









CCI Newsletter December 2024



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Dear reader,

First of all, we would like to thank everyone who supported CCI's work over the past year. This is encouraging as we look back on the past year with gratitude, despite the worrying developments on the world stage.

This year our country and ourselves came incredibly close to giving up a large chunk of our national and personal sovereignty. If the World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic agreement had been approved, it would have seriously undermined national sovereignty and personal health decisions and given it to an unelected, uncontrollable international bureaucracy. Our constant presence around the negotiations and being on top of them helped narrowly prevent this unprecedented globalist power grab.

Much work has been accomplished in the past quarter. In this newsletter, you will find articles, videos, and photos that highlight these efforts. We appreciate our dedicated team members, <u>Sylvia Mesesi</u> from Nairobi and <u>Wilmer Hak</u> from Geneva, for their exceptional efforts.

George Roller, Congress Pastor and board member of CCI-USA, along with his wife Linda, visited the Netherlands, Strasbourg, and Budapest. We also reflect on an insightful evening focused on the American elections. Below, you will find a live stream of the event. Now that the results are known, we hope the policies of the new government will help turn the secular tide, with the understanding that no administration is perfect. Read more about this in the article by John Van Der Brink, board member of CCI-USA. The undersigned had several opportunities around the elections to highlight CCI's priorities in the media. (fragment 6 nov.) Peter Smith monitored a committee session at the United Nations on our behalf. You can find his report below. In the coming quarter, we plan to introduce various young people to the field of work at the UN and the Human Rights Council through our <u>Fellowships</u> in New York and Geneva. As part of these Fellowships, students from Driestar-Wartburg College visited the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Read the students' report below!

We hope that in 2025 you will continue to enable us to stand up for life, family and freedom worldwide. It now only remains for us to wish you God's blessings this Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

On behalf of the CCI team,

Henk Jan van Schothorst Director Christian Council International

The Americans are choosing "not a national pastor"

The Americans are choosing "not a national pastor," but a president who must be able to run the country like a business and is skilled in diplomacy. George Roller, pastor in the American Congress, said this on Thursday evening, October 24, 2024 in the Luther Church in Bodegraven. There, the Christian Council International (CCI) organized a meeting about the election campaign in the United States.

Read more

See this evening's live stream below.







Reasons for gratitude amid worrying developments By Wilmer Hak

As we come to the end of 2024, it is always good to look back and forward. For CCI, 2024 was a blessed year. The increased presence within international organizations,



seeing positive political changes, the weakening of the <u>Pact for the Future</u> and <u>the slowing down</u> <u>of the Pandemic Agreement</u> makes us grateful.



Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, after the Treaty of the Future was adopted on Sunday, 22 September 2024.

That said, challenges and concerns remain high about our positions. The international outlook on abortion, freedom of speech, Christian education and family is changing dramatically. This makes propagating God's Word and the values based on it as the first foundation difficult.

Perspective

On the international stage, the pressure on Christian norms and values is particularly evident within the United Nations. The way in which this is done, however, has changed drastically in recent years. In New York and Geneva, the basic principles do not even seem to be mentioned anymore.

First, for instance, they named religious freedom or parental rights within new resolutions (nonbinding exhortations of countries to 'improve' the world) and conventions. Of course, these were always supplemented with all kinds of terminology to negate these rights, but at least they were still mentioned.

Now, however, we increasingly see that rights are just completely ignored. Where previously CCI and other Christian organizations had to point <u>out the change or removal of text</u>, now the first thing to point out is the insertion of new text protecting these rights.

Despite appearing to be a small change, it is one with major consequences. It is an erosion of fundamental legal protection. For instance, the lack of any mention of religious freedom in the Pact for the Future relegated this right to a more secondary role in the future, making it easier for attacks on it occur.





Convention on the Rights of the Child, the original goal of protecting children from abuse and other dangers, has evolved into a mechanism that prefers to see any form of traditional parenting disappear.

This is also visible around children's rights. Whereas in the past the role of parental rights in parenting was always cited, as is also laid down within international treaties, any reference to these rights is now carefully avoided. <u>The UN</u> <u>Committee on the Rights of the Child even goes</u> <u>so far as to openly portray people who stand up</u> <u>for 'family values' from a religious perspective as</u> <u>a danger to the child and its rights.</u>

Polarization

This new task for CCI to work more from the grassroots is additionally made more difficult by increasing polarization at the international level. The US presidential elections showed this in particular. The divide largely outlined by the media was not really about different political views or ways of conducting policy, but about all kinds of groups and views being diametrically opposed to each other.

This thinking in groups is also increasingly reflected within international policy. While the media during the US elections was generous in handing out all kinds of discriminatory stamps on certain voter groups, in the international arena, terms like 'intimidation' and 'hate speech' are increasingly being used.

Although freedom of speech may be limited when people spread hatred or intimidate, there is an increasing attempt to include Biblical norms and values under this. <u>Ms. Räsänen's still</u> <u>ongoing case</u> is a telling example of this. Here, the word sin is tried to be subsumed under hate speech, and thus indirectly the entire Biblical Message which has major implications for schools, churches and religious freedom.

CCI therefore tries to re-establish the standard of God's Word and international law within all kinds

of international organizations to weaken these developments as far as possible.

Education

This shift in perspective and polarization is also increasingly evident in education. At the various national levels where CCI works, <u>calls for the</u> <u>abolition or restriction of Christian education are</u> <u>getting louder and louder.</u>



The Netherlands during the 2022 UPR session where it did not support a call for the protection of the family as a fundamental group unit (literal passage from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

At the international level, this call is particularly visible during the UPR sessions. Once every four and a half years, such a session is held for each country. Here, countries and organizations can raise issues around the human rights situation in that country. Unfortunately, these sessions are also used to push all kinds of political agendas, such as around education.

During the Dutch UPR session, for example, several requests were made to restrict Christian education. Fortunately, this was still rejected on the basis of Article 23 of the Constitution at the time, but for how long will that be done as pressure increases at the international level?

During Canada's UPR session, for example, the country supported a proposal to have more influence on sex education within schools. This could cause a ban on religious norms and values propagated in Christian schools around sexuality.

CCI has therefore launched several initiatives. For instance, through presence and participation in



Geneva, we are trying to weaken the attack on religious education. Moreover, we have also set up several training programs that provide students with quick, effective and truthful information about the United Nations. This not only allows us to quickly deploy people at international organizations, but also to provide students with reliable and honest insights for their future jobs.

Conclusion

These developments and changes within the United Nations are worrying. But despite that, we may and can still share our message. This therefore calls us to gratitude and humility before God. We also pray then that He will continue to bless it in 2025.

Wilmer Hak is CCI Policy Officer Geneva

The Conversation - God's lobby on the world stage



Simon (<u>These Days</u>) in conversation with Henk Jan van Schothorst, founder and executive director of Christian Council International and its sister organization in the US. As a representative of the Consultative Organization, he brings a Christian voice to international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) and in Member States. He is also committed to strengthening the indispensable transatlantic bond, especially between the Netherlands and the United States of America (US). (Dutch spoken)

Fields of Work

News from New York

Reflections on the Summit of the Future **By Sylvia Mesesi**

The Summit of the Future, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York



on September 22-23, 2024, brought together representatives and delegates from across the globe. The Summit aimed to address pressing global challenges and resulted in several key outcome documents. These include the *Pact for the Future*, the most comprehensive and detailed of the agreements, the *Global Digital Compact*, which focuses on technology and digital governance, and the *Declaration for Future Generations*, which emphasizes the protection and well-being of future generations.



This article outlines the major concerns that Christian Council International (CCI), an organization dedicated to defending life, family and freedom, has identified within these



documents. While the **Pact for the Future** claims to build upon existing treaties, it raises a crucial question: what gaps does this document address that previous frameworks could not?

Read more

The UN, an intimidating place - report on the Third Committee 2024 By Peter Smith

Since 1994 large numbers of Pro-Life /Pro-Family NGOs have been lobbying at the UN. I got involved January 1995. My last trip to the UN



was 2020. So, I have met hundreds of delegates at these meetings. The UN is a very intimidating place.

Delegates need to understand what certain terms mean. "Women in all their diversity" includes transgender people. When delegates know the hidden meaning behind words and phrases, then they need courage. Just seeing friendly NGOs in the building helps. Having students attending, under supervision, helps. Many activities are held in and out of UN buildings. Over the years these have attracted sometimes 100 delegates and ambassadors at a meeting. All this helps with education and building courage.



From 4 to 16 Nov. 2024 I monitored 25 resolutions of the 3rd Committee of the General Assembly. Some 9 of these were voted on. The UN hates voting, they like to pretend there is "consensus". Most of these resolutions are repeated every two years. There is a pretense that if something is repeated enough times it becomes "customary international law".

<u>Read more</u>

News from Geneva

Update on the Pandemic Agreement *By Sylvia Mesesi*



The World Health Organization (WHO) has been working hard on a new global Pandemic Agreement, which they claim aims to prepare the world for future health crises.

Leading these negotiations is the International Negotiating Body (INB), a group tasked with drafting the agreement and managing discussions between countries. Essentially, the INB acts as the bridge between WHO's leadership and the member states, helping to shape the details of this treaty.

Recently, the INB held its 12th meeting (INB 12), and here's what happened.

INB 12

The most striking outcome of INB 12 (held in November and December) was that negotiators could not reach a consensus to finalize the Pandemic Agreement. This means they missed their goal of preparing the agreement in time for a special session of the World Health Assembly (WHA), which was planned for this December.

To understand why this matters, we must look at the World Health Assembly (WHA). This is the decision-making body of the WHO, made up of health ministers from around the world. The WHA typically meets in May each year and discusses global health issues.



At the 77th WHA this May, however, they made controversial amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR), which dictate how nations manage health crises. The Pandemic Agreement was not completed at that time, leading to ongoing negotiations throughout the year.

Read more

News from Africa

World Media Conference in Lagos, Nigeria By Sylvia Mesesi

This December, CCI alongside its African network, successfully oversaw a significant world media press conference in Lagos, Nigeria. Organized by the Foundation for African Cultural Heritage (FACH) and supported by 25 legal, civil, and religious organizations, this conference highlighted pressing issues threatening Africa's cultural, religious, and legal sovereignty.



Held at Home Touch Place, Surulere, Lagos, the event addressed concerns surrounding the Samoa Agreement, surrogacy, and the WHO Pandemic Treaty. Here's an overview of the issues discussed and their potential impact:

Samoa Agreement

Originally known as the Cotonou Agreement and initiated in 1975 as a trade treaty between the EU and African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) nations, the Samoa Agreement has since evolved to include controversial provisions. Despite public opposition, Nigeria signed this agreement, which now promotes policies that conflict with its laws and cultural values.

During the press conference, it was highlighted that key provisions in the Samoa Agreement endorse LGBTQ+ rights, abortion, and Comprehensive Sexuality Education. For example, Article 36(2) references sexual and reproductive health rights, defined by the EU to include sexual orientation and gender identity. The participants stated that these policies directly contradict Nigeria's Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act of 2014.

Read more

News from America

American Elections



Around the American elections, Henk Jan van Schothorst was invited by the Dutch media several times. Herewith a fragment from the television program 'Bar Laat' on the day after the elections.





Election Results and What They Mean to Education **By John Van Der Brink**

Election Day 2024 is now a thing of the past. The leadup to this day was filled with tension and anxiety for millions of Americans.



People from every walk of life, from all age groups, and from across the political spectrum looked to November 5 as the most consequential day of the year. Everybody knew that the outcome of this election would turn our nation even further left or that there would be an attempt to conserve some of the norms of the past. And now the results are in, a new president has been elected, and he is already picking the cabinet members who will form and shape his vision for America. The question for us as a school community is, "What will those changes mean for education in America?"

There are several things worthy of note.



Wokism

One change that this administration had promised to pursue is stemming the tide of wokism in our nation's schools. During the current administration, the LGBTQ+ movement has had almost free reign to promote their leftist agenda in our schools.

Read more

News From Europe

Visit Strasbourg – October 22-23, 2024



Last October, as part of a collaboration between the Driestar-Wartburg College from Gouda and Christian Council International (CCI), 25 students had the opportunity to visit the European



Parliament in Strasbourg at the invitation of Mr. B.J. Ruissen of the SGP. This excursion was designed with the aim of showing young people what the European Parliament means to them and how organizations like CCI are involved in it.

Read more

Conference 'Patriotic Intellectuals For Europe' in Budapest – October 25, 2024



At the invitation of EuCET Hungary, with CCI-US Board Member George Roller and Riekelt Pasterkamp, contributed to the constructive network conference 'Patriotic Intellectuals For Europe' in Budapest, up and down in 1 day. Theme: EU Gender Wokism: Danger for Chr Family? Stand up!



Family Days – October 29-31, 2024



During the Family Days we presented the Dutch translation of the booklet by Niilo and Päivi Räsänen 'Marriage from a Christian perspective' to SGP MP Diederik van Dijk. He highlighted marriage from Luther's point of view on this reformationday. See his opinion in the <u>Reformatorisch Dagblad</u>.

The booklet can be ordered here: https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/nl/ nieuws/huwelijk-vanuit-christelijk-perspectiefniilo-paivi-rasanen



The booth at the Familiedagen



America evening of SGP Goeree-Overflakkee – November 2, 2024



What a fantastic America evening of SGP Goeree-Overflakkee in a great ambiance with more than 100 enthusiastic SGP young people! Discussion about the work of Christian Council International and the American elections. Beautiful, that warm involvement! #SGP #SGP youth.

March for Life – November 16, 2024

We had a dignified march for the dignity of human life. "Human rights begin in the womb".



VI Transatlantic Summit 'For freedom and a culture of life' – December 2, 2024



Attended the very informative networking VI Transatlantic Summit 'For freedom and a culture of life' in the beautiful Senate building in Madrid. <u>#VITransatlanticSummit</u> <u>#summit4freedom4life</u>

European Prayer Breakfast in Brussels – December 3-4, 2024



On my way back from Madrid to the Netherlands, I was able to attend meetings around the European Prayer Breakfast in Brussels. A good place to meet new people and to bolster contacts with old friends in the same working field of defending and promoting Christian values.



Vaccines, Parental Rights and Government

By Wilmer Hak

A few months ago, a mother with her 4-year-old son entered the Children's Clinical University Hospital in Latvia. Initial diagnosis:



diphtheria, an infectious and dangerous disease. Unfortunately, a few days after this diagnosis, the boy developed myocarditis and kidney failure, resulting in his death.



Image source

This sorrowful message however changed to another level when the media began blaming the parents for their son's death. Even though diphtheria wasn't the main cause of death and subsequent tests failed to detect the pathogen, the parents were blamed for refusing to vaccinate their children against it.

Read more

Right to abortion on the rise - what do Christians stand to do?

By Henk Jan van Schothorst and Wilmer Hak Published in the Reformatorisch Dagblad of November 23, 2024

Since the scrapping in the US of the infamous Roe v Wade ruling, which took the nationwide right to abortion off the table, more and more countries actually seem to be strengthening the right to abortion, for instance by setting up safe-access zones around abortion clinics. A dangerous trend.

Read more



'Part of the European Parliament would prefer to guarantee access to abortion everywhere.' Photo: the Strasbourg building that houses the European Parliament. image AFP, Frederick Florin



Christian Council International in a nutshell



LIFE

What's at stake:

The EU wants to standardize abortion laws, LGBT promotion and sexualizing education internationally, here in a binding trade treaty with a group of 79 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries, more than 1 billion people. But education and health are matters which belong to national competencies. By pressuring these nations, the EU is subverting sovereignty and Christian values.

What we do:

We alert key leaders in ACP countries and in the EU so that complying with this pressure is prevented. Freedom to enact own legislation must be preserved.

What we achieve:

ACP-EU Treaty National Sovereignty Secured

 Due partly to our efforts to alert EU and ACP member states about serious content problems, the signing of the EU-ACP Treaty has been delayed, already for 2 years.
We spoke in the European

Parliament to identify problems that would result from passing the Treaty. We also drafted written questions for the European Commission to answer. **3.** Through our African office, we

supported ACP Members of Parliament by asking critical questions during the EU-ACP Parliamentary Assembly.



FAMILY

What's at stake:

Western countries are trying to use the UN to add a new term to categories protected by nondiscrimination policies. This term is "sexual orientation and gender identity" (SOGI). Proponents would like to define gender as a feeling, a self-chosen identity, and not as a biological distinction. This new gender ideology denies the Biblical creation order.

What we do:

We participate in public discussions at the UN and lobby for worldwide respect for Biblical directives on marriage and the family.

FREEDOM

What's at stake:

Freedom of education, of religion, and of speech is under increasing international pressure, especially in the EU and the United States. Finnish Christian politician Päivi Räsänen is on trial for inciting hatred because of her expressed Biblical views on homosexuality and marriage. In a similar vein, Hungary is also under attack over its child protection laws.

What we do:

We stand up and publicly defend these freedoms. We provide moral and informational support to individuals and countries under attack for their Christian beliefs and culture.

United Nations Norm Creation Order Maintained

 Through our consultative status, we bring a Christian voice to the United Nations meeting rooms and actively monitor the ongoing agenda.
We managed to work with supporters to keep sexual orientation, gender identity, sexualizing education, and LGBT

promotion out of norm-setting resolutions.

3. We help to prevent abortion from becoming an international human right.



Hungary - Finland - USA Defense of Christian Freedom Supported

 By supporting Hungary's defense of Christian values, we help to prevent the EU from reaching European and international consensus on pro LGBTQ+ and gender ideology.

2. Through our support of the Finnish politician Päivi Räsänen, awareness has been raised in the EU and member states that the Bible is on trial.

3. With our CCI branch in the US, a policymaker network is being formed for the defense of freedom of education and of religion.



www.christiancouncilinternational.org



Financial support needed for CCI

In order for CCI's work to continue and expand, a steady flow of funds is necessary. To get an idea of what the project plan looks like for the next three years, see the picture below or <u>click here</u>. It is an ambitious plan, but every contribution helps us! (In USD: USD 860,000 per year (Alternative plan B: USD 430,000 per year)





CAD 1,200,000 per year (Alternative plan B: CAD 600,000 per year)

CCI PROGRAM JANUARY 2025 - DECEMBER 2027

A Christian answer to turn the secular tide.

Christian Council International defends, advances and protects life, family and freedom at international organizations and member states from a Christian perspective.

How?

- By using the powers provided by CCI's Consultative Status at the UN and EU, as well as high-level access in Africa and the US, to protect Christian values and freedoms and national sovereignty.
- By mobilizing an international network, such as from governments, NGOs, parliaments, churches, schools and media, to protect and defend life, family and freedom to policy makers.

What? CCI's main activities across the different project locations

Alerting

- Permanent monitoring of agendas and day-to-day affairs of important and decision-making meetings.
- Equipping like-minded delegates, stakeholders and politicians with insights on matters of concern.

Advocating

- Participating in meetings by presenting oral or written statements and proposing amendments.
- Organizing strategic side-events and awareness-raising conferences on researched concerning policies.

Defending

- Organizing regular online planning sessions to develop joint intervention strategies with key allies.
- Supporting politically persecuted states and Christians (e.g. Hungary, Päivi Räsänen).

Networking

- Maintaining strong partnership relations with likeminded policy influencers.
- Informing interested groups from the support base, students, businesspeople and media

Why? Key focus areas for CCI in international policy

Dangerous policy key words threatening life, family and freedom:

- Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) sexualizing children
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) abortion rights
- Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SOGI) LGBT promotion
- Global Governance unaccountable power concentration vs national sovereignty

Goals:

- National sovereignty secured
- Norm of male female creation order maintained
- Defense of fundamental freedoms supported

Donate safely online

Become a member of the CCI Business Network

Friend of CCI \$365 | Ivory Member \$1,500 | Silver Member \$3,650 | Gold Member \$7,300 | Platinum Member starting at \$14,600 | Patron starting at \$146,000 Amounts per year.

> Christian Council International (CCI) canada@christiancouncilinternational.org www.christiancouncilinternational.org/business-network



policy network established and effective in influencing policy at the US, Canada, UN, EU, and ACP level.

Expected Results

Harmful policies / treaties blocked or amended in



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OUR PROJECTS

Plan B

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CAD 180,000 per project per year (Plan B: CAD 90,000)













1. PROJECT NORTH-AMERICA

With our presence in Washington DC (and potentially Ottawa), CCI is strategically positioned to work with governments and like-minded organizations on life, family and freedom issues from a Christian perspective. At the international level, from here our influence is spread to the Organization of American States and their 35 member states from Latin America, the Carribbean and North America.

2. PROJECT UN GENEVA

Geneva stands at the core of many international organizations. With our presence here, CCI focuses on the Christian voice and legal advocacy within the United Nations Human Rights Council, the various treaty organizations, the World Health Organization and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. By oral and written input and offering our Christian guidance and research, we strengthen and protect countries from a secular agenda in resolutions and treaties and defend Christian values in international policy.

3. PROJECT UN NEW YORK

Our presence in New York focuses on the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, Commissions and other United Nations entities. With our consultative status since 2016, our mission is to preserve the male-female order of creation, defend classical freedoms and secure national sovereignty. Through cooperation, participation in meetings and legal research, our Christian voice is amplified to reform treaties, resolutions and international policies that undermine life, family and freedom.

4. PROJECT EUROPE

Through our accreditation and presence at the European Parliament, our office aims to bring a Christian voice and alternative to the European Union bodies in Brussels and Strasbourg. We do this, among other things, by advising parliamentarians and drawing their attention to dangers in the areas of life, family and freedom. We also monitor the agenda's of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in Vienna and are actively present at important meetings.

5. PROIECT AFRICA

Our presence in strategically located Nairobi, Kenya, broadens the voice for life, family and freedom in Africa. From here we focus on national leaders and public policy makers. We also monitor, among others, the agendas of the African Union (Ethiopia), the Pan-African Parliament (South-Africa), the UN (Kenya) and the Organization of African (48), Caribbean (16) and Pacific (15) states. We try to prevent the export and implementation of secular policies from the UN and the West across the continent.

6. OFFICE NETHERLANDS

Our head office is located in Bodegraven in South Holland, where it all started in 2013, close to the Dutch government center The Hague. It provides an ideal base for coordinating our advocacy efforts around the world. We also work from here on fundraising, communication with our support base and all other general administration, including for our two other branches in the US and Canada.

👗 H.J. van Schothorst

👗 (Part-time) Staff

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CCI is a Section 501(c)(3) organization under the IRS code, so contributions are tax-deductible for U.S. taxpayers.

Website: https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/

Email: info@christiancouncilinternational.org

Support: https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/do nate

Board of Directors: *Chairman*: Mr. Henk Jan van Schothorst, CCI activities coordinator, former European Parliament policy advisor

Member: Mr. John Van Der Brink, Administrator at Netherlands Reformed Christian School, New Jersey

Member: Mr. George E. Roller, Ambassador for Hope to the Hill at Capitol Hill

Secretary/Treasurer: Mrs. Jolanda van Schothorst-Geluk, General Administrator CCI

Office Canada:

To be set up.

Email: <u>canada@christiancouncilinternational.org</u>

Donation option in CAD, see:

https://www.christiancouncilinternational.or g/donate

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