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Latest: Labour Support for Conversion Therapy Ban Collapses to 4% Over Parents and Pastors

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Conversion practices"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Support for the goverment's proposed ban on "conversion practices" collapses once voters are told what the law could actually do. A poll of 4,201 UK adults found Labour voters' backing falls from 57 per cent to just 4 per cent when they learn that parents and pastors could face a police investigation for ordinary conversations - praying with a child, advising a teenager, or telling a husband not to walk out on his wife. Across all adults, support drops from 51 per cent to 3 per cent once all 15 scenarios are put to them. The bill's problem is not its name, which most people like, but its reach, which most people do not.

The survey was conducted by Whitestone Insight for The Christian Institute between 20 and 23 July, and realeased on 2 November. It is believed to be the largest nationally representative poll examining attitudes towards conversion practices legislation and its potential scope. The findings landed in the middle of pre-legislative scrutiny, as MPs and peers on the joint committee heard oral evidence from experts on 29 October and 2 November.

The gap between the slogan and the substance is the story of this poll. Say "ban conversion therapy" and a majority of Britons nod along. Show them the 15 everyday situations the draft Bill could sweep up, and the majority walks away. Simon Calvert, deputy director of The Christian Institute, put it bluntly: "This polling exposes the enormous gap between support for the words 'ban conversion therapy' and support for what the sweeping draft legislation the Government proposes could actually mean in people's lives."

The 15 Scenarios That Changed Voters' Minds

The pollsters showed respondents 15 scenarios that lawyers for The Christian Institute confirm are possible under the draft Bill, then asked whether they would still support the ban if each one were covered. The answers moved fast. Support across all UK adults dropped below 40 per cent if the ban were to criminalise a parent refusing to allow their child to take part in a Pride march, advising a 16-year-old against intercourse, or praying with a child to help them stop watching pornography.

Pastoral advice fared no better. When voters were asked whether they would still back the legislation if it covered a minister advising a man not to leave his wife for another man, support fell below 20 per cent. When the scenario was a parent discouraging a child from changing sex, or taking a "wait and see" approach, Labour voters' support fell from 57 per cent to 8 per cent. Support more than halved when the question was mothers facing charges for refusing opposite-sex pronouns for their child.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment a complaint withdrawn under threat -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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