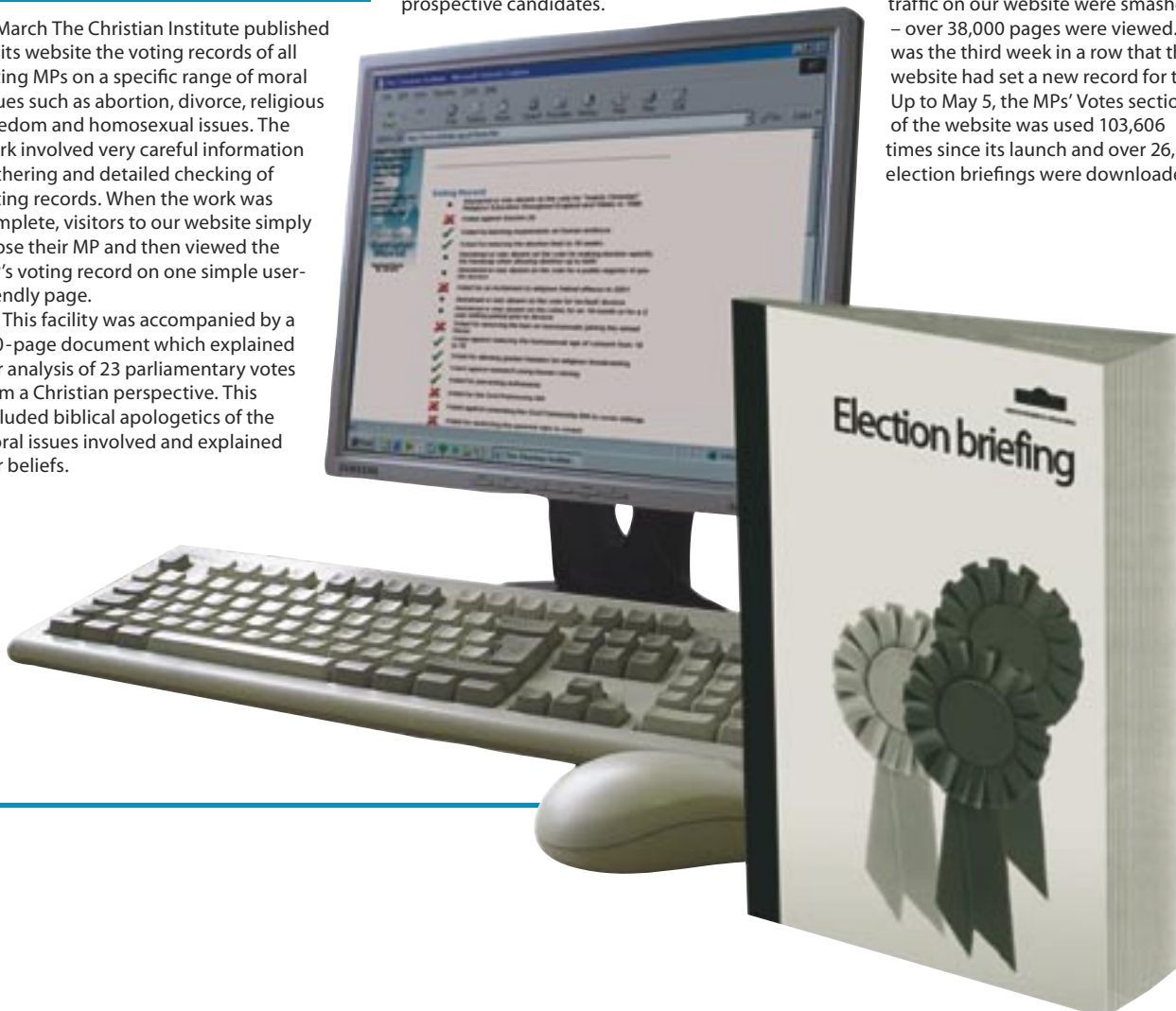
■ **By Jonathan Phillips**

In March The Christian Institute published on its website the voting records of all sitting MPs on a specific range of moral issues such as abortion, divorce, religious freedom and homosexual issues. The work involved very careful information gathering and detailed checking of voting records. When the work was complete, visitors to our website simply chose their MP and then viewed the MP's voting record on one simple user-friendly page.

This facility was accompanied by a 130-page document which explained our analysis of 23 parliamentary votes from a Christian perspective. This included biblical apologetics of the moral issues involved and explained our beliefs.

In April we published our 'Election Briefing'. This outlined the official policies of political parties on moral issues. We were able to release the briefing very quickly after the final manifestos were published. Included in the briefing were questions on important current issues for Christians to put to prospective candidates.

The briefing was sent to supporters by post. We also notified supporters by email that the briefing was available to download from our website. In the 24-hour period following the sending of the email almost 5,000 briefings were downloaded. In the week before the election all records for traffic on our website were smashed – over 38,000 pages were viewed. This was the third week in a row that the website had set a new record for traffic. Up to May 5, the MPs' Votes section of the website was used 103,606 times since its launch and over 26,000 election briefings were downloaded.



A different way of supporting the Institute

■ By Mike Judge

There are many people who value the work of The Christian Institute who are unable to financially support the work at present. One alternative is to consider leaving a legacy to The Christian Institute in your will.

It is a natural thing to want to plan for the future to ensure that your savings and possessions will be dealt with according to your wishes. For most people their primary concern is for their families. However, many people also use their will to leave money to causes they have supported during their lives.

When making a will we hope you will consider The Christian Institute. If you have already made a will, you can easily amend it to include a gift to The Christian Institute.

By leaving a legacy you will help us to do more to stand for Christian truth in the public arena and fight to make a better future for the generations to come.

One Christian Institute supporter, Mrs Cawdron from Kent, has chosen to support The Christian Institute in this way. She told us, "There are many people, particularly in the South East, who have their money tied up in property. They may not be able to financially support an organisation while they are alive but afterwards they can make a difference and leave something to help future generations."

If you would like to know more about leaving a legacy, please contact The Christian Institute and ask for a legacy leaflet. Or tick the box if you have a response form.

New booklet on the moral law

■ By Mike Judge

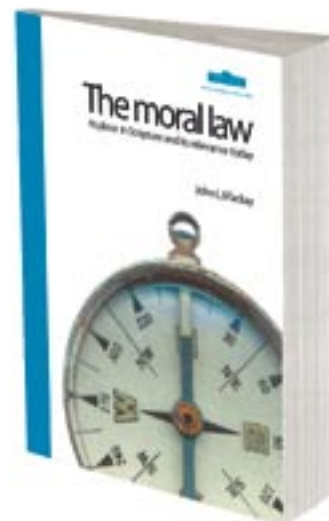
The Christian Institute has published a booklet on the role of the 'moral law' written by Professor John L Mackay of the Free Church of Scotland College. The booklet has been sent free to all church ministers on our mailing list.

It is vitally important that Christians think through the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments. Many are under the impression that Old Testament believers were saved by works through keeping the law. John Mackay shows how wrong this view is – they, like us, are saved by grace through faith in Christ. Having been justified by faith we, like believers in the Old Testament Church, need the moral

law to show us how to live.

As John Wesley said, "I cannot spare the law one moment, no more than I can spare Christ... each is continually sending me to the other - the law to Christ, and Christ to the law". There is much confusion amongst Christians over the role of the moral law. Some raise objections of 'legalism' others say 'love' has replaced 'law'. Some accept that the moral law applies to Christians but mistakenly believe it has no relevance to anyone else.

In this excellent booklet, Professor John L Mackay shows from the Bible that the moral law still applies and is bound up with God's glory, his nature, his salvation purposes and with the preservation of ordered life following the Fall.



Copies of *The Moral Law* are available from The Christian Institute priced £3.50

Institute's building plans moving forward



An artist's impression of the development which will include the Institute's new headquarters

■ By Colin Hart

The Christian Institute's plans for a new purpose-built headquarters have been delayed because of problems encountered by the developers.

Prior to the land acquisition going ahead several issues needed to be resolved including rights of way, environmental issues and legal contracts. In addition, the local council has added a new road to the development plans to improve public transport access. All this has led to problems for our developers.

The delay has given the Institute the opportunity to fine tune the internal layout of the building. This has been done with the help of architect and Christian Institute supporter, Trevor Condy. We are very grateful to Trevor for his continued help.

God willing, the Institute's planned headquarters will be part of a larger development involving other similar buildings. The artist's impression (above) will give you a good idea about how the building will look from the outside.

The whole project is likely to cost about £1.1million. At the end of May 2005 we had received £688,002 in donations to our building appeal with an expected further £82,570 to come in mainly as low-cost loans from supporters. While the shortfall of approximately £330,000 will initially be covered by a loan from the bank we are very much hoping that in the meantime the appeal fund will reach £1.1million.

The developers say building work will be completed by Summer 2006.