



Foley's executioner prompts a reckoning in Britain - Washington Post



Archbishop of Canterbury to visit Armagh

The Church of Ireland Primate, Archbishop Richard Clarke, will welcome the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Revd Justin Welby, to St Patrick's Cathedral on Thursday 2 October.

It will be Archbishop Welby's first visit to the city and he will join in a service of evensong in the cathedral.

The Dean of Armagh, the Rev Gregory Dunstan, said: "Since his appointment to Canterbury, Archbishop Welby has become known for thoughtful and clear-sighted Christian leadership, both in the Church of England and in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

"He comes to Armagh as guest of our primate Archbishop Clarke. His visit, however, is to Ireland as a province of the Anglican Communion, and to the city and diocese of Armagh, with its ancient inheritance from St Patrick."

"We look forward to welcoming him to St Patrick's cathedral," added the Dean. Representatives of the other main churches are likely to attend the service.

Derry City Mission - 75th Anniversary of Hostel Work

This year the Methodist City Mission (MCM) in Derry/Londonderry celebrates 75 years of providing help and accommodation to homeless men in the City.

The MCM currently provides 49 units of accommodation to single homeless men in purpose built hostel in Crawford Square. This consists of 43 single rooms sharing a living environment and 6 self-contained flats. The MCM manages the hostel, including the provision of housing



management services, under a management agreement established with North & West housing Ltd and provides support services to the residents occupying the premises under a support contract with NIHE.

The hostel was set up in 1909 by Rev Robert Byers in Dark Lane. The building was named "The People's Hall". In 1933 a new building was purchased in Barrack Street which included accommodation for homeless men. In 1972 the Barrack Street building was destroyed by fire and another building was purchased in Crawford Square where accommodation was provided for 22 men. The MCM moved to their current building in September 2003 which is owned by North & West Housing Ltd.

In this premises all residents have their own rooms with individual washing facilities. The premises is equipped to a high specification with facilities designed to develop life skills and to empower residents to move towards independent living, equipping them with skills to sustain tenancies in their own right.

Throughout these years the MCM Hostel has retained a homely and friendly atmosphere, in which the dignity and respect of the individual is paramount.

Former Irish PM Albert Reynolds dies

Ireland's former prime minister Albert Reynolds, who played a key role in the Northern Ireland peace process, dies at the age of 81.

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28876613>

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/former-taoiseach-albert-reynolds-dies-aged-81-1.1903597>

Church of England responds to Iraq crisis

The Church of England is calling on its members to pray, act and give to those suffering in Iraq under the actions of ISIS.

The Archbishop of York issued three prayers for Mosul and the third of these can be used for all those fleeing persecution across the country.

Churches are being encouraged to act by downloading a poster and to display it in homes, churches and noticeboards to display their support for all religious minorities fleeing persecution.

The poster uses the Arabic letter, "N", which has been daubed on the homes of Christians (often called 'Nasrani' in Arabic) in Mosul to identify them as targets for persecution or execution.

This symbol has been picked up around the world as a way in which the Church can identify with those from all religious and ethnic communities who are being targeted to championing freedom of religion and belief worldwide as a fundamental and internationally recognised human right.

The Archbishop of Canterbury issued a statement on the situation in Iraq. In the statement, the Archbishop said, "It is extremely important that aid efforts are supported and that those who have been displaced are able to find safety. I believe that, life France, the United Kingdom's doors should be open to refugees as they have been throughout history."

Churches and individuals are also being encouraged to write to their local MPs urging them to press the Government to increase Britain's humanitarian efforts for all those affected by the crisis and to ask for asylum to be granted to a fair number of those who will be unable to return to their homes.

Fianlly, donations can be made to the Anglican Diocese for Cyprus and the Gulf which is part of the Church network functioning alongside the Kurdish authorities in the absence of the normal international relief agencies. The immediate need is funds for food and further priority is to providing accommodation for those sleeping in schools or even in the streets.

Further resources including the 'We Are N' poster, the Archbishop of Canterbury's statement and the Archbishop of York's prayers are available from www.churchofengland.org/iraq



Blair's Iraq War created the precedent that allows Cameron and co to get away with doing nothing

I don't know what we should do about ISIS (I refuse to call them 'Islamic State' – they are, as Nigel Fletcher has pointed out, neither of these things).

Catholic Herald - I know that we could assist the US in producing a more favourable ground war for the Kurds, Christians, Shiite militias and others braving resistance against this tide of barbarism. I know that we could offer refuge to religious minorities fleeing – in particular, because they have nowhere else to go and because we are a Christian country in heritage at least, to Iraqi and Syrian Christians. I know that we could provide troops to help shore up the defences of innocents and that we could equip our friends in the region with the kind of military technology that we have, inadvertently, allowed ISIS to capture and to use. What I do know, though, is that it is unsustainable to sit and to watch.

[As Pope Francis said](#), when asked whether he would support action against ISIS, "It is licit to stop the unjust aggressor ... I say stop. I do not say bomb, make war, I say stop by some means. With what means can they be stopped? These have to be evaluated. To stop the unjust aggressor is licit."

This point is hammered home with brutal clarity by [the murder of US journalist James Foley](#). I have not watched the video; I would urge you not to either. To do so would be to join ISIS in turning one man's lonely and uncalled for death into a geopolitical plaything, a stunt. But we now know – as if there were ever any real doubt – the true extent of ISIS's evil ambitions. They won't rest at genocide in their own lands. They won't stop when they reach the borders of Iraq. They will come for us as surely as they came for Foley. If the people of Britain felt able to ignore the plight of Christian, Yazidi and Shiite

victims in far-off lands – and, to our credit, polling shows that many of us do not – we cannot ignore the direct threat to our own safety that ISIS’s expansion poses. This murder is significant because it demonstrates that no-one will ever be safe. Yes, Foley was in Syria. But his killing was directed at us, here. It was an act of theatre, macabre but meaningful.

And what do our politicians intend to do about it? Who knows? David Cameron sweeps up the road from his holidays in Cornwall (not that one begrudges him a break) to meet with Cobra. Ed Miliband tweets vague messages of support for “combatting the threat of ISIS”. What that means is, really, anybody’s guess. The spectacle of Philip Hammond on the Today Programme outlining all the things Britain “could” do – without ever committing to any of the options he outlines – is a demonstration of the strange paralysis that appears to exist at the highest levels of Government. Politics has become enfeebled when it comes to foreign policy – to the serious, weighty questions of war and peace, we are adrift.

It is, in some ways, Tony Blair’s fault. Not because of Iraq in the conventional sense. I understand why we helped to defeat Saddam Hussein. And I supported it then for reasons of basic morality that I continue to believe relevant and justified. But Tony Blair’s handling of the build up to that war continues to have a haunting, emasculating effect on our current leaders – it is a toxic hangover that exerts a tremendous, physical effect on Britain’s politicians. Blair’s desperation to get his way on Iraq led him to establish a new and wholly invented precedent – giving Parliament a previously non-existent right to vote prior to action in a foreign land. Read more -

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2014/08/20/blairs-iraq-war-created-the-precedent-that-allows-cameron-and-co-to-get-away-with-doing-nothing/>

British extremists among ‘most vicious’ in Isis, expert says

British extremists are among the “most vicious and vociferous fighters” in Islamic State (Isis) ranks in [Syria](#) and Iraq, a jihadism expert has said.

The Guardian - Sunni Muslims from the UK are taking part in the conflicts “in every way”, according to Shiraz Maher from King’s College London’s International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation.

That includes acting as suicide bombers and executioners, he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme on Wednesday after a video purporting to show a US journalist being beheaded by an [Isis](#) fighter with a British accent was placed online.



Abu Muthanna al-Yemeni, centre, believed to be Nasser Muthana, from Cardiff.

The black-clothed and masked man, who spoke with traces of a London accent, threatened bloodshed in the gruesome video, accusing America of plotting against Muslims and interfering in their affairs before taking a knife to his victim's throat. If it is confirmed that he is British he will be seen as the most extreme example yet of a fighter travelling from the UK to take part in brutal violence as part of the militant Isis movement.

Maher, a senior research fellow at ICSR, told Today: "Unfortunately the British participation in the conflicts now raging in both Syria and [Iraq](#) has been one of full participation, one that has seen them at the front lines, taking part in the conflict in every way. "So we have seen British fighters out there operating as suicide bombers, we have seen them operating as executioners.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/20/uk-isis-extremists-most-vicious-iraq-syria-expert>

Accent of James Foley's executioner prompts a reckoning in Britain - Washington Post

The beheading of an American journalist at the hands of a London-accented extremist prompted deep reckoning among Britons on Wednesday over the particularly vicious role their countrymen are playing in the destabilization of the Middle East.

Washington Post - Security officials in London have been sounding the alarm for more than a year over the large number of foreigners in Syria, with the chief of Scotland Yard telling reporters last week that about 500 Britons are among the thousands of Westerners who have joined the fight.

The government's concerns have focused on the possibility that some of those fighters will return home, newly radicalized, and [carry out attacks in Britain](#).

But the [video released Tuesday](#) that showed the execution of American journalist James Foley highlighted just how central foreigners have become to some of the most extreme behavior by militant Islamist groups in Iraq and Syria.

"Foreign fighters are often used for the most brutal acts because they are the most ideologically motivated," said Peter Neumann, director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization. "The locals may say, 'That's not the kind of thing we do here.' But the outsiders don't know that."

Security officials say that most of the Britons who have left to fight in Syria, and increasingly in Iraq, have joined the Islamic State, the extremist group that asserted responsibility for Foley's killing.

Neumann said the group probably selected a Brit to carry out the execution both because he was willing and because it knew that his voice would resonate across the West.

"They probably picked the Brit because there was no American," Neumann said, noting that only an estimated 100 Americans have joined the fight in Syria. "It was important for them to [have someone who speaks English fluently](#)."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/europeans-are-flocking-to-the-war-in-syria-what-happens-when-they-come-home/2014/01/29/772f56d0-88f6-11e3-833c-33098f9e5267_story.html

South Sudan cries for help

A conference in London brought together senior church leaders from 5 major denominations in South Sudan, together with leaders from UK mission organisations and NGO's to explain the seriousness of the crisis in South Sudan and to appeal for help.

This comes just after a visit by Rowan Williams with Christian Aid to the new country, and is happening at the same time as another attempt at peace talks between Government and rebel factions in Addis Ababa facilitated by church leaders.



Barnabas Fund provided the organisation of the London conference, together with Oxford Centre for Religion in Public Life. I attended an open meeting featuring a presentation by Bishops with Martin Mogga from the African Inland Church as the chief spokesman. We heard of the appalling results of the explosion of civil war which followed independence and the creation of a new country in 2011 – in many parts of the country there is an almost complete breakdown of health and education services. A tenth of the population are refugees, mostly internally displaced within the country although many thousands have fled to neighbouring lands. As crops have not been planted because of violence in some areas and drought is affecting others, lack of food and clean water is rapidly becoming a serious threat, with an estimated 50,000 children facing imminent starvation. Militias and other armed gangs roam the country, often taking food aid; no-one is sure who is funding the fighting.

As is often the case in Africa, the church is often the only functioning organization in the absence of proper governance or public services in much of the country. Remarkable stories are emerging of the sacrifice and spiritual strength of Christians of different denominations. Women in particular are at the heart of subsistence agriculture, small enterprise and local reconciliation initiatives. Most amazing is the faith shown by many individual Christians and churches across the country in the face of disaster. Anglican Bishop David Akau said that the first need is prayer, and then of course financial help from brothers and sisters across the world.

There is a danger of “compassion fatigue”, with the attention of the world’s media focused on the middle East, and also West Africa with its Ebola outbreak. Some have dismissed South Sudan as a problem created by its own people and that we have no responsibility to help. But failure to act will result in suffering and death for many; it will also create huge instability in a

region already at risk from radical Islamic forces. Great work by NGO's is already going on, but more is needed.

The Pope's war with the Vatican

If you want to understand how Pope Francis is planning to change the Catholic church, then don't waste time searching for clues in the charming, self-effacing press conference he gave on the plane back from South Korea on Monday.

Damian Thompson is an associate editor of The Spectator. His books include The Fix and Counterknowledge - It's easy to be misled by the Pope's shoulder-shrugging interviews and impromptu phone calls. On his return flight from Rio last year, he said, 'If a gay person seeks God, who am I to judge?' What did that mean? Then there was that mysterious telephone conversation with an Argentinian woman apparently telling her it was OK to receive communion despite her irregular marriage. The media has concluded that Francis wants the church to change its stance on divorcees and same-sex couples.

But the media are wrong. Neither of these subjects is high on Francis's agenda — and, even if they were, he wouldn't alter Catholic teaching on sexuality.

The first non-European Pope was elected to do one thing: reform the Roman Curia, the pitifully disorganised, corrupt and lazy central machinery of the church. He is determined to pull it off — but he's 77 and has part of a lung missing. When he looks at his watch during long Masses in St Peter's, it's not just because elaborate services bore him. He knows he may not have much time. 'Two or three years and then off to the house of the Father,' he said this week. Was he serious? You can never tell.

Jorge Bergoglio has little in common with Joseph Ratzinger apart from an intense, orthodox Catholic faith and a love of classical music. Like many Jesuits, Francis isn't interested in liturgy. This is actually good news for traditionalists, because it means he won't clamp down on the Latin Mass (with one baffling exception: the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, a new order whose use of the Old Missal has been brutally restricted).

But there is one big difference. To quote a senior bishop: 'Benedict allowed the Roman Curia, and specifically the Italians in it, to kill his pontificate. Francis will not permit that to happen.' He will strike first.

The Pope has declared a spiritual culture war on the bureaucrats who forced the resignation of his predecessor, the most intellectually gifted pontiff for 200 years. Cardinal Ratzinger was once known as ‘the Rottweiler’. How ludicrous that nickname seems in the light of his eight years as Pope, during which he allowed curial officials — including his incompetent secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone — to plunge the church deeper into financial and sexual scandal while they fought their own factional battles. Benedict was too old and too kind to knock heads together.

Pope Francis is far more of a rottweiler. He became a Jesuit because he wanted to be ‘in military terms, on the front lines of the church’. As superior of the Argentine Jesuits, Bergoglio expected instant obedience. He still does, much of the time, even though he has moved to the left and become a ferocious advocate of social justice for the poor.

As a Latin American who didn’t know his way around Rome when he became pope, he approaches the Curia as an outsider. That is why the cardinals elected him. They did not imagine that this previously austere figure, who even as a prince of the church travelled on buses dressed as a simple priest, would turn on the charm for journalists and become a global celebrity. (In Buenos Aires he rarely gave interviews.) But they did suspect that he would kick the living daylights out of Vatican politicians who seal sleazy deals with Italian businessmen while stuffing their faces with saltimbocca alla romana.

Last year Francis described his ‘court’ as ‘the leprosy of the papacy’. By ‘court’ he may have been referring to monarchical trappings — but employees of the Curia suspected that he was talking about them. For those good priests who found themselves trapped in a sclerotic bureaucracy it came across as a needless insult. ‘Morale is tremendously low,’ says a Vatican source. ‘And matters aren’t helped by Latin American clergy swanning around Rome telling us how they’re bringing us simplicity. There’s a new ultramontanism of the left. You can disagree with anything the church teaches so long as you think Francis is fabulous.’

This article first appeared in the print edition of The Spectator magazine, dated [23 August 2014](http://www.spectator.co.uk/issues/23-august-2014/) <http://www.spectator.co.uk/issues/23-august-2014/>

Press review

Telegraph

Report on a letter to the paper signed by multi-faith leaders, and led by the Bishop of Coventry calling on the Prime Minister to use the UK's seat on the UN Security Council to begin the process of bringing war crimes prosecutions against Iraqi militants. The report

says that in a "rare show of unity" Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and Zoroastrian leaders say: "Such violations as are currently taking place are crimes against humanity that must be both stopped and punished."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11046459/Iraq-crisis-UK-faith-leaders-press-Cameron-for-action-on-crimes-against-humanity.html>

Tel

Text of Letter referred to above with full list of signatories including Bishop of Coventry, General Secretary of Muslim council of Britain, Secretary General of Hindu Forum and Judge of the Court of the Chief Rabbi

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/letters/11046182/Britain-must-act-to-bring-the-perpetrators-of-Iraq-atrocities-to-justice.html>

Times

Opinion piece on how the writer believes the Church of England can't rely on politicians to defend faith. Referring to the letter to the Prime Minister from the Bishop of Leeds about the Government's policy on Iraq, Tim Montgomerie writes: "I hope the Baines letter might be the moment when Church realises that, for all their worthy rhetoric at Christmas and Easter, British politicians will not fight for religious freedom."

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4182362.ece>

Tel/Times/Mail/Independent

Reports that Richard Dawkins has said that it is "immoral" to allow Down's Syndrome babies to be born. In response to a question on twitter as to what someone who was pregnant with a Down's Syndrome child should do, Prof. Dawkins replied "Abort it and try again. It would be immoral to bring it into the world if you have the choice."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/11047072/Richard-Dawkins-immoral-to-allow-Downs-syndrome-babies-to-be-born.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/richard-dawkins-on-babies-with-down-syndrome-abort-it-and-try-again-it-would-be-immoral-to-bring-it-into-the-world-9681549.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2730028/Atheist-author-Richard-Dawkins-says-foetuses-Downs-syndrome-aborted.html?>

[ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2730028/Atheist-author-Richard-Dawkins-says-foetuses-Downs-syndrome-aborted.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

BBC

Report that Suffolk priest, Canon Ian Finn from Hopton Rise in Haverhill has been charged with fraud after an allegation that £13,000 was dishonestly gained from a church. Canon Finn, who has been suspended by the Church of England, is due to appear before magistrates in September.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-28870076>

BBC

Report says there's been a 70% drop in church theft claims across England. Quoting the church insurers Ecclesiastical Insurance, the report says there were 659 claims in the first half of 2012, mainly for lead theft, dropping to 195 for the same period this year. It goes on to say that EI have concerns that government funding for the police's National Metal Theft Taskforce is due to finish.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-28857517>

BBC

The hourly chime of a church clock has been silenced after a complaint about the noise.

Holy Trinity in Ventnor on the Isle of Wight agreed to stop the chimes while the council investigates.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-28860606>

Guardian

Review of a book about "Conscription in Britain between 1945-1963" by Richard Vinen. Includes a reference to the Church of England encouraging its clergy to undertake national service.

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/20/national-service-conscription-britain-richard-vinen-review>

BBC

A London stand up comedian is providing free lessons to clergy in an attempt to make church sermons more fun. Bentley Browning says about 50 members of the clergy have been on his courses so far.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-28867524>

Blogs

Huffington Post article on Richard Dawkins' comments about aborting fetuses with Downs Syndrome

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/08/20/richard-dawkins-sparks-twitter-debate-over-aborting-down-syndrome-fetuses_n_5694961.html?utm_hp_ref=uk