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Proclaiming hope and truth

Our work challenging assisted suicide has kept the team very busy. We are briefing parliamentarians on key points as they are debated, and on the strength of feeling against the proposals. It is clear that the more people know about the plans, the less they like them.

Through our clear resources and programme of local church meetings, we are also ensuring that Christians – especially church leaders – are fully aware of the immense danger assisted suicide poses to society.

We enjoy widespread religious liberty and freedom of expression in the UK, but should not take this for granted. The prevalence of abortion censorship zones and proposals for a new definition of 'Islamophobia' have left many people increasingly concerned that free speech is being eroded.

Our new legal case on behalf of Northern Ireland pastor Clive Johnston defends the hard-won freedom to preach the Gospel in public. Preaching Christ crucified is a stumbling block and an offence to many, but it is not against the law.

CI backs pastor facing prosecution for gospel preaching in censorship zone

The Christian Institute is providing legal support to a retired pastor facing prosecution for preaching the Gospel in one of Northern Ireland's eight abortion censorship zones.

Pastor Clive Johnston, 76, from Strabane was preaching on John 3:16 near Causeway Hospital in Coleraine on Sunday 7 July 2024 when he was cautioned by police. An officer claimed Pastor Johnston was breaking the 'Safe Access Zones' law, even though he had made no reference to abortion.



◀ Clive Johnston

The zones were introduced in 2023 after pro-abortion lobbyists claimed they were necessary to protect abortion centres' staff and visitors from protestors.

On 21 March, at Coleraine Magistrates'

Court, the grandfather of seven denied a charge of seeking to 'influence' people accessing abortion services.

In a statement, the Institute's Simon Calvert said: "We have amazing

gospel freedom in this country and we encourage Christians to use that freedom so that more people will hear about the love of God.

"That's why we've taken on this case. Prosecuting someone for preaching John 3:16 near a hospital on a quiet Sunday is an outrageous restriction on freedom of religion and freedom of speech."

Similar censorship zones came into effect in Scotland in September 2024.

➤ See inside:

MSP: 'Praying in your home could be illegal'.

Unisex school toilets give boys access to film hundreds of girls

A mother has criticised a Dundee high school for enabling boys to obtain hundreds of indecent videos of girls by introducing unisex toilets.

Her daughter contacted the police after she found a camera hidden in a toilet roll holder. A 15-year-old boy has been charged in connection with the crime.

The anonymous mum told the Daily Record: "This is something that a lot of parents have been concerned about for a number of years and since I spoke out about what happened to my daughter, loads of people have come



forward and agreed that unisex toilets are a huge issue.

"This boy would simply not have had access to the girls' toilets otherwise."

Joanna Cherry KC added: "Is it too much to hope that this appalling case will sound the death knell

for unisex toilets in our schools and mean a return to prioritising the dignity, safety and privacy of girls?"

Last year, campaign group For Women Scotland found that 95 per cent of the 243 secondary schools it surveyed were unlawfully forcing

boys and girls to share mixed-sex toilets.

Scottish Government guidance on 'supporting transgender young people in schools' claims that toilets and changing rooms may be used on the basis of "social convention" rather than a pupil's biological sex.

Ten-year-olds able to access explicit images on school iPads

The Education Secretary has called for robust protections after children as young as ten in Edinburgh were able to access pornography on school iPads.

Jenny Gilruth MSP told local councils across Scotland to ensure that "safety protocols are regularly reviewed" to guarantee that the issue "is not replicated in other parts of the country".

According to one parent, ten and eleven-year-olds had been able to view explicit images by misspelling blocked terms.

MSP for Lothian Miles Briggs called it a "wake up call" for robust measures to be put in place, "so that this does not happen again".

Ofcom, which is gradually implementing the Government's Online

Safety Act, has emphasised that "self-declaration of age", "general terms, disclaimers or warnings" would not meet its age-verification requirements for pornographic websites or user-generated content.





In case you missed it



The Colin Hart Lectures

Iron sharpens iron: Examples of Christian fellowship and friendship from David and Jonathan to the Cambridge Seven.
the.ci/IronSharpensIron



Sandie Peggie case
 The absurdity of gender ideology has been brought into sharp focus.
the.ci/SandiePeggie



Shocking arguments for assisted suicide
 An expert panel considers some of the arguments put forward by advocates of assisted suicide.
the.ci/ASshockingarguments

MSP: 'Praying in your home could be illegal'

The MSP behind Scotland's abortion censorship zones has confirmed that the law can ban residents from praying inside their own homes.



Speaking on BBC Scotcast, Scottish Green Gillian Mackay initially attempted to deny that the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) (Scotland) Act 2024 could affect private dwellings situated within 200-metres of an abortion centre.

But she later admitted that praying could be illegal, depending on "who is passing the window" and whether someone was praying in a manner that could "be seen from outside their own house".

The interview followed public criticism of a

letter delivered to people living within a censorship zone in Edinburgh, informing them of the new restrictions.

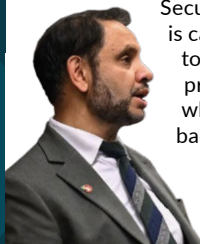
The Act, which came into force last October, makes it illegal for pro-lifers to pray with, or offer help to, pregnant women inside one of Scotland's censorship zones.

Westminster prayers 'part of nation's Christian heritage'

Muslim MP Shockat Adam (below) has defended the use of Christian prayers before each sitting of the House of Commons.

Opposing a move to abandon the tradition, Mr Adam said the prayers were "part of our Christian heritage and Parliament's traditions".

Attendance is voluntary but the National Secular Society is campaigning to axe the practice, which dates back to 1558.



"Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our King and his government, to Members of Parliament and all in positions of responsibility, the guidance of your Spirit. May they never lead the nation wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but laying aside all private interests and prejudices keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all mankind; so may your kingdom come and your name be hallowed. Amen."

Form of the main prayer in the House of Commons

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Govt urged to reject chilling 'Islamophobia' definition

The UK Government has been urged not to adopt a highly controversial definition of 'Islamophobia' because it would threaten free speech.

Shadow Justice Secretary Robert Jenrick raised concerns that the definition, which claims Islamophobia is "rooted in racism" and "targets expressions of Muslimness", would have "a chilling effect on freedom of speech".

Former Labour MP Khalid



Mahmood, one of the first Muslims to be elected to Westminster, has also argued that it would not help to "tackle discrimination".

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner has launched a working group to advise on tackling allegations of racial and religious hatred, with particular focus on Islamophobia.

In response to Mr Jenrick's

concerns, the Government said it would outline any updates on its position "in due course".

The Government had recently rejected a Home Office-commissioned report calling for a wider definition of extremism to cover "behaviours and activity of concern" such as alleged "conspiracy theories".

CI cautions NI Executive to tread carefully on equality law

The Christian Institute has warned that plans to consolidate existing equality laws in Northern Ireland must be handled very carefully to avoid undermining religious liberty.

Solicitor-Advocate Sam Webster told Stormont's Committee for the Executive that drawing together the Province's "patchwork of equality law" into a single piece of legislation could undermine the work of churches.

Mr Webster urged the Committee to pay particular regard to the impact of possible changes on religious freedom and the work of churches.

He reflected that, when the Fair Employment and Treatment Order was passed in 1998, nobody had ever envisaged the Ashers Baking Company case ending up at the Supreme Court.

"[C]aution needs to be exercised", he remarked, "because why should the citizen have to go all the way up to the UK Supreme Court in order to get the law clarified, in order to defend his or her rights to freedom of expression or religious freedom?"



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Scot Con leader rethinking support for assisted suicide

The leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Russell Findlay, has said he is re-examining his support for assisted suicide following the debate at Westminster.

Findlay told The Scotsman that, while he 'instinctively' supports assisted suicide, he is now "a lot more cautious" following the debate at the Second Reading of Kim Leadbeater's assisted suicide Bill.

He warned that Liam McArthur's Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill would need "proper, robust



Russell Findlay MSP

scrutiny", which he admitted has not always been the case with legislation at Holyrood.

McArthur's Bill is being considered by the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, which recently heard evidence from a panel of pro-life groups including Not Dead Yet UK, Our Duty of Care

and Care Not Killing.

The witnesses told the Committee it should consider whether Scotland wants to eventually become a society which could help kill anyone, and urged MSPs to affirm that "every life is worth living" by rejecting the proposals.

At Westminster, MPs are growing

increasingly concerned about Kim Leadbeater's dangerous assisted suicide Bill. Additional safeguards have been disregarded by the Westminster Committee tasked with scrutinising the legislation, prompting up to 30 MPs to suggest they are prepared to withdraw their support.

Over 1,500 Scottish babies born with drug or alcohol addiction

Between April 2017 and October 2024 more than 1,500 babies were born with neonatal abstinence syndrome in Scotland, responses to Freedom of Information requests have revealed.

The condition, which can result in uncontrollable trembling and



hyperactivity, is caused by exposure to drugs in the womb.

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton, whose party obtained the

figures, said there could hardly be a "worse start in life for a newborn baby than to be born dependent on drugs".

He added: "The Scottish Government

regularly make the headlines for their mishandling of drug deaths but in a host of other ways drug misuse can make lives a misery."

In response, Health Secretary

Neil Gray claimed: "Through our £250 million national mission on drugs, we are taking a wide range of evidence-based measures to reduce harm and save lives."

Latest figures from the National Records of Scotland show that 1,172 people died of drug misuse in 2023.

Scottish mum 'utterly shocked' by sex ed for nine-year-old daughter

A mum has been left shocked by sex education materials used in a school lesson for her nine-year-old daughter.

Emma Cormie from Moray said her daughter was left "anxious and stressed" over graphic content shared in a Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) class.

Slides for the module 'How do people have sex?', deemed suitable for 8 to 12-year-olds, contain a picture of a naked couple, talk about sexual arousal, and have descriptions of what takes place during intercourse.

When she saw what was being taught Mrs Cormie reacted in disbelief: "I was just utterly shocked at what I was seeing,



It was far beyond any kind of expectation that I had for this subject for this age of children."

She described the material as "absolutely not age appropriate", adding: "Learning about body functions and changes is necessary, learning how to have sex at 11 years old is absolutely not".

The Education Secretary has paused the sharing of data from the Scottish Government's

controversial school 'sex survey' after a public outcry.

Jenny Gilruth withdrew the data in February after revelations that it was being shared without the consent of children or parents.

Highly controversial from the outset, the survey asked teens as young as fourteen shocking sexual questions and primary school children intrusive questions about their home life.

Activists now set sights on parents in England with proposed smacking ban

Activists are seeking to criminalise parents in England who tap their child on the back of the hand, claiming it is abuse.

Jess Asato MP has been seeking to introduce a ban by amending the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

It comes after the Westminster Government said it



does not plan to follow Scotland and Wales in banning smacking.

Minister for School Standards Catherine McKinnell emphasised that abusive parents

are already caught by existing legislation and called it "absurd" to suggest that reasonable chastisement could be used as a defence in cases of serious harm

or murder.

The Minister also said the Government needed to consider the views of those who might be "disproportionately affected" by changing the law.

Under Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland became the first part of the UK to criminalise parents for reasonable chastisement in 2020.

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Tear off and keep

Pray continually

1 Thessalonians 5:17

SUNDAY

PRAY With thanksgiving for all of God's blessings on the UK.

MONDAY

PRAY For dangerous legislation on assisted suicide to be rejected.

TUESDAY

PRAY Thanking God for His gift of marriage and the blessings it brings.

WEDNESDAY

PRAY That families would remain free from intrusive state interference.

THURSDAY

PRAY That plans to restrict preaching and prayer through a new 'conversion therapy' law would be dropped.

FRIDAY

PRAY For our work supporting the freedom of Clive Johnston and others to publicly preach the Gospel.

SATURDAY

PRAY That the Lord will bless the staff and work of The Christian Institute.



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 Nigel Kenny,
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