



Grace and truth

The Christian Institute
Annual Review 2024





THE CHRISTIAN
INSTITUTE

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The Christian Institute is a registered charity whose main object is “the furtherance and promotion of the Christian religion in the United Kingdom and elsewhere”.

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Welcome



BY RICHARD TURNBULL

Welcome to our Annual Review 2024. May it encourage you as we reflect together on all God has done through The Christian Institute over the year.

In recent months we have mourned the loss of the Institute's founder and Director, Colin Hart. Saddened though we are by his death, we rejoice that he is now in the presence of his Lord and Saviour. His vision was ahead of his time. He knew that this nation would face challenges around education, Christian values and religious liberty. His humble determination to uphold the cause of Christ has left an indelible imprint on this Institute. Much more will be said of this when we come to look back on 2024. The Trustees unanimously agreed to appoint Ciarán Kelly as the new Director. There is no one more suited to lead the Institute for the challenges that lie ahead.

We were pleased to welcome Michael Larbi, Nathan Wallace, Jonathon Macdonald and Jenny Olson to bolster the Research team. Elsewhere, Administration saw the arrival of Ming Shu Chin, Dovile Snarskaite and Arghyadeep Chowdhury, while Rosalynne Hutchings added her experience to the Communications team. Rachel Revell also joined our legal team to assist In-house Solicitor Sam Webster.

It was with sadness that we said goodbye to Financial Administrator Brian Steemson and our highly respected Wales Officer Gareth Edwards. Rhys Roberts has taken over his career in industry to join us in February 2024. We are very grateful that Gareth has agreed to continue to take Institute meetings in a voluntary capacity.

I am delighted to say that we were able to engage with nearly 21,000 supporters at more than 450 events across the UK and Ireland in 2023. Such faithful and increasing support is a tremendous encouragement to us.

Such meetings are just one of the ways we help believers to be a Christian influence in a secular world. Alongside them are our concise, creative and always rigorously researched publications – another ten last year – videos, podcasts and other social media content.

This year we could face new laws on conversion therapy, assisted suicide, hate crime, abortion, drugs, gambling and more. May God give us all the grace to face the challenges of the year ahead.

Revd Dr Richard Turnbull
Chairman

Grace and truth



BY CIARÁN KELLY

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

JOHN 1:14 NIV

When I joined The Christian Institute ten years ago it was this verse that resonated in my mind as I walked through the doors for the first time. Or more specifically, a portion of the verse: “[Jesus Christ] came from the Father, full of grace and truth”. It was my great desire to work somewhere that modelled “grace and truth” and to live them out in my own life.

It is sad that so many people behave as though these two qualities operate on some kind of sliding scale or – even worse – are polar opposites. Truth without grace is of course a travesty. These days however, it seems that truth is more often the punching bag. To speak the truth, however gently or compassionately, however nuanced and full of context, is to risk accusations of being ‘ungracious’, even ‘hateful’.

Grace and truth are not opposed to one another and in need of reconciliation. They are not even in tension, as if to demonstrate more grace or more truth must somehow be at the expense of the other. We need them both in full – as we see in Jesus himself. John’s language here is reflecting Exodus 34:6-7 when God causes his glory to pass by Moses on Sinai and proclaims himself to be “abounding in love and faithfulness”.

A little later the Apostle says: “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). This is not to pit the Old Testament against the New, as if God exhibited no grace before the coming of Christ – far from it. God’s law is full of grace towards sinful creatures. It simply recognises that the Law had not





¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

fully revealed the glory of “the One and Only” in whom grace and truth meet in matchless harmony. On the cross the truth of the awful consequences of sin was met with the grace of a punishment borne by Christ.

Attempts to set grace and truth against one another are readily apparent in many areas of the Institute’s work. Gender ideology, sexual ethics, marriage and the sanctity of life are highly sensitive issues and must certainly be addressed with genuine compassion. Speaking the truth does not require rudeness or self-righteousness. They are also areas where the biblical worldview stands in stark contrast to the cultural zeitgeist. We cannot water down the truth for fear of man or in the misguided belief that this is the gracious thing to do. ‘Grace’ without truth is not grace at all, it is merely empty sentimentality.

Cancel culture, the rise of abortion censorship zones and the cases of ‘Susan’ and Angus Cameron highlighted in this Review are all examples of attempts to undermine the

truth with fake grace. We see it too when assisted suicide is presented as compassion and when demands for a new law on ‘conversion therapy’ seek to silence calls to repent.

Though this Annual Review deals with 2023, it is impossible to conclude without reflecting on the sad loss of my mentor, our late Director Colin Hart, in March 2024. Under God, his vision and gifts have shaped the Institute for nearly 35 years. In tribute, we are renaming our long-running Autumn Lecture series after him. The first annual Colin Hart Lectures will take place in November 2024.

Motivated by his love for the Lord Jesus Christ and gratitude for what He had done at Calvary, Colin spoke up boldly and faithfully on all these issues and many more. We will continue to do the same and, by the Holy Spirit, do so full of grace and truth.

Ciarán Kelly, Director

Religious liberty

“Our campaigns to protect free speech help preserve our freedom to share the Gospel.”

Colin Hart

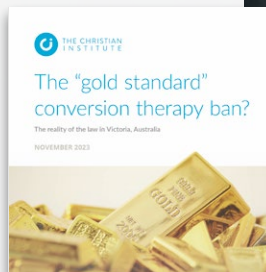
‘CONVERSION THERAPY’

The Institute continues to lead opposition to new laws banning so-called conversion practices in the British Isles.

Campaigners are still pushing to outlaw preaching, prayer and pastoral care that seeks to help people live in accordance with biblical sexual ethics. Some even want to ban calls to repent. Parents who refuse to affirm LGBT ideology with their children could also be criminalised.

The Institute has engaged with ministers, Parliamentarians and civil servants at Westminster, Holyrood and Stormont to warn of the dangers of such a broad ban. We highlighted shocking guidance on the law in Victoria, Australia that could see Christian ministers prosecuted for encouraging churchgoers to say the Lord’s Prayer. Activists in the UK have called it their “gold standard”.

We obtained fresh legal advice from top human rights lawyer Jason Coppel KC on Private Members’ Bills tabled by Baroness Burt and the then MP Lloyd Russell-Moyle. He confirmed that their proposals would criminalise the legitimate expression of religious beliefs and parents’ freedom to bring up their children in the way they believe to be right.



We wrote to the then PM Rishi Sunak in August 2023 over our concerns about a broad ban.





let us pray

Support for our Let Us Pray campaign has grown rapidly.

In August 2023, we launched **letusprayireland.com** to run alongside **letuspray.uk**



More than **2,000 people** signed our open letter to the Scottish Government – including over **500 church leaders**.



The Irish Government has been drafting a new law intended to ban 'conversion therapy'.



Institute-commissioned polling found that the vast majority of the adults surveyed did not think conversion therapy should be a priority for the governments at Westminster, Holyrood or Dublin.

HATE CRIME

The freedom to disagree on contentious issues is crucial in a democratic society. Yet accusations of 'hate crime' are frequently used by activists to try to silence Christian beliefs.

In August 2023, we briefed supporters in the Republic of Ireland on the dangers of the Government's hate crime Bill. It includes a vaguely worded offence of inciting hatred against

others based on their protected characteristics, which could carry a five-year prison sentence. Widespread public opposition has persuaded the Irish Government to promise significant amendments.



the.ci/HateCrimeROI

LEGAL CASES

Did you know? Since 2006, our legal team has helped more than **3,000 people** – over 200 of them in 2023 alone.

Order your free copy of *Legal help for you*  Email: info@christian.org.uk 

We support cases of national importance for gospel freedom to help establish good precedents. This includes defending Christians unjustly discriminated against because of their faith.



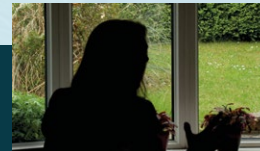
Susan*

Parents, teachers, governors and the wider public have become increasingly concerned about children being exposed to inappropriate or misleading sex education materials.

Christian mum Susan had been dismissed as a parent-governor in 2022 for questioning the pro-trans sex ed policy at her children's school. With our help Susan brought a successful legal challenge to the High Court. She was reinstated in July 2023.

Winning this case was important to reassure parents and school governors of their right to challenge inappropriate teaching on gender and sexual ethics in schools.

**Not her real name. Susan has been granted anonymity by the High Court in order to protect her children.*



WATCH 
[the.ci/susan](https://www.the.ci/susan)

Angus Cameron





In January 2024, street preacher Angus Cameron received nearly £15,000 in compensation and legal costs from Police Scotland.

He had been wrongfully arrested and handcuffed over an unsubstantiated allegation of 'homophobia' while preaching in Glasgow city centre in 2022.

The Institute has won all of its street preacher cases. This is another good outcome that will have wider benefits for gospel freedom.

Did you know? Most of what we do never hits the headlines. We regularly give practical advice to help Christians navigate difficult situations so they can consistently live out their faith.

In 2023 this included:

-  Helping a church challenge a Public Spaces Protection Order that placed restrictions on sharing the Gospel;
-  Clarifying with the General Medical Council that doctors are not required to use inaccurate pronouns;
-  Working with a city council to secure an important change to its code of conduct for street evangelists;
-  Assisting various churches, Christian charities and individuals to avoid legal disputes by enabling them to know their rights, responsibilities and legal protections.

Sanctity of life



God gives life, he sustains it and only he has the authority to take it away. Laws to introduce assisted suicide, liberalise abortion or experiment on human embryos send a message that some lives are not worth living. But all human life is precious because it is made in the image of God.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:26-27

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Assisted suicide and euthanasia deny the value of human life made in the image of God. We continue to oppose all attempts in the British Isles to remove end-of-life protections from those who need them most.

There is no safe way to legalise assisted suicide or euthanasia. Wherever they have been introduced, people are put under great pressure to end their lives for fear of being a burden on others. Claims of ‘strict safeguards’ are proven to be unfounded, with the conditions and ages eligible for assisted suicide expanding rapidly. In Canada, this has included people seeking financial help with housing or disability needs.

We briefed supporters about Bills in Scotland and the Isle of Man. We also responded to moves to introduce assisted suicide and euthanasia to Jersey and the Republic of Ireland.

ABORTION AND EMBRYOLOGY

The Christian Institute upholds the sanctity of human life from conception.



In February 2023, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) set out plans to make it even easier to experiment on human embryos.

Our laws are already some of the most liberal in the world. We told the HFEA its proposals would lead to more unethical experiments, and encouraged supporters to respond to its consultation. Of the nearly 4,500 responses, 80 per cent opposed the plans.

We also helped supporters challenge moves to introduce censorship zones near abortion centres in Scotland.

Laws prohibiting harassment and intimidation already exist, so outlawing free speech and access to prayer and advice does not help women in need. Christians should be free to witness to what they believe about the value of human life, and to offer life-saving assistance to those considering abortion.

Marriage and the family

ONLINE SAFETY ACT

The Online Safety Act became law in October 2023.

The Institute and its supporters had already played a major role in getting the Government to remove restrictions on so-called legal but harmful online content for adults. We successfully argued that the Bill's vague language risked censoring Christian teaching and other free speech.

During the year the Institute continued

to work with Parliamentarians to improve protections for children from pornography, suicide and self-harm content. We called for content that is already illegal offline to be made illegal online.

In June the Government announced major improvements to the Bill. Any services that publish or allow pornography on their sites will now have to ensure that the age-verification tools used

are "highly effective" in establishing whether a user is a child or not.

But there is a big difference between a law being passed and its measures being enforced. We

raised concerns about Ofcom's ability to effectively implement the Act. We reminded the Public Accounts Committee that the regulator has failed to use its existing powers to protect under-18s from pornography.



GENDER IDEOLOGY

The Institute has been campaigning against gender ideology for more than 20 years. Sadly, in that time we have seen many of our predictions come true. But public opinion is turning and some politicians are starting to recognise the dangers, especially to women and children.

Throughout 2023 we worked hard to improve guidance for schools in England, to better protect pupils from this damaging ideology. In November, we welcomed NHS England's decision to restrict the use of puberty blockers for under-16s. However, we warned that allowing them to be prescribed to children in "exceptional circumstances" remained unjustified and dangerous.



Other work

DRUGS

The Institute opposed Scottish Government plans to establish drug consumption rooms that would allow users to take illegal drugs under supervision.

Such policies increase the number of people involved in a harmful activity rather than reducing it. There is no 'safe' way to take illegal drugs.



GAMBLING

Christians have always understood that gambling is inherently wrong and poses a unique danger to some of the most vulnerable members of society.

During 2023 we called on the governments at Westminster and Stormont to take urgent measures to curb the prevalence of gambling advertising. We also supported proposed restrictions to reduce the speed and intensity of online gambling.

Education

Did you know?

In 2023 we helped more than 220 Christian parents, teachers and school governors.

Need help?



Email: education@christian.org.uk

ADVISING CHRISTIANS

Throughout the year we have helped Christians with tailored, practical advice on dealing with issues including the Equality Act, sex education, Religious Education and LGBT ideology. Sometimes a brief conversation is all that is needed, in

other cases support has extended over several years.

Many are teachers or governors who have been asked to endorse something that goes against their faith. Parents are also very concerned that their children are being

indoctrinated into a worldview that clashes with their Christian beliefs.



"Thanks in large part to your research, our school is halting completely the social transition of the little girl. It is a cause of great joy. This was an astonishing few days. Thank you so much for your detail and timeliness."

"Thank you, again, for all your help. I could not have done it without you and feel a weight lifted off my shoulders".


SEX EDUCATION

Our expertise means we were well placed to respond to the numerous policy proposals put forward in 2023 concerning the different forms of sex education teaching around the UK and Ireland.

England: Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Draft guidance on gender-questioning children for schools in England was published in December.

Encouragingly, it addressed many of the changes we had called for. These included making clear that schools are not required to allow children to socially transition, and that pupils and teachers must not be compelled to use false pronouns. The guidance was strongly opposed by LGBT lobby groups.



they/them

NI: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

In June, we objected to schools being required to promote girls' "legal right to an abortion". We raised our concerns with key MLAs and government officials, and briefed church groups across denominations. We particularly emphasised the need for parents to be free to withdraw their children from all aspects of RSE.

Nearly 400 people, including many teachers, school governors, and concerned

parents, attended our public meeting to hear practical tips and advice on how to respond to the Department of Education's consultation.

Almost three quarters of the 13,500 responses opposed abortion being taught without considering a pro-life perspective, forcing the Department to acknowledge the "moral, ethical and spiritual" dimensions involved.

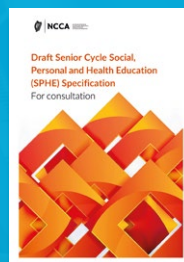
Scotland: Relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP)

We challenged the promotion of disputed LGBT ideology in RSHP.

We highlighted the need for schools to consult with parents, and advocated for the wider rights to withdraw from controversial aspects of the curriculum.

Rol: Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

We identified significant improvements needed for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's draft specification for Senior Cycle teaching.



The draft promoted contested gender ideology but largely ignored traditional marriage and parental rights. The lack of protections for free speech risk marginalising Christians and others who uphold the reality of biological sex.

Teaching and meetings



THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE EXISTS FOR THE FURTHERANCE AND PROMOTION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ELSEWHERE, AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION.



ENGAGING WITH CRUCIAL ISSUES

The Institute seeks to equip Christians to apply their faith to the issues of the day. Our public meetings play a very important part in this.

Over the course of the year, staff spoke to nearly 21,000 people at over 450 events around the UK.

Every church meeting outlines biblical principles which underpin our work, and shows how those principles should affect Christian involvement in today's society. In 2023, this included Christ's command to love our neighbour and the value of every human being. Many supporters first

learn about our work at one of these meetings. We also undertook our first public meetings in the Republic of Ireland for many years.

The Institute has seven members of staff largely devoted to arranging meetings with churches. Many more are routinely involved in planning, publicity, and writing or giving presentations.

We are always delighted to be asked to speak in churches. We are grateful to those who open their doors to us, although sadly it is not possible to accept every invitation.

Critical Theory

In July 2023, the Institute launched a suite of resources to help Christians understand and confront the dangers of Critical Theory.



This ideology is behind many of the challenges facing the Church and society today, and we were delighted to welcome local church leaders to Wilberforce House for lectures and discussion.

In October 2023, Ciarán Kelly and Dr Sharon James began a *War of the Worldviews* tour at the Tron Church, Glasgow. It presented a robust examination of Critical Theory – its impact on society and the Church, and how Christians should respond.



Hidden Influences

In April 2023 more than **350** 18 to 30-plus-year-olds came to Co. Antrim to hear Dr Sharon James and former chairman of IFES Ireland Jim Crookes address the themes of identity and biblical worldview.

The World We Live In

In September we commenced *The World We Live In*, a 13-part series presented in association with TWR-UK. It considered what it is like to be a Christian in today's world, and why we as believers should engage with it.



Autumn Lectures

Every autumn, the Institute holds a series of lectures given by expert speakers.

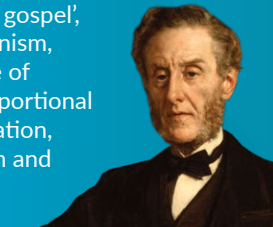
The five lectures for 2023 continued the theme of 'Solid Foundations': key areas of the Christian faith that help us to live out the Bible's teaching day to day.

Rupert Bentley-Taylor spoke about Christian maturity; Institute Chairman Revd Dr Richard Turnbull addressed the Bible's call to do good works; Dr Calum MacKellar considered the significance of mankind being made in the image of God; Revd Dan Peters tackled the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; and Revd Dr William Philip encouraged attendees to follow the whole counsel of God.

Developing our people

Social Policy Analyst Dr Sharon James continued the ongoing programme of staff training on the ethical, social and legal issues taken up by the Institute over the years. Institute staff were also addressed by visiting speakers on topics including IT security, Common Grace and Carl Trueman's book *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*.

In addition, they continued to benefit from teaching by Institute Trustees Richard Turnbull and Rupert Bentley-Taylor. In 2023 this included the fourth commandment, Lord Shaftesbury (below), the 'social gospel', antinomianism, the House of Lords, proportional representation, Quakerism and pietism.



Prayer

Prayer is vital in everything we do at the Institute. Twice a year we hold a week of prayer where we join with supporters in praying for some of the big moral issues affecting the nation.



"The Week of Prayer was so helpful. I pray on for your excellent work and great diligence in upholding The Lord's best ways in our culture. Every blessing",

Brenda D.

Meet the team



Back Row:

- Nathan Jeal BA Development Officer**
Develops the Institute's work with churches and supporters.
- Callum Webster MA MSc Northern Ireland Officer**
Develops the Institute's work in Northern Ireland.
- Rhys Roberts BSc (Econ) MCIPS Wales Officer**
Develops the Institute's work in Wales.
- Jonathan Patterson BA Office Manager**
Supervises the running of the office.
- Alicja Cieniawska LLB Assistant Office Manager**
Assists with the administration and running of the office.
- Barbara Elder Administrative Assistant**
Handles correspondence and calls from supporters.
- Sharon Dews BA AATQB Senior Finance Administrator**
Handles the Institute's payments and financial data.
- Susannah Daubney Financial Administrator**
Handles the Institute's payments and financial data.
- Joanna Timm BA MA Senior Public Affairs Officer**
Works with the Deputy Director (Public Affairs).
- Louisa Bratley BA Personal Assistant to the Deputy Director (Public Affairs)**
- John Denning BSc PGCE Head of Education**
Conducts research and advises on education issues.
- Jon Errington BA DipTP Head of Operations**
Supervises the efficient operation of the Institute.
- Simon Calvert LLB Deputy Director (Public Affairs)**
Responsible for public affairs, including our parliamentary work.
- Dave Greatorex LLB Head of Policy and Research**
Responsible for policy and research.
- Sam Webster BA Solicitor Advocate In-house Solicitor**
Manages religious liberty cases.
- Rosalynne Hutchings BA Communications Officer**
Helps with the Institute's communications.
- Angus Saul BA Senior Communications Officer**
Helps with the Institute's communications.
- Mark Taylor BA Senior Multimedia Designer**
Assists with the design of the Institute's various communications.
- Nathan Batten BA Researcher**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Jonathon Macdonald BSc Researcher**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Rhys Curnow BA Senior Researcher**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Michael Larbi LLB LLM Researcher**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Nathan Wallace BD MSt DPhil Research Associate**
Researches theological issues.
- Nick Needham BD PhD Writer/Editor**
Writes and edits the Institute's theological publications.
- Johnny Timm BSc IT Manager**
Oversees our IT systems.

Front Row:

- James McIntosh MTheol MTh Senior Development Officer**
Develops the Institute's work with churches and supporters.
- Sandra Mackay Personal Assistant to the Northern Ireland Officer**
- Susan Constable Personal Assistant to the Scotland Officer**
- Nigel Kenny LLB DipLP Scotland Officer**
Develops the Institute's work in Scotland.
- Ming Shu Chin BSc, MSc, M Med Sci, Ed D Administrative Assistant**
Handles correspondence and calls from supporters.
- Dovile Snarskaite BA Administrative Assistant**
Handles correspondence and calls from supporters.
- Arghyadeep Chowdhury MSc Administrative Assistant**
Handles correspondence and calls from supporters.
- Janet McMaster ACA Financial Administrator**
Handles the Institute's payments and financial data.
- Daniel Friery BA Public Affairs Officer**
Works with the Deputy Director (Public Affairs).
- James Kennedy BTh MA Public Affairs Officer**
Works with the Deputy Director (Public Affairs).
- Daniela Martinez BA MA Education Officer**
Assists with the work of the Head of Education.
- Judi Coulson BA PGCE Head of Staffing and Supporter Development**
Responsible for staff and oversees work with churches and supporters.
- Kathy Calvert Personal Assistant to the Director**
- Ciarán Kelly BA MSc Director**
Controls the day-to-day running of the Institute.
- Rachel Revell Assistant to the In-house Solicitor**
- Marilla Friery BA Communications Officer**
Helps with the Institute's communications.
- Andrew Wood BSc BA MA Communications Officer**
Helps with the Institute's communications.
- Janet Davidson BA Multimedia Designer**
Assists with the design of the Institute's various communications.
- Joshua Towers BA MA Multimedia Designer**
Assists with the design of the Institute's various communications.
- Alison Bowie BSc Researcher**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- David McPherson MA Researcher**
Conducts general research across a range of issues.
- Jenny Olson MA Policy Researcher**
Researches public policy issues.
- Sharon James MA (Cantab) MDv PhD PGCE Social Policy Analyst**
Conducts research on developments in social policy.
- Robert Drennan MBE BA MSt MSc Northern Ireland Researcher**
Conducts research on Northern Ireland issues.
- David Gillespie BA DipCG MSSc Northern Ireland/ Republic of Ireland Researcher**
Conducts research on Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland issues.
- Fiona Rushton Cleaner**



◀ TURN OVER

2023: Engaging...



5.4 MORE THAN
million

VISITS TO OUR WEBSITE



680

ARTICLES
PUBLISHED

CHRISTIAN.ORG.UK

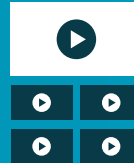


OVER

6.2m

TIMES OUR
POSTS
APPEARED
ON SOCIAL
MEDIA

LEADING TO
450k
INTERACTIONS



OVER

5.5m

VIEWS OF MORE THAN

400

VIDEOS POSTED ONLINE



62k

IN TOUCH SUPPORTERS
INCLUDING MORE THAN 5K CHURCHES



94k

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



106

PRINT AND BROADCAST
MEDIA REQUESTS



CHRISTIANINSTITUTE



CHRISTIANORGUK

...equipping



OVER
131,000

AUDIO
DOWNLOADS



NEARLY
21,000

PEOPLE AT MORE THAN

450
PRESENTATIONS
IN PERSON
AND ONLINE



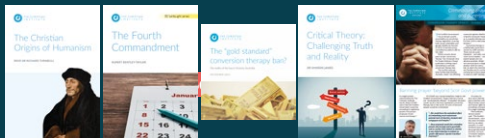
10 NEW
PUBLICATIONS



PUBLICATIONS

christian.org.uk/publications

Church leaders often say how much the Institute's briefings help them in their preaching and pastoral work. Thousands of individual Christians use our material for prayer, and to discuss Christian teaching at home, at church and in their communities.



IN THE STUDIO

christian.org.uk/videos

Interviews



DR RIVA EGAN



ISABEL VAUGHAN-SPENCE



NICK FLETCHER MD

Explainers



Online Safety Act



Trans guidance



Conversion therapy

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

In March 2023 we started producing content specifically for our supporters in the Republic of Ireland.



How we are managed



TRUSTEES OF THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

From left to right:

Ken Nelson MBE
Trevor James (Treasurer)
Rod Badams
Revd Rupert Bentley-Taylor
Revd David Holloway
Revd Dr William Philip
Revd Dr Richard Turnbull
(Chairman)
Revd James Leggett
John Burn OBE
Revd George Curry
Prof Philip Robinson
Mike Judge

The Institute is governed by its twelve-member Council, who act as Trustees and are legally responsible for the registered charity.

The Council meets regularly throughout the year. The Trustees' knowledge, skills and support are invaluable to the organisation. They are all current or former church leaders or preachers.

Following the unexpected death of the Institute's founder and Director Colin Hart, the day-to-day running is the responsibility of the new Director, Ciarán Kelly. He is helped by an executive group, comprising the Chairman, Treasurer and John Burn. They meet regularly to discuss the Institute's affairs.

The Christian Institute relies upon the generosity of its supporters. Our charitable work continues because our supporters are willing to give financially to it. Over 99 per cent of our income comes through such gifts. We give thanks to God for his continued provision through the generosity of his people.

Giving to our work (excluding the Legal Defence Fund) is split between regular giving, e.g. by standing order, and one-off gifts. By faith we rely upon approximately £27,000 arriving each week, either through the post or online. If you are able to give regularly by standing order, it is a great help to us in our planning and budgeting.

Finance summary

This summary is provided to indicate to supporters how funds were obtained and spent during the years 2022 and 2023.

The summary for 2023 is based on draft and unaudited figures.

The summary for 2022 is based on the audited accounts for that year but does not form part of the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements of The Christian Institute.

Copies of the full audited annual accounts for 2022 and 2023 (when available) can be obtained by contacting our office:

The Christian Institute,
Wilberforce House,
4 Park Road,
Gosforth Business Park,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE12 8DG



Jon Errington,
Head of Operations

Expenditure		2023	2022
General Fund			
Staff	50%	£1,793,864	£1,607,235
Printing and stationery	5%	£231,150	£174,701
Postage and telephone	9%	£272,067	£288,610
Travel	5%	£183,398	£154,298
Research materials	2%	£85,619	£74,849
Rent and building running costs	4%	£149,462	£143,918
Equipment and depreciation	4%	£159,140	£136,456
Conference and meetings costs	<1%	£30,916	£26,933
Professional fees	5%	£194,670	£159,716
Miscellaneous	<1%	£16,827	£17,171
Total for the General Fund		£3,117,113	£2,783,887
Legal Defence Fund	14%	£48,720	£398,637
Growth Fund and other designated expenditure	<1%	£34,335	£29,581
Total Expenditure – All Funds		£3,200,168	£3,212,105

Income		2023	2022
General Fund			
Unrestricted	91%	£3,245,692	£2,873,638
Sales	<1%	£3,647	£4,087
Total for the General Fund		£3,249,339	£2,877,725
Legal Defence Fund	9%	£299,634	£270,394
Growth Fund	<1%	£3,207	£1,770
Total Income – All Funds		£3,552,180	£3,149,889

What we believe

1. GOVERNMENTS EXIST TO RESTRAIN EVIL

Governments are vital for civilisation. The rule of law is the basis of order and civilisation. Authorities are instituted by God for the good of everyone to restrain evil. The Bible teaches that governments are ordained by God to punish the wrongdoer and to commend those who do right (Romans 13:3-4; 1 Peter 2:14).

The Bible plainly teaches that it is the duty of every Christian to submit to authority. This includes the payment of taxes: "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established... This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing." (Romans 13:1,6). "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right" (1 Peter 2:13-14).

It is the duty of those in authority to punish those who do wrong. The punishment envisaged in the Bible clearly includes physical force. The Apostle Paul notes that a ruler "does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13:4).

It is right and proper for the state when deciding on appropriate punishments to consider deterrence and reformation. But desirable though these aims may be, punishment cannot be separated from the concept of just desert or retribution. Justice demands that the guilty are punished as their deeds deserve. For this reason it is detestable in God's sight for the guilty to be acquitted or the innocent condemned (Proverbs 17:15).

The New Testament teaching on submission to authorities was given to the Church in the context of corrupt authorities. There may be circumstances where the Christian cannot obey the state: if the state should command what God forbids or forbid what God commands then the duty of the Christian must be to obey God rather than man (Acts 4:19; 5:29). The supreme example of Jesus Christ teaches that Christians will experience persecution and injustice in this life.

All judgment dispensed on earth is provisional. One day God will dispense perfect justice "so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God" (Romans 3:19). The Bible teaches that "man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). This judgment will be on the basis of works in this life, and is not to be confused with justification which is solely obtained through the merits of Jesus Christ's atoning death on the cross.

In a democracy Christians can seek to be salt and light and use their democratic rights for the good of the Gospel. It is often said today that the law should not be used to enforce morality. This is quoted against Christians, as if we are the only ones who believe the law should be based on a moral position. In reality, everyone has a 'moral' position upon which their view of the law is based.

Secularists passionately believe that their assumptions should be the basis of our law and policy. However, Christians have always recognised that the purpose of national laws is to restrain evil. So morality cannot be divorced from the law.

God knows how we are made. He knows what is best for us. We believe the Bible contains the 'Maker's instructions'. Only God's moral law can truly protect people and promote what is good. Christians want to see God's moral law obeyed. This brings glory to God and it is also what is truly best for people. Christians want to see public policy which is consistent with the teaching of Christ and the Ten Commandments.

In a democracy Christians have the freedom to argue their case like everyone else. Our responsibility is to speak out for what is right. We are not responsible if men and women reject what they have heard.

It is because we love our neighbour and want what is best for them that Christians should speak up for what is right.

And when Christians speak up, very often they will find that non-Christians agree with them. Man is fallen, but God's image has not been entirely eradicated. Men and women still have a conscience which can agree with God's standards (Romans 2:14-15).

Christians believe that there is not only special revelation found in the Bible; there is also general revelation which comes through nature and conscience. Thus there is a higher universal moral law as distinct from the specific laws of individual states. Because these specific laws can be in defiance of the moral law and what is right, governments and individuals can be held accountable. This happened with the Nazis in the mid-twentieth century, where laws were held to be immoral. This and similar tyrannies resulted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which are based on the moral law. If governments, ignoring the moral law, enact immoral legislation giving rise to so-called 'rights', Christians, people of other faiths and people of no faith, seeking to uphold the moral law, have a duty to protest.

2. MARRIAGE IS SACRED

It is now being argued that marriage is no better than any other type of relationship and should not have a special status in law. It is said that marriage is just a piece of paper. But this is not how God sees it. At the beginning of creation God spelled out the importance of marriage to mankind when, after Eve was created for Adam, the Bible records: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Marriage between one man and one woman is a creation ordinance and therefore God's teaching on marriage and sex is relevant to the world as well as to the church. Marriage is meant for the good of all people – not just Christians.

Marriage clearly is different from other types of relationship. Marriage is part of God's 'common grace'. The Bible clearly teaches that the only context for sexual activity is within lifelong monogamous marriage between a man and a woman (1 Corinthians 6:9). Marriage is the proper context for raising children. Even secular research shows that marriage is head-and-shoulders above other types of human relationships in terms of the benefits it gives to adults and children. In the past marriage was protected in the Western legal tradition because of the unique social benefits it offers. Historically, the definition of marriage in our law was: "the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others" (Hyde v Hyde and Woodmansee, 1866). This is consistent with the biblical view.

Today marriage has lost much of its unique status in public policy. The Christian Institute is concerned about any legislation, public policy, benefit or tax requirement that undermines marriage and Christian family patterns. For example, it is unfair that a household with a single earner on £50,000 pays more tax than a household with two earners on £25,000 each.

The family is a fundamental carrier of values and is at present being undermined. This is evident not least in the area of divorce. Jesus emphasised that marriage was for life, but successive reforms of the divorce law have fostered a rampant divorce culture. God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) and Jesus clearly aligned himself against easy divorce (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12). Liberalisation of divorce law in Britain has increased both the divorce rate and the number of children born outside marriage. The Institute believes that the legal framework should be reformed so that divorce is discouraged and reconciliation encouraged. Divorce law should not acquit the guilty and condemn the innocent.

When Paul went to Athens he found it "was full of idols". Paul attacked the rampant idolatry (Acts 17:16-34). In our own day there may not be idols on every street corner, but there is the all-pervasive worship of sex. Christians must continue to argue that marriage is between a man and a woman. We also have to be clear that all sex outside marriage is wrong. This means that fornication, adultery and homosexual activity are wrong. Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

3. PARENTS HAVE A GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY OVER THEIR CHILDREN

In the Bible it is parents who have the responsibility for raising children. Parents have a God-given authority over their children. The fifth commandment requires a child to honour its father and mother (Exodus 20:12). This was quoted by Jesus and by the Apostle Paul.

Child abuse is wrong and entirely incompatible with Scripture. Instead, the Bible expects parents to exercise loving discipline over their children. As part of this, most parents use mild physical chastisement such as smacking. Discipline must not be harsh. Fathers are told to instruct children according to what is good and not to exasperate their children (Ephesians 6:4). That discipline can be painful is clearly accepted in Scripture (e.g. Hebrews 12:7-11). Making the administration of reasonable chastisement a criminal offence is wrong, as are other moves which usurp the authority of parents.

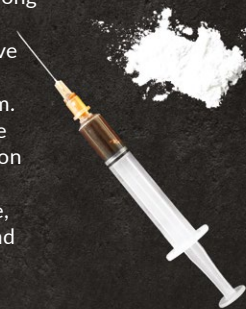
Christians ought particularly to be concerned by any proposals which weaken the moral protections for children. Jesus gave a serious warning of judgment against those who cause children to sin (Matthew 18:6). This is an apt warning in these days when children have their innocence stolen from them.

Parents are ultimately responsible for the education of their children, even where this has been delegated to the state. This is rightly reflected in UK law (e.g. Education Act 1996, Sections 7 and 9). Pupils should be educated in line with their parents' values and the state should not undermine those values, other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

The unique role of parents must also be upheld in decisions about healthcare. The presumption should be that parents make decisions about what is in their child's best interests. The threshold for overturning this presumption should be very high. In several prominent cases, views of parents have been discounted too readily.

4. DRUG TAKING IS WRONG

The Bible bluntly teaches that drunkenness is wrong: "Do not get drunk on wine" (Ephesians 5:18). Intoxication and loss of control are intrinsic to taking drugs. Intoxication is also wrong because of escapism. People cannot solve their problems by running away from them. Down the ages Christians have been at the forefront of battling against the epidemic of public drunkenness and the personal tragedy of alcoholism. Now Christians must take a stand as it becomes ever more fashionable to argue for the decriminalisation or legalisation of all drugs. Blanket policies not to prosecute certain drug-related offences, such as possession for personal use, effectively decriminalise and normalise such behaviour, and must be resisted.



5. 'HARM REDUCTION' APPROACHES ARE UN-CHRISTIAN

Teenage pregnancy and drug taking are recognised as two of the major social problems affecting this country.

Telling young people to steer clear of drugs and to abstain from sex until marriage is now viewed as 'indoctrination' and a waste of time. Such approaches have been ridiculed as a simplistic 'just say no' message. For the past 25 years the argument has been made that preventative approaches which give strong moral guidance to young people do not work.

Instead, 'harm reduction' approaches have been advocated with the justification that telling young people not to take drugs or engage in underage sex will not stop them doing it, therefore it's better to allow them to do it and ensure they do it safely. This harm reduction philosophy has led to young people being told how to have 'safer sex' and how to take drugs 'safely'. This philosophy is superficially appealing because it has a desirable goal – the reduction of harm. Many people have been taken in by this profoundly naïve philosophy. But by opposing restraint, harm reduction actually increases the number of people involved in a harmful activity rather than reducing it.

Harm reduction was originally introduced to help drug addicts who were hooked on a chemical substance. As part of a programme to end their addiction, addicts in danger of killing themselves were given advice on how to take their drugs more safely. The important point

was that the aim in view was to end the addiction. This original approach has now largely been abandoned. Heroin addicts are now being given methadone on a long-term basis.

Of even wider significance is the fact that harm reduction approaches have been extended to cover the whole population of young people rather than just those who are addicts. From a Christian perspective, harm reduction greases the tracks of sin. Instead of telling young people that actions inevitably have consequences, harm reduction presents as a paradise what is inherently dangerous.

Harm reduction creates an atmosphere of acceptability that encourages more people to engage in harmful activity and stigmatises those young people who remain opposed to it. This will result in increased harm, not reduced

harm. This is clearly seen in the field of sex education. Since 'safer sex' education was introduced the number of children engaging in underage sex has increased. The levels of sexually transmitted disease have also rocketed. Meanwhile, it has become almost impossible for young people to feel free to say they want to wait until they are married before having sex. Harm reduction has increased harm, not reduced it.

Harm reduction undermines the rule of law and parental authority. It leads young people into wrongdoing. It sends out the message that taking drugs or engaging in underage sex is acceptable. Increasing use of the harm reduction philosophy is leading to increasing failure. The only answer that the gurus of harm reduction can give to this is to say that there must be more use of harm reduction at ever younger ages.

By contrast, where preventative approaches are used they have been seen to succeed. Take, for example, smoking. The Government has embarked on a tough anti-smoking campaign that tells people in no uncertain terms: don't smoke. It has launched hard-hitting advertising campaigns with heart-rending stories of people suffering from lung cancer. Smoking is now banned in almost all workplaces and public buildings. Instead, we see smokers huddled outside because smoking is not allowed inside. The result of the public education programme has been a decline in smoking amongst men aged over 35. This led to a 43% reduction in the lung cancer rates for men over a 25 year period to 1999 (see *Social Trends*, No 32, 2002, page 126). If we can promote 'just say no' to smoking, why not to activities which are illegal and morally wrong?

6. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM MUST BE PRESERVED

Christians are to pray for the governing authorities "that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness". Paul says, "this is good and pleases God our Saviour who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4). In other words, we are to pray for freedom to live the Christian life and to proclaim the Gospel.

When religious liberty is threatened, gospel liberty is also in danger. It becomes more difficult to proclaim the

Gospel and more difficult for Christians to live out godly lives that witness to the Gospel. Jesus himself warns his followers not to lose their distinctive 'salt', lest they become useless and trampled on by men (Matthew 5:13). Jesus wants us not to be ashamed but rather to put our light on its stand. Christians should therefore be concerned greatly about any laws or policies that limit our religious liberty.

Christians must submit to the governing authorities

except where they require what God forbids or forbid what God requires (Acts 5:29).

The Christian Institute has been very concerned about laws which limit religious broadcasting and seek to impose unwarranted secular restrictions on churches – such as being forced to employ unbelieving staff.

These days there is a deliberate twisting of what 'religious liberty' actually means. Religious liberty is not only the liberty to believe certain things in

our head, but the liberty to act according to those beliefs. It is, for example, the liberty to gather with like-minded people, to form associations with those who share our faith, to tell other people about our faith, and to speak out against what we believe to be wrong.

It is this liberty to act on our beliefs that is under attack in our day. Part of this stems from the growing chasm between Christian values and the values of those in public life.

7. LIFE IS SACRED FROM CONCEPTION

The Bible clearly teaches that human life is precious and that murder is wrong (Genesis 9:6). Uniquely among all creatures only man has the capacity for a relationship with God. Only man has a soul. Only man was made in God's image, God's likeness (Genesis 1:26).

The Bible talks of God establishing and sustaining this relationship with an individual from conception (Jeremiah 1:5, Psalm 139:13). It follows that the human soul must be present from conception. Body and soul cannot be separated until death.

The incarnation of Christ also has important implications for medical ethics. Jesus Christ reveals not only the nature of deity but also the nature of what is human. The incarnation of the divine Son of God began with the conception and not the manger in

Bethlehem – he “was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the virgin Mary” (see The Apostles' Creed and Matthew 1:20). Since Jesus shared our humanity and was made like us in every way (Hebrews 2:14,17), our own human life must also have begun at conception.

The early church was at the forefront of ending the practice of abortion in the Roman Empire.

The Christian Institute therefore affirms that human personhood begins at conception and that the human embryo is precisely that – a *human* embryo. There are enormous practical implications which flow from this belief. Not only is abortion wrong, but also any practice which deliberately destroys human embryos. This includes human cloning and the use of drugs which prevent the implantation of an embryo.

8. CHRISTIAN BELIEFS ON TRANSEXUALISM

Transsexuals are people who are biologically male or female, but who believe themselves to be members of the opposite sex – they say they are ‘trapped in the wrong body’. And so a male-to-female transsexual will assume the identity of a woman. Often transsexuals undergo a ‘sex change’ operation. The Gender Recognition Act provides many legal rights for transsexuals.

Three fundamental premises lie behind the Act: *one*, human psychological states rather than human bodily nature can determine a person's gender; *two*, it is right for a surgeon to deform a healthy body in the interests of a psychological disorder; and, *three*, the State should validate psychosocial confusions having precedence over unambiguous biological sex.

Christians say these premises are wrong from biblical teaching, and also church tradition and common sense reason.

Firstly, the Bible teaches that a human person is a mind-body whole. So the body determines personhood, not just the mind. The first Christian heresy was to deny that “Jesus Christ has come *in the flesh*” (1 John 4:2). Genesis 1:27 records: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Biblical Christians hold that ‘sex change’ surgery desecrates a body made in the image of God. And the Bible teaches that the State should validate what is right and not what is wrong (Romans 13:3).



9. CHRISTIANITY AND THE STATE

Secondly, the Church of England's 2003 discussion document equated transsexualism with the ancient heresy of Gnosticism.¹ Both see the body as unimportant and the mind as all important. Gnosticism was strongly condemned by early Christian theologians such as Irenaeus (c130-200 AD) and Tertullian (c155-220 AD).²

Thirdly, the philosopher, Sir Peter Strawson, holds that a person must have "both states of consciousness and corporeal characteristics... [so] the orthodox have wisely insisted on the resurrection of the body".³ So it is wrong to determine a person's gender because their mind cannot accept their body. As the then Bishop of Winchester stated in 2004: "When the bill passes into law, for me the words woman and man will no longer mean what they have always meant and the government will have introduced marriage between two people of the same sex."⁴

Churches try to care for transsexuals and to speak to them about the Gospel. The Christian response to a transsexual, as with any other person, should be prayer, care and counsel as for any with psychological difficulties, and where necessary repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). There will, of course, be differences in the

pastoral approaches that are taken. However, when it comes to deciding who should join ladies' prayer meetings or be leaders, who should use the ladies' lavatories or take Holy Communion, surely individual churches should have the freedom to decide this themselves? Surely the law should not leave churches wide open to legal actions in secular courts over such matters?

The theologian Oliver O'Donovan (Emeritus Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology, University of Edinburgh) has argued: "If I claim to have a 'real sex', which may be at war with the sex of my body and is at least in a rather uncertain relationship to it, I am shrinking from the glad acceptance of myself as a physical as well as a spiritual being, and seeking self-knowledge in a kind of Gnostic withdrawal from material creation."⁵

¹ *Some Issues in Human Sexuality - A Guide to the Debate*, discussion document from the House of Bishops' Group on Issues in Human Sexuality, Church House, 2003, page 249

² Berkhof, L, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, The Banner of Truth Trust, latest edition 2002, pages 45-51 and 62-63; Elwell, W A (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Paternoster Press, 1999, pages 444-447, 569 and 1078-1079

³ Strawson, P F, *Individuals - An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, Methuen, 1959, pages 104, 116

⁴ *The Sunday Times*, 29 February 2004

⁵ O'Donovan, O, *Transsexualism and Christian Marriage*, Grove Booklet on Ethics, 1982, page 11

Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords "far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the age to come" (Ephesians 1:21).

Scripture clearly teaches that God's present judgment is a reality for nations which defy Jesus Christ: "Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (Psalm 2:10-12).

Christians are to pray for those in authority and for the state to provide freedom for the Gospel to be preached and for men to live "quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:1-3). A ruler in authority is "God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." (Romans 13:4).

Christ's kingdom can never be identified with any particular nation or political party. While it is not the role of a state to coerce individual citizens to adhere to particular beliefs, the state can never be neutral as regards values. Christians are to work for the state to adopt Christian values and to implement godly laws.

There are different views among Christian people regarding the establishment of religion.

However, as a matter of fact the Coronation Oath is an explicit denial of the secularity of the United Kingdom; and the establishment of the



Protestant Reformed Christian religion in general, and of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland in particular, still defines the UK as constitutionally a Christian country. These constitutional arrangements will remain in force until there is intentional constitutional change to the contrary.

In promoting the Christian faith The Christian Institute seeks to affirm the universal Lordship of Christ and to challenge secular humanism, theological liberalism, universalism and other ideologies.

The Institute affirms:

(1) Salvation solely through the atoning work of Jesus Christ (John 14:6); and

(2) That biblical Christianity maintains the true basis for tolerance, democracy and human dignity; and

(3) Its commitment to freedom for, not freedom from religion. There must be freedom for minority faiths and philosophies, except where these are plainly immoral. A state may not compel religious belief. However, no state can be neutral in terms of morality or religion. Given the UK's constitutional arrangements, there is a privileging of Christianity at certain public ceremonies such as thanksgivings, funerals of public figures, and rituals and prayers at the beginning of Parliaments. There is also state provision for schools with a Christian ethos and emphasis on Christianity in assemblies and religious education, while ensuring opt-outs for those of other faiths and none. To change our constitutional arrangements establishing the Protestant Reformed faith could be for the State positively to endorse either a secular humanistic philosophy (which results in atheism), or a "multifaith philosophy" (which is opposed by faithful people in all religions). Currently, almost half the UK population claim a Christian allegiance (cf. the National Census 2021 in which 46.2% of all people in England and Wales stated their religion as Christian). The Christian Institute sees this as entirely appropriate and is committed to the ideals behind the current Coronation Oath whatever future form of constitution the UK may have.



10. GAMBLING IS WRONG

Gambling is any activity in which wealth changes hands, mainly on the basis of chance and with risk to the gambler. Such activities include betting, fruit machines, lotteries, casino games, scratchcards and card games and their online equivalents. Creative effort, useful skills, and responsible investment are not integral factors.

There are three legitimate ways in which wealth may change hands – by giving, by working for it, or by genuine exchange (including taxation): anything else is virtual theft and so a breaking of the 8th commandment. As has been said: "Gambling is a kind of robbery by mutual agreement; but it is still robbery, just as duelling, which is murder by mutual agreement, is still treated as murder."

Of the three impulses behind gambling – the desire for gain, the desire for a thrill and the desire for competition, the moral and ethical problems are focused on the desire for gain.



(1) Gambling directly appeals to covetousness and greed “which is idolatry” according to the Apostle Paul (Colossians 3:5). Gambling breaches the 1st, 2nd, 8th and 10th commandments. It enthrones personal desires in place of God. Jesus warned: “you cannot serve both God and Money” (Matthew 6:24). A greedy and unrepentant person is an idolater who cannot obtain salvation (Ephesians 5:5).

(2) Gambling directly depends on other people incurring financial loss. Jesus said that you should “do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12). But gambling depends on doing to others what we would not have them do to us. At that point no gambler desires the best for his fellow man. Instead he is indifferent to his fellow gamblers or wants them to lose so that he can win. In any honest business transaction it is the intention of both parties to benefit, yet with gambling the intention is to gain but the gain is at the other’s expense. We are called to do good to all people, not to do harm (Galatians 6:10).

(3) Gambling denies the biblical work ethic which links honest labour with reward. The Apostle Paul said: “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (Ephesians 4:28). Gambling holds out the dream that it is possible to get something for nothing. It can

encourage laziness rather than work. Laziness is condemned in Scripture (e.g. 2 Thessalonians 3:10).

(4) Gambling is a reckless use of resources. It undermines the creation mandate to be stewards of creation and to work (Genesis 1:28; 9:1-2) The Bible teaches that all things belong to God (Psalm 24:1) and that man will have to give an account for his stewardship of all that he has been given (Matthew 25:14-30).

(5) Rather than facing up to reality, gambling is a form of escapism. The gambling industry trades on people’s vulnerability to temptation and relies on the fact that statistically it is the industry that wins practically every time. Those who gamble often are not thinking rationally about risk. Instead they are thinking about luck and superstition. Chance is glorified and God’s sovereignty denied (Job 42:2; Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:3). Scripture makes clear that trust in God and trust in luck cannot co-exist (Isaiah 65:11).

(6) There is evidence that gambling disproportionately affects the poor who face particular temptations because of their strained financial circumstances (Proverbs 30:8-9). It is very wrong to exploit this vulnerability.

(7) Gambling is inherently addictive. As with alcohol or drug addiction, compulsive gamblers lose control of their lives. This is plainly contrary to the teaching of the Bible, which teaches us to be self-controlled (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:22-23; Titus 2:11-12; 1 Peter 5:8). Anyone with a smartphone can effectively have a casino in their pocket, making the addictive nature of gambling all the more dangerous.

(8) Gambling is the very opposite of contentment (1 Timothy 6:6-10). Man’s duty is to seek first God’s Kingdom and trust that God will meet his needs. (Matthew 6:30-34; Philippians 4:19).

Mainstream Christian belief has always viewed gambling as incompatible with the Bible’s teaching. Gambling was strongly opposed by Tertullian, Hugh Latimer, John Wesley, William Wilberforce, C H Spurgeon and William Temple. On this issue, Thomas Aquinas is not representative of mainstream Christian belief.

Gambling does not cease to be wrong because a proportion of the take is devoted to so-called good causes. Many are misled at this point, and persuaded of the legitimacy of the National Lottery, for example. The end does not justify the means.



Thanks

The work of the Institute is greatly blessed through those who voluntarily give their time to it. Thank you to everyone who helped during 2023. I apologise to any I have inadvertently omitted.

The wise advice, faithful support and constant encouragement of the Trustees is always greatly appreciated, but even more so in these months since Colin was called home. Their governance provides robust accountability and underpins the smooth and efficient operation of the charity.

I am particularly grateful to Revd Dr Richard Turnbull. In addition to all his work as Chairman of Trustees, I was delighted that Richard could once again speak to the staff on various historical and theological issues.

Richard also spoke alongside Rupert Bentley-Taylor, Dr Calum MacKellar, Revd Dan Peters and Revd Dr William Philip at our 2023 Autumn Lectures series. I wish to record my deep appreciation to each of them. Thanks also go to George and Kathryn Curry, Edith Avery, Pat Johnson, Ruth Shutler and Judith Sword for their tireless efforts in making them such a success.

Thank you to others who gave their time to share their knowledge and experience with the staff: Tim Bull, Dr Nick Land and Dr Donald John MacLean. My thanks also go to Howard Chapman, Philip Dove, Mike and Pat Johnson, Duncan McGilvray, Evelyn McNichol, Malcolm and Caroline Peters, Peter Sword and Michael Waller for their steadfast help with mailings.

I am grateful to the many people who helped to make our meetings and events so successful. In particular, Revd Gareth Burke, Revd Paul Foster, Bobby Mackay, Ruth Burke, Joel Davidson, Lynn Kennedy, Priscilla Drennan, Calum and Liz Ferguson, Malcolm and Katie Maclean, Revd Alen McCulloch, the McPherson family, Andrew and Christine Cumming, and James and Donna Maciver.

Finally, on behalf of the entire Christian Institute staff, I wish to express my grateful thanks to all our supporters for their faithful prayers and financial support. We trust that our gracious God will continue to enable us to serve him in grace and truth.



Ciarán Kelly, Director



¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Basis of faith

We are committed to the truths of historic, biblical Christianity including:

- A.** The existence of the one, eternal God, Creator and Lord of the universe, who in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both governs all things according to his will and is accomplishing his purposes in the world and in the Church.
- B.** The inspiration of the Holy Scripture in its entirety by God's Spirit through the human authors, and its revelation of God's truth to humanity. The Bible is without error not only when it speaks of salvation, its own origins, values, and religious matters, but it is also without error when it speaks of history and the cosmos. Christians must, therefore, submit to its supreme authority, both individually and corporately, in every matter of belief and conduct.
- C.** The inherent value of all human beings, in consequence of their creation by God in his own image, and their sinfulness and guilt since the Fall. This has rendered them subject to God's wrath and condemnation, and has resulted in their alienation from his life, suppression of his truth, and hostility to his law.
- D.** Salvation from the guilt, penalty and all other consequences of sin solely through the work of Jesus Christ – his perfect obedience, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection and exaltation as Lord. He alone is truly God and truly man, the only mediator between God and man. There is salvation through no other person, creed, process or power. Each sinner is justified before God and reconciled to him only by his grace appropriated through faith alone.
- E.** The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit for the individual's new birth and growth to maturity, and for the Church's constant renewal in truth, wisdom, faith, holiness, love, power and mission.
- F.** The one, holy, universal and apostolic Church, which is the body of Christ, and to which all true believers belong. The Church's calling is to worship and serve God in the world, to proclaim and defend his truth, to exhibit his character and to demonstrate the reality of his new order.
- G.** The personal and visible return in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ to raise the dead and bring salvation and judgment to final completion. Evildoers will suffer eternal punishment. God will fully establish his kingdom when he creates a new heaven and a new earth from which evil, suffering and death will be excluded, and in which he will be glorified for ever.



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*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.
We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 1:14 (NIV)

