

SUCCESS STORIES **1** Free speech vote won in the Lords **2** Euthanasia vote won in the Lords **3** Teachers' code changed to allay concerns **4** Care home wins back funding

Institute Update

Issue 12
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THE
CHRISTIAN
INSTITUTE

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN A SECULAR WORLD

FREE

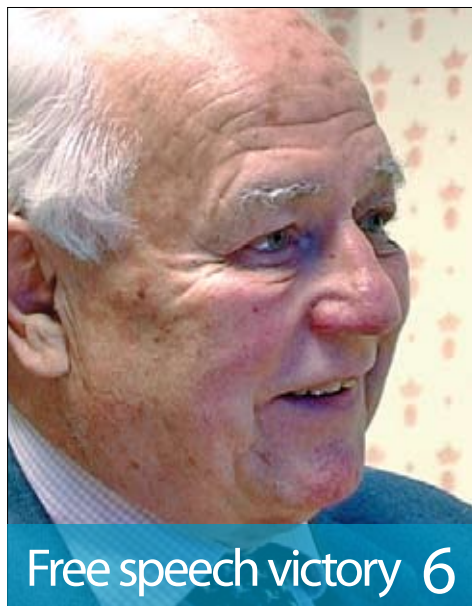
The UK-wide newsletter of The Christian Institute

Equality?

**Equality Bill
could further
marginalise
Christians**



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What can the righteous do?

When the spiritual and moral foundations of a culture are being undermined, we may well ask with the psalmist “what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3) Crying out to God for wisdom in this way does not mean we should do nothing. The first has scriptural warrant (e.g. James 1:5), the second none at all. Doing nothing is not an option for the Christian.

Our nation’s foundations have been undermined for some time but, over the past ten years in particular, Parliament and increasingly the courts have changed our laws to privilege the values of secular humanism. One result is that Christians are now finding it more and more difficult to live out their faith at school, at work or in business.

These are very serious times for our nation. In the last year a nurse has been threatened with the sack for offering to pray for a patient and a Christian care home in Brighton has had its funding for a warden withdrawn after the home refused to ask residents about their sexual orientation four times a year.

I am glad to say in these two cases the Christians involved stood firm and won. But there are many other situations which are currently unresolved. For example, the case of Lillian Ladele, the Christian registrar who refused to register civil partnerships, and the case of the Christian foster carer who was de-registered because a 16-year-old Muslim girl in her care became a Christian.

Religious liberty is now under pressure and the Equality Bill will make things significantly worse. Under the Bill it is going to be much more difficult for a Church to employ a Christian pastoral worker or for a Christian charity

to receive public money. These plans could all become law next year.

Secular humanism is not only squeezing religious liberty. It is also undermining the value of human life. There is a well organised campaign to make euthanasia legal, with a leading ethicist saying that the elderly have a duty to die.

With such ungodliness in the nation many believers can be so demoralised that they are tempted to do nothing. But events in July showed that way of thinking to be mistaken. First, the General Teaching Council for England amended their draft professional code to help ensure that Christian teachers are not required to act against their conscience. Second, the House of Lords

voted against an amendment to legalise assisted suicide. Third, the House of Lords voted to reject Government plans to scrap the free speech clause from its homophobic hatred offence. Prayer and letter writing were crucial in all these campaigns. How important it is that Christians get involved.

Though we are perplexed when evil seems to prosper, there are two great truths to remember: God’s sovereignty, and our responsibility to make a difference. Accepting that God is working his purposes out for our good can often be a real challenge to faith, yet since God is good we must acknowledge it to be true in our hearts.

No doubt there will be many battles ahead. But if you have ever wondered whether it is still true that Christians can make a difference, just think of what happened during July.



Colin Hart
Director

Lords vote down assisted suicide

SUCCESS STORY

A bid to weaken the law on assisted suicide was voted down in the House of Lords in July.

Peers voted 194 to 141 against the plan to make it legal to help someone travel overseas to commit suicide.

A disabled Peer, Baroness Campbell of Surbiton, made a moving speech appealing to Peers to reject the amendment.

Born with the wasting disease spinal muscular atrophy, she told of how three years ago doctors had convinced her that her life was at an end and that it was "time for me to go on my way".

She warned that many vulnerable patients would face similar pressure if the law was weakened.

Baroness Campbell is a former chairman of the Disability Rights



Baroness Campbell of Surbiton, a disabled Peer, spoke out against the proposals.

Commission and heads up the All-Party Parliamentary Disability Group.

She warned the House: "Legalising premature death as a treatment option plants a seed of doubt about one's right to

demand help to live with dignity and undermines the state's responsibility to ensure that all citizens can live with dignity.

"If this amendment were to succeed, it would place a new and invidious pressure on disabled and terminally ill people who think that they are close to the end of their lives.

"Some will consider death as preferable to fighting for support to live with dignity. It will be the cheapest, quickest and simplest option.

"Think of older people who are anxious not to cause their families any distress."¹

The Christian Institute, along with several other pro-life groups, campaigned against changing the law.

¹ House of Lords, Hansard, 7 July 2009, cols 613-614

Campaigner wins case but law on assisted suicide remains unchanged

An assisted suicide campaigner has won a court case which means the Director of Public Prosecutions must publish guidance on the law.

The ruling does not alter the law on assisted suicide but has nevertheless been welcomed by euthanasia supporters.

The case was brought by Debbie Purdy, who has multiple

sclerosis. She wanted to know whether her husband would be prosecuted if he helped her travel abroad to a country where assisted suicide is legal.

The Director of Public Prosecutions resisted her calls for guidance, saying the matter raises profound issues for society that Parliament should decide.

In July the House

of Lords voted against weakening the law on assisted suicide for people travelling overseas.

Although it is a crime to help or encourage someone to kill themselves, the law allows prosecutors not to pursue cases which are not in the public interest.

Despite reports that more than 100 Britons have ended their lives

in Switzerland where assisted suicide is lawful, no one has been prosecuted for helping them to travel there.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Dying Well, said: "The current law works well. It has a stern face and a kind heart. The stern face deters coercion."

¹ *Guardian Unlimited*, 2 July 2009

Real lives saved by the law

Alison

Alison was born with severe spina bifida, and is often in extreme pain to the extent that she cannot move or speak. She attempted to commit suicide several times and for ten years had “a settled wish to die”. Now she runs a charity called Enable which helps children with disabilities in India. She says: “I’m especially thankful there was no possibility of persuading my doctors to legally help me die.”¹



¹ See <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,837273,00.html> as at 3 June 2009; see <http://www.spuc.org.uk/about/no-less-human/alison> as at 3 June 2009

Betty

Severe multiple sclerosis left Betty confined to a wheelchair. With eyesight and strength reduced, at times the burden seemed intolerable. “There were three periods when I longed for the end,” she admitted, “and, if euthanasia had been legal, I would certainly have asked for it. As it is now, however, life is so worth living that I am very glad euthanasia was not allowed.”¹

¹ Smith, A M, *Euthanasia: A Licence to Kill?*, Kingsway Publications, 2006, pages 53-54

Martin

Facing terrible pain and fearing “being a nuisance” to his hospice nurses, cancer-stricken ex-soldier Martin asked a doctor to help him die.

Instead she arranged for him to attend a parade of cadets he had trained, who threw a party in his honour. His remaining days were transformed by new purpose and a realisation of his own value to others. Martin died peacefully two days later.¹

¹ Jeffrey, D, *Against Physician Assisted Suicide: A Palliative Care Perspective*, Radcliffe Publishing Ltd, 2009, pages 95-97

Matt

Like tragic Dignitas victim Daniel James, Matt Hampson was a promising young rugby player until a collapsing scrum left him paralysed from the neck down and requiring a ventilator to breathe. While Daniel was assisted to commit suicide, Matt has been able to set up a website,



is writing his autobiography and is patron of a disability charity called Special Effects. “I don’t live a bad life,” he says, “I live a different life.”¹

¹ *The Times*, 18 October 2008

Euthanasia in Holland and Oregon

The Netherlands formally legalised voluntary euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide (PAS) in 2002.

The practice of *involuntary* euthanasia is now well established, with 546 deaths in 2005 as a result of lethal drugs not explicitly requested by the patient.¹

If the 2005 Dutch euthanasia or assisted suicide rate was replicated in the UK it would mean approximately 9,000 deaths per year, including 2,000 without a specific request.

The US state of Oregon legalised PAS in 1997. The law has led to patients ‘doctor shopping’ for willing practitioners, using doctors who have minimal knowledge of their past and who may be ideologically disposed to fulfil their request.

In 2008, 50 per cent of patients requesting suicide were assisted to die by a doctor who had been their physician for eight weeks or less.²

¹ Van der Heide et al, ‘End-of-life Practices in the Netherlands under the Euthanasia Act’, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 356(19), pages 1959-62

² *Death with Dignity Act Annual Report*, Oregon Department of Human Services, see <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pas/docs/yr11-tbl-1.pdf> as at 4 August 2009

Lords back free speech clause

SUCCESS STORY

■ By Ben Mitchell

The Government has been defeated in the House of Lords over its attempt to repeal a free speech protection from a sexual orientation 'hatred' law.

Peers voted by 186 to 133 to keep the protection in place. The matter will be passed back to the House of Commons after the summer.

MPs last debated the issue in March and they voted in favour of repealing the free speech safeguard.

The safeguard makes clear that criticising homosexual conduct or encouraging people to refrain from such conduct is not, in itself, a crime.

The Government says the protection is not necessary, insisting that the threshold of the 'homophobic hatred' offence is high enough to protect free speech.

But several members of the House of Lords were concerned about incidents of Christians being challenged by the police because of their beliefs on sexual ethics.



Lord Waddington, former Home Secretary, led the campaign against the Government's attempted repeal of the free speech protection.

The Christian Institute produced a series of short video interviews with Christians who had been investigated by police officers because someone made a complaint of 'homophobia'.

Actor Rowan

Atkinson is in favour of keeping the free speech protection,¹ as are several prominent homosexuals including journalists Matthew Parris² and Iain Dale,³ comic actor Christopher Biggins⁴ and 'gay rights' activist Peter Tatchell.⁵

¹ *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 March 2009

² *The Times*, 24 April 2008

³ *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 2007

⁴ *Daily Mail*, 23 March 2009

⁵ See <http://www.petertatchell.net/hate%20crimes/hatespeechvreespeech.htm> as at 30 July 2009

Bid to strengthen laws on lap-dancing clubs

The Government is clamping down on lap-dancing clubs after its weak licensing laws caused an explosion in numbers.

The 2003 Licensing Act means that lap-dancing clubs outside London only need the same kind of licence as karaoke bars and cafes.

Since the Act, the number of clubs in Britain has surged to as many as 300.¹

Last year, Object, a group which campaigns against sex trafficking, said that women living and working near clubs face increased levels of sexual harassment.²

The Government is now seeking to strengthen the law using the Policing and Crime Bill.

It wants to reclassify lap-dancing clubs as "sex encounter venues", a category of sex establishment alongside sex shops and sex cinemas.

This will make it much harder for lap-dancing clubs to open, and give local residents more legal powers to object.

¹ *A Growing Tide*, Object, December 2008, page 11
² *Ibid*, pages 14-15

Government plans to tighten prostitution law

■ By Jess Khan

The law on prostitution in England and Wales is set to be significantly strengthened under Government proposals in the Policing and Crime Bill.

The plans have been introduced to deal particularly with the problem of sex trafficking.

Under the Bill as it currently stands, a person would commit an offence if they purchased sex from a prostitute who had been exploited for gain.

Exploitation would include use of force, threats, deception or any other form of coercion.

This would be what is called a 'strict liability offence'. It means the buyer could be guilty regardless of whether he or she knew or attempted to find out if the prostitute had been exploited.

Prostitution is inextricably linked to drug abuse, exploitation and violence.

Statistics from the 'Crime and Disorder associated with Prostitution Initiative' showed



The plans are particularly aimed at reducing sex trafficking.

that 93% of prostitutes were using non-prescribed drugs, including 88% using heroin.¹ More than half of UK prostitutes have been raped or suffered indecent assault and three quarters have experienced physical violence.²

Nine in ten prostitutes want to escape prostitution but feel unable to do so.³

Prostitution and people trafficking is now the third most lucrative black market trade in the world after gun running and drug smuggling.⁴

¹ *Tackling Street Prostitution: Towards an Holistic Approach*, Home Office, July 2004, pages i and 80

² *Ibid*, page 82

³ Farley M, Cotton A, Lynne J et al, 'Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries', *Journal of Trauma Practice*, 2(3&4), 2004, pages 34 and 56

⁴ *The Belfast Telegraph*, 3 July 2008

christian.org.uk



Prostitution briefing

Download a recent Institute briefing on prostitution here:

www.christian.org.uk/issues/2009/prostitution/briefing_jun09.pdf



Funding restored to Christian care home

SUCCESS STORY

■ By Mike Judge

The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund successfully helped a Christian care home win back £13,000 of funding which had been taken away because of the home's religious ethos.

The home in Brighton – one of ten operated in the UK by the 200-year-old Pilgrim Homes charity – was told by Brighton & Hove City Council to ask its elderly Christian residents about their sexual orientation every three months.

The home was also told to use images of gay couples in its promotional literature, promote lesbian and gay events to residents and show staff a presentation prepared with the help of homosexual lobby group Stonewall.



The home's leaflets were criticised for not including images of elderly homosexuals.



The Council demanded that residents be asked their sexual orientation.

When the home explained that the Council's demands would unsettle the elderly Christian residents and undermine the home's religious ethos the Council accused the home of "institutional homophobia" and pulled the funding.

Pilgrim Homes made numerous appeals to the Council to change its decision but the Council would not alter its stance. Having exhausted all other options, the home launched a legal action for religious discrimination supported by The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund. The move was reported in the national news media.

The Council subsequently agreed to settle the matter out of court, restoring the funding and removing its discriminatory demands against the home.

Responding to the settlement, Pilgrim Homes' Chief Executive Andrew Jessop said, "I am delighted that we have been able to reach an amicable solution with Brighton and Hove Council

and that our lost funding is to be restored.

"We will be receiving a letter from Brighton removing the allegation of 'institutional homophobia', together with the requirement that we should ask our residents about their 'sexual orientation' four times a year."

He added: "We are a Christian organisation for older Christians, and our chief concern has always been to protect their best interests.

"Many have been missionaries or pastors, and when they come into residential care or even sheltered housing they deserve the peace, comfort and security of an organisation that supports their dearly-held religious beliefs.

"We do not think our Brighton home – and others like it – should be denied access to public funding just because of those beliefs."¹

¹ *Telegraph.co.uk*, 7 February 2009, see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/4548761/Christian-care-home-victorious-in-gay-dispute.html> as at 3 August 2009

Receptionist sues school for religious discrimination

■ By Jen Davis

A Devon mother who works part-time as a receptionist at her children's school is taking legal action against her employers for religious discrimination.

The school investigated Jennie Cain for professional misconduct after she sent a prayer email to friends asking them to pray about a school incident involving her five-year-old daughter.

The email was sent from Mrs Cain's home, in her own time, using her own personal email account.

It asked friends to pray because her daughter had been reprimanded by her classroom teacher for expressing her Christian faith to another child.

The case hit the headlines in February and followed news



Mrs Cain is defending religious liberty for herself and others like her.

of a nurse being suspended for offering to pray for a patient.

The head teacher, Mr Gary Read, defended the decision to reprimand the five-year-old girl.

He told local TV news that he would not allow children at

school to state their faith as it were fact.

As a result of her treatment over sending the prayer email, Mrs Cain has lodged a claim for religious discrimination with an employment tribunal.

Carer struck off after Muslim girl converts

An experienced Christian foster carer has been struck off because she allowed a Muslim teenager in her care to convert to Christianity.

The girl was interested in Christianity before she came to the carer, but when she decided to be baptised council officials said the carer had failed in her duty to preserve the girl's religion.

They said the girl should stay away from church for six months, and later struck the carer off the fostering register. Neither can be named for legal reasons.

The carer is now challenging the decision with support from The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund.

Christian registrar case continues

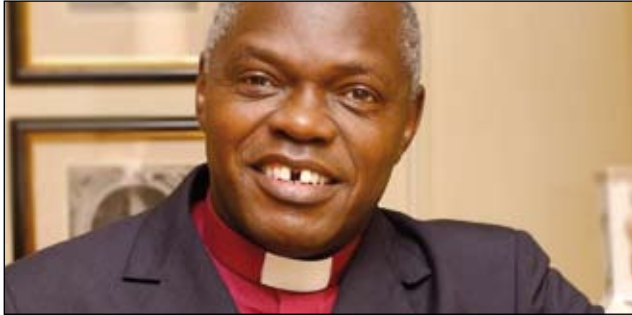
Christian registrar Lillian Ladele, who was ordered to perform homosexual civil partnership registrations or face the sack, is continuing her legal battle against Islington Council.

The Council accepts that it has been able to provide a "first class" civil partnership service without needing Miss Ladele to take part.

She won an initial tribunal hearing which ruled she had been bullied and discriminated against because of her faith. But this was overturned at an appeal tribunal.

Supported by The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund, she is taking her case to the Court of Appeal. A hearing is scheduled for November.

Archbishop: Christians must take faith to work



■ **By Jen Davis**

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, is worried about workplace discrimination against Christians.

In February he said: "Asking someone to leave their belief in God at the door of their workplace is akin to asking them to remove their skin colour before coming into the office.

Faith in God is not an add-on or optional extra.

"For me, my trust in God is part of my DNA; it is central to who I am and defines my place in the world. It informs my whole life, not just a weekly service on a Sunday."

He said Christians are facing problems at work because bosses fail to grasp this.¹

¹ *Daily Mail*, 13 February 2009

Sidelined Christians feeling the squeeze, new polls show

Thousands of Christians are losing out at work and fear their religious liberty is at risk, according to polls conducted this year.

More than four in five Christians believe religious freedoms are at risk in the UK, according to a survey published in January.¹

In a separate ComRes poll carried out in May, over half said they had suffered some form of persecution for being a Christian.²

One in twenty said they had been reprimanded or cautioned for sharing their faith at work, and a similar proportion said they

had lost out on a promotion because of their beliefs.

¹ *Pollwatch*, ComRes, January 2009

² *Telegraph.co.uk*, 30 May 2009, see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/5413311/Christians-risk-rejection-and-discrimination-for-their-faith-a-study-claims.html> as at 30 July 2009

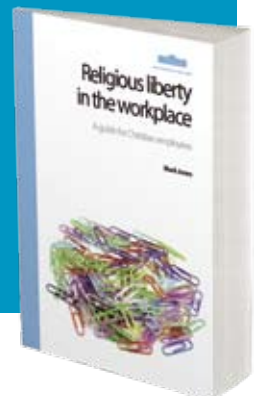
Know your rights in the workplace

Does the law let you share your faith at work? Can you give a Christian opinion on controversial topics? What if your boss gives you a duty which conflicts with your faith?

Mark Jones, head of employment law at Ormerods solicitors, answers these and many more questions in his guide, *Religious liberty in the workplace*, published by The Christian Institute.

Mark has advised many household name corporations, and he has assisted a number of Christians who have faced problems at work because of their faith.

You can download the guide from christian.org.uk or contact The Christian Institute to request free copies.



Informing thousands of Christians every day

■ By Mike Judge

Our website, with its mix of breaking news and helpful Christian resources, continues to be increasingly popular.

Visits to *christian.org.uk* hit a record high of 102,625 during the month of June – up from 65,801 visits per month at the start of the year.

Staff have been working on developing the resources section of the site so that Christian teaching on important issues will be easier to find.

A brand new 'opinion' section is being developed which will host a series of commentary articles on topical issues written from a biblical perspective.

The website's audio library of Christian teaching remains



Christian.org.uk and our Facebook page keep thousands informed.

in high demand. Since the beginning of the year our audio files have been listened to around 50,000 times – almost ten times per hour.

Supporters of The Christian Institute can also follow us on the popular social networking site, Facebook. This allows Christians to interact with our information

and share it easily with their friends and family. More than 1,000 people follow our work in this way, with over 100 new people joining each week.

The Christian Institute is making the most of the latest technology to share the unchanging message of Christ in the public sphere.

Charity guide being prepared

Staff from The Christian Institute have been developing a guide to help Christian charities – including churches – understand new 'public benefit' rules from the Charity Commission.

This has involved obtaining expert legal advice from a top charity law firm and the Institute will be publishing information in due course. We hope this will be a great practical help to churches and other Christian groups.

Institute meetings across the nation

In the first half of 2009 The Christian Institute has organised 110 meetings in churches and other venues around the nation.

The meetings have been attended by 6,742 people, who have heard Christian teaching on a range of issues. They have also received information about how they can promote the Christian faith in the public sphere.

A large range

of free literature is available at most of our meetings and members of staff give presentations about our work. People have the opportunity to ask questions and speak to us about the issues they care about.

If you would like a Christian Institute meeting in your area, please contact us and request one. We cannot guarantee to accept every

invitation but we will consider each one carefully.



Events Co-ordinator,
Debbie Stephens

Gay youth workers could be forced on churches

■ **By Matt Jess**

Churches could be forced to consider practising homosexuals or transsexuals for youth worker posts if the Equality Bill becomes law, the Government says.

Employment discrimination laws currently include exemptions which protect the religious liberty of churches and other faith groups.

But the Bill will narrow the circumstances under which such exemptions would apply.

Under the current law, religious groups can restrict posts to Christians whose private

conduct is consistent with the Bible's teaching on sexual ethics.

These posts must be for the purposes of organised religion, which could include jobs like a youth worker.

But under the Equality Bill the Government is specifying that this protection can only apply to posts that mainly involve leading worship or explaining doctrine.

The Bill's explanatory notes make it clear that this protection "would not apply to a requirement that a church youth worker or accountant be heterosexual".

The Church of England is demanding to know why the Government inserted such a "substantial narrowing" of church exemptions without any prior consultation with Christian groups.¹

The Roman Catholic Church has accused the Government of failing to understand the nature of religious life.²

¹ *Church Times*, 15 May 2009

² Memorandum from the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales, House of Commons Public Bill Committee on the Equality Bill, Uncorrected Evidence m14, June 2009, para. 5

£47,000 fine for Bishop sued by homosexual youth worker for refusing him church job

■ **By Mike Judge**

Last year the Diocese of Hereford was ordered to pay £47,000 in compensation to a man who was turned down for a job as a youth worker because of his homosexual lifestyle.

John Reaney took the Diocese to an employment tribunal after being questioned by the Bishop of Hereford about his lifestyle during a job interview.

The tribunal found that Mr Reaney, whose legal action was funded by homosexual

campaign group Stonewall, had been wrongly discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation.

The original ruling was issued in July 2007, but it took another seven months to decide the question of compensation.

Despite a legal exemption covering youth worker posts, the case was lost because of procedural issues and because teaching from the House of Bishops did not require Anglicans, other than ministers, to commit for life to celibacy or marriage.



Bishop of Hereford, the Rt Revd Anthony Priddis, was sued under employment discrimination laws.

The case shows that individuals, backed by powerful lobby groups, are willing to use the law to sue

churches that do not employ practising homosexuals as youth workers.

Christian firms may be cut out of Government contracts

Christian businesses could find themselves losing out on Government contracts under plans contained in the Equality Bill.

The Bill has the potential to discourage public bodies from entering into commercial contracts with businesses that do not demonstrate the right commitment to 'equality and diversity'.

It is uncertain how this procurement aspect of the Bill will work in practice because the details will be contained in regulations brought forward once the Bill is in force.

However, the Government has placed strong emphasis on the importance of using public purchasing power to "broaden equality's reach". Minister Angela Eagle said it was "essential" that public procurement does not just achieve value for money but achieves "a fairer society and greater equality of opportunity for all".¹

In the past 'equality and diversity' rules have been used against Christian groups and individuals who publicly express their faith.

¹ Office of Government Commerce Press Release, *Angela Eagle Asks Public Sector to Make Equality Count*, 10 December 2008

Activist group wants to force churches to employ atheists

The British Humanist Association wants the Equality Bill changed so that churches and Christian groups who are contracted to provide public services will be forced to employ atheists.¹

Under the current law religious organisations can, where there is a genuine occupational requirement, select employees on the basis of their religion.

This allows such groups to have a staff that supports the religious ethos of the organisation.

In the same way, the Labour Party has a policy of only employing card-carrying members of the party.

The Government says it does

not intend to alter the 'religion or belief' exemptions afforded to faith-based employers. But it is coming under pressure from the British Humanist Association and others to narrow the protection.

¹ British Humanist Association, *New Bill fails to promote real equality for non-religious people*, 28 April 2009, see <http://www.humanism.org.uk/news/view/273> as at 30 July 2009

christian.org.uk



Equality Bill Updates

To keep informed of the latest news and resources on the Equality Bill visit:

www.christian.org.uk/equalitybill



Christian charity told jobs can't be kept for believers

■ **By Jen Davis**

In 2008 a court decided that a Christian charity was acting unlawfully by expecting key members of staff to share its beliefs. Legal exemptions for religious organisations were held not to apply in this case.

The charity, Prospects, cares for people with learning

disabilities. In 2004 it introduced a new employment policy in order to protect its religious ethos.

But a manager who changed his beliefs claimed the policy had forced him to resign and took his case to an employment tribunal.¹

Mark Sheridan said he had been required to discriminate against

job applicants and existing staff who were not Christians.

He won the case with support from the British Humanist Association.²

¹ *BBC News Online*, 5 December 2007

² British Humanist Association, *Tribunal Victory for Employee in Landmark Religious Discrimination Case*, 16 May 2008, see <http://www.humanism.org.uk/news/view/104> as at 30 July 2009

Equality laws may force public bodies to promote 'gay rights'

■ **By Jen Davis**

All public bodies like the police, schools and local councils could be forced by law to promote gay and transsexual rights if Government plans are passed by Parliament.

Under proposals contained in the Equality Bill

public bodies will also have a duty to promote equality of religion, but this may result in public references to Christianity being replaced with those that are multi-faith.

In September last year the Trades

Union Congress (TUC) called for the duty, known as the Single Equality Duty, to be extended to the private and voluntary sectors. This would include churches. The Government rejected the TUC's suggestion.

Two publicly-funded broadcasters, the BBC and Channel 4, have expressed concern that a Single Equality Duty could interfere with their editorial independence by imposing politically correct quotas of actors and presenters.¹

Homosexual

activists have been boasting about how they hope to use the Single Equality Duty to force local councils to back their demands.

When Canterbury City Council chose not to fund a gay play in a local theatre one activist who works in Parliament said: "With an Equality Duty, this behaviour would be made quite literally *illegal*."²

¹ *Guardian.co.uk*, see <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/apr/29/bbc-channel-4-equality-bill> as at 1 May 2009

² See <http://equalitybill.com/2009/04/27/a-good-reason-to-support-the-equality-duty/> as at 17 July 2009



Police

Even without a Single Equality Duty (SED) we have seen street preachers wrongly stopped by police officers on grounds of offending Muslims or homosexuals. A Lancashire couple were interrogated in their home by two officers after complaining to the Council about displays of homosexual literature. An SED could see Christians facing more problems with the police.

Schools

A Single Equality Duty could force schools to promote homosexuality to pupils. This is already going on in some schools, particularly during LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) History Month, an event devised by the homosexual lobby. An SED could increase pressures on faith schools and Christian teachers.

Councils

Councils are already scrapping Christmas celebrations to avoid offending minorities. One told staff not to use the phrase "singing from the same hymn sheet" because it might offend atheists.¹ A Single Equality Duty could see further efforts to sideline Christianity.

¹ *The Sunday Telegraph*, 9 November 2008

'Gay rights' laws force adoption agencies to close

■ By Jess Khan

Most of Britain's 14 faith-based adoption agencies have closed or abandoned their religious ethos because of homosexual discrimination laws.

The agencies played a key role in finding homes for children often described as 'hard to place'.

These have included children with severe medical problems, and over half have been in sibling groups.

But in 2007 the Government introduced the Sexual Orientation Regulations (SORs), which outlawed discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods and services.

Under the Regulations faith-based adoption agencies are forced to consider homosexual couples as adopters or face crippling legal action.



Gay men sue guesthouse over double rooms policy



The Chymorvah Hotel, near Penzance, has been run by Christian couple Peter and Hazelmary Bull for over 20 years.

■ By Jen Davis

The Christian owners of a guesthouse in Cornwall are being sued under controversial equality laws because they have a 'married couples only' policy for their double rooms.

Peter and Hazelmary Bull have always operated the policy because of their Christian belief about the importance of marriage.

When Steven Preddy booked a double room by telephone last September, Mrs Bull believed he would be staying with his wife.

But when he arrived with his civil partner, the guesthouse's manager said it could not accommodate them.

Prior to the incident gay activist group Stonewall had written to the guesthouse saying its policy was illegal.

Laws leave Christian groups vulnerable

■ By Mike Judge

The Equality Bill consolidates divisive laws that have exposed Christian groups to hostile legal actions in the name of 'diversity'.

The laws deal with the provision of goods, facilities and services and make it illegal to discriminate on

grounds of religion or sexual orientation.

There are some protections for religious liberty but these are not wide enough.

As a result faith-based adoption agencies have been closed down or forced to drop their religious ethos (see left-hand panel) and Christian guesthouse

owners have been sued (see above).

The Equality Bill could be amended so that the religious liberty protections are extended.

The Christian Institute is pressing the Government to do this because the current laws are being used to push Christians out of the public sphere.

EU Directive threatens religious liberty

■ By David Greatorex

An EU Directive which threatens the religious liberty of Christians continues to be discussed by Government ministers from across Europe.

The Directive would be made even worse if proposals from the last European Parliament are adopted.

Under MEPs' plans, UK churches could be sued for refusing to give communion, baptism or church membership to a non-Christian.

The Directive covers discrimination in the provision of goods and services across the four areas of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.

The current draft includes exemptions that allow religious bodies to restrict some services, such as communion, to those who share their religious beliefs.



But MEPs wanted the exemptions to be radically narrowed.

They also said faith schools should only be allowed to select pupils who share their ethos if this does not "lead to a denial of the right to education".

Under this wording, an atheist may be able to sue a church school which does not accept them on the grounds that their

right to education has been infringed.

The Directive must now be approved by the Council of the European Union. It is thought that many nations will recognise that the MEPs' changes are extreme and will not accept them.

The Swedish Government, which strongly supports the Directive and took up the presidency of the EU at the start of July, has set a target of finalising the text by November. But others think this time frame is unrealistic.

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Harassment provisions:

One of the most alarming features of the draft EU Directive is that it includes a harassment provision.

Under the draft Directive, a person merely has to show they have been offended and their dignity has been violated whilst they are receiving a good or a service in order to satisfy the definition of 'harassment'.

This highly subjective wording would be a major threat to freedom of speech and religious liberty.

If retained it could be interpreted so broadly that moderate explanations of Christian beliefs

on sexual conduct or other religions, in the context of goods and services provision, may fall foul of it.

The UK Government has shied away from introducing religious 'harassment' laws in this area, precisely because of concerns about how the law may hamper free speech due to its low threshold.

When sexual orientation 'harassment' laws were introduced in Northern Ireland's Sexual Orientation Regulations, a High Court judge removed them in part because of their potential impact on freedom of expression.

Teachers code altered to meet faith concerns

SUCCESS STORY

■ By Mike Judge

A new code of conduct for teachers has been redrafted in an attempt to calm fears that religious staff could be disciplined at work because of their faith.

The General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) had originally proposed 'diversity' wording which was based on a controversial code of conduct for nurses.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council Code came under fire earlier this year when it was used to justify the suspension of a Christian NHS nurse who offered to pray for a patient.

Christian teachers were concerned that adopting the wording from the nurses code could result in them being disciplined because of their faith.

Similar concerns were raised



The draft code could have affected the religious liberty of teachers.

by the Church of England, The Catholic Education Service and the Association of Christian Teachers.

The Christian Institute obtained a legal opinion on the teachers code from top employment lawyer John Bowers QC.

He warned that the code could be open to a legal challenge and said it could "lead to a 'chilling effect', creating a culture where teachers hide their faith, fearing adverse consequences".

The GTCE has now altered the wording of the code in a bid to allay religious liberty concerns. The new code will come into force in October. Sarah Stephens, director of policy at the GTCE, said: "The draft code has been amended to take account of a wide variety of responses and comments from a range of individuals and organisations, which were used as a body of evidence in the redrafting process."¹

¹ *Guardian Unlimited*, 3 July 2009

Suspended Christian teacher back at work after 'disproportionate' charge

A Christian teacher from London who was punished for objecting to a one-sided training day about homosexuality will be allowed to return to work.

Kwabena Peat, 54, was suspended in January after he complained that a staff training day was used

to promote 'gay rights' and marginalise those who disagreed with homosexual practice.¹

He was charged with gross misconduct but an appeal panel of school governors has decided the charge was disproportionate.

Mr Peat said he had expected the training session merely to

provide information to help teachers handle homophobic bullying, but the guest speaker had gone much further.

He wrote to three staff who organised the event and complained about the "aggressive" presentation of 'gay rights'. His letter also referred to his

religious beliefs about homosexuality.

The recipients of the letter said they felt "harassed and intimidated" by it. Following an investigation, Mr Peat had been suspended on full pay.

¹ *The Mail on Sunday*, 26 April 2009

Compulsory sex ed in primary school

■ **By Elizabeth Rome**

Sex education is to be made mandatory from the age of five in schools throughout England beginning in September 2011, the Government has said.

Parents will retain the power to withdraw their child if they wish, but the Government will keep that right under constant review.¹

A public consultation on the plans closed on 24 July.

The Government has said that lessons on same-sex relationships should begin with teaching about homosexual civil partnerships from age seven.²

Schools will also be obliged to teach about marriage and cohabitation.



Parents currently have the right to withdraw children from sex and relationship lessons and the Government has agreed to continue giving them this option.

However, parents who use the freedom to withdraw their children will have to provide alternative sex

education which meets what is called the "core entitlement" of their child.

To ensure that parents are fulfilling this obligation, the Government says it will keep the right of withdrawal under constant review.

School governors will be permitted to determine their

school's approach to SRE so that it reflects the school's "context, ethos and values", but must ensure all the required topics are covered.

The groups that have been pushing for mandatory sex education have demonstrated questionable judgment in the resources which they have been promoting for children.

These include 'condom credit cards' for 13-year-olds, and a DVD for girls which downplays the medical consequences of abortion.

¹ House of Commons, Hansard, 27 April 2009, cols 32-34WS

² *Understanding Physical Development, Health and Wellbeing – Draft for Consultation*, QCA, April 2009, pages 3 and 6

Animal-human embryos useless, admit scientists

■ **By Jane Leung**

A new study has cast doubt on whether research using animal-human embryos will ever lead to medical treatments for human beings.

A team of scientists in Massachusetts tried to produce stem cells from embryos created from animal and human material. The scientists now call into question the

ability of the embryos to generate stem cells necessary for medical treatment.

When they put the nuclei of human cells into animal eggs they found that the mechanism needed to generate the stem cells did not work.

"Instead of turning on the right genes, it turns out the animal eggs actually turn them off," said senior researcher Dr Robert Lanza.¹

During debates last year over new embryology laws, animal-human embryo research was said to be crucial to the development of new medical treatments.

Despite divisions in the scientific community such research was legalised by the Government in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008.

¹ *Associated Press Newswires*, 2 February 2009

Scots Government drops plans to weaken age of consent laws

SUCCESS STORY

■ By Jess Khan

Changes to laws in Scotland on the age of consent for sex have been approved by the Holyrood Parliament.

The Scottish Government dropped some of its more controversial plans during the parliamentary process.

Initially it wanted to make it legal for a child aged 13-15 to have oral sex with someone who is up to two years older.

The proposals were contained in the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Bill. The Christian Institute and others pointed out the medical risks of oral sex and said the move would send out the wrong message to Scotland's teenagers.

The Institute's Head of Research, David Greatorex, gave evidence to the committee of MSPs that examined the legislation.

The committee recommended that the proposals to legalise underage oral sex should be dropped and the

Scottish Government agreed.

The Bill gives boys the same protection as girls from unwanted sexual conduct, but activity such as groping is not covered by the new law.

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Watch online

David Greatorex addressing a committee of MSPs:

www.christian.org.uk/issues/2008/family/aocscot



Sexual bullying growing problem in school

■ By Jess Khan

In January a BBC Panorama investigation revealed the worrying extent of sexual bullying in schools.

Pupils spoke about distressing experiences of unwanted sexual touching in schools and discussed how frequently it happens.

One girl described how in her case it started with a boy stroking her leg. It progressed and eventually led to a serious groping incident.

In 2007 Government figures revealed that in the previous year there



were 3,500 school exclusions for sexual misconduct – ranging from sexually explicit graffiti through to serious physical assault.

A survey of 11 to 19-year-olds found that

one in ten had been forced to take part in sex acts against their will.

Michelle Elliott of the charity Kidscape said: "Sexual bullying has become much more prevalent. On the

Kidscape helpline we used to get maybe one or two calls a year. Now we are getting two or three a week. It's probably the tip of the iceberg."¹

¹ Daily Mail, 5 January 2009

Northern Ireland critics unite against Bill of Rights

■ **By Ben Mitchell**

Proposals for a Northern Ireland Bill of Rights have been savaged by politicians, human rights activists and even one of the original architects of the Bill.

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission is responsible for the proposals.

The Commission recommends that the Bill should give further protection to homosexual rights and introduce 'harassment' laws which could limit the free speech of Christians.

The Commission also says that smacking should be banned, but not as part of the



Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Shaun Woodward (left) and Professor Brice Dickson are among those who have criticised the proposals.

proposed Bill of Rights.

It has stopped short of recommending a 'right' to abortion in the Province, but says the Government should respond to the conclusions of a UN committee on discrimination against women.

Professor Brice Dickson, one of the Bill's



original architects, has distanced himself from the recommendations.

He says the Bill should be much smaller although he remains in favour of a Bill of Rights in principle.

He said: "The human rights situation in Northern Ireland is not so bad, or so precarious, as to require a Bill of

Rights that is more penetrative than any other such document in the world."¹

A commitment to produce a Bill of Rights was included in the Belfast Agreement.

Current Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Shaun Woodward called the proposals "unwieldy", with the Ulster Unionists branding them "ridiculous" and the Democratic Unionist Party stating it would "lose no sleep" if there was never a Bill of Rights for the Province.²

¹ Memorandum from Brice Dickson, Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, Uncorrected Evidence 02, 15 April 2009, para. 9

² *News Letter*, 11 May 2009; *News Letter*, 28 May 2009

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Bid to ban smacking is abandoned

■ **By Ben Mitchell**

In April Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner Patricia Lewsley halted her bid to ban smacking in the Province after running out of taxpayers' money.

Miss Lewsley argued that smacking was a breach of the dignity and wellbeing of children. She was willing to pursue her case to the House of Lords, after losing at the High Court and the Court of Appeal.

During her campaign Miss Lewsley said that parents who



Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner Patricia Lewsley.

smack are child abusers. The failed legal action was reported to have cost taxpayers about £200,000.¹

¹ *News Letter*, 21 April 2009