

Daily media briefing

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Thu, 11 Jan 2024

[Christian barman sacked for telling lesbian colleague 'God will forgive' has his discrimination claim thrown out](#)

A Christian Wetherspoons barman who sued the pub chain for discrimination after he was sacked for replying 'God will forgive you' to a lesbian colleague has had his case thrown out.

Daily Mail

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[Defacing of Stalin icon exposes deep divisions in his home country Georgia](#)

Georgian authorities are investigating the defacing of a recently-installed icon in Tbilisi's main cathedral depicting Josef Stalin, a case that has exposed deep divisions in Georgia over the former Soviet dictator's legacy in his homeland.

Reuters

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[A spiritual leader in Nepal known as 'Buddha Boy' arrested on charges of rape and kidnapping](#)

A controversial Nepalese spiritual leader known as "Buddha Boy" was arrested on charges of sexually assaulting a minor and involvement in the disappearance of at least four of his followers from his camps, police said Wednesday.

Associated Press

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A secret tunnel in a NYC synagogue leads to a brawl between police and worshippers

A historic Brooklyn synagogue that serves as the center of an influential Hasidic Jewish movement was trashed this week during an unusual community dispute that began with the discovery of a secret underground tunnel and ended in brawl between worshippers and police.

Associated Press

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US: How a conservative Christian college got mixed up in the 2020 election plot

Hillsdale College has become quietly involved in many political fights — including Trump's attempt to overturn his defeat.

The New York Times*

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Pope Francis calls for a universal ban on surrogacy. He says it exploits mother and child

Pope Francis called Monday for a universal ban on what he called the "despicable" practice of surrogate motherhood, as he included the "commercialization" of pregnancy in an annual speech listing threats to global peace and human dignity.

Associated Press

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Wed, 10 Jan 2024

Half of Britons think religion does 'more harm than good' to society

A new survey has found half of British people view religion as "having more negative consequences for society than positive".

Premier Christian News

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Church groups says it is 'ready to go to court' with the Scottish Government over conversion therapy

A Christian group says it is prepared to take the Scottish Government to court over its proposals to ban conversion therapy.

The Scotsman

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Ex-Post Office boss' shortlisting to be Bishop of London was supported by Justin Welby

Sources have revealed ex-Post Office boss Paula Vennells was shortlisted to be Bishop of London in 2017, with the Archbishop of Canterbury supporting her application.

BBC

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Afghan girls detained and lashed by Taliban for violating hijab rules

Girls as young as 16 have been arrested across the Afghan capital, Kabul, in the past week for violating the Taliban's hijab rules.

The Guardian

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Legislation banning FGM under threat in The Gambia

Members of the Gambia's legislature, the National Assembly, have called for the 2015 law that banned Female Genital Mutilation to be repealed.

International Bar Association

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TB Joshua's daughter: Tortured after standing up to 'Daddy'

Reports reveal how the late megachurch leader TB Joshua, who is accused of committing sexual crimes on a mass scale, locked up his own daughter and tortured her for years before leaving her homeless on the streets of Lagos, Nigeria.

BBC

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'Soldiers of Christ' killing unsettles Korean Americans in Georgia and stokes fear of cults

The details of an alleged murder have shocked the large Korean community in metro Atlanta. Community leaders say the case is a wake-up call for Korean Americans to be more vigilant about religious cults and potential threats to new arrivals from South Korea.

Associated Press

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Pope's doctrine chief under fire for book depicting erotic encounter between Jesus and teenage girl

The Pope's doctrinal chief has been accused of blasphemy after the rediscovery of a book he wrote 26 years ago praising the orgasm and depicting a passionate encounter between Jesus and a young girl.

The Times*

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Tue, 9 Jan 2024

The 'cultural genocide' of Scotland's Gypsy Traveller community supported by the Church of Scotland

Between 1940 and 1980, the "Tinker experiment" – a programme supported by the UK Government, the Church of Scotland and Scottish councils - looked to "integrate" Gypsy Travellers into so-called mainstream society by threatening to remove their children into care.

The National*

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Spokesman for Bishop of St Albans says Post Office TV drama "diverges from actual fact"

Paula Vennells, the disgraced former Post Office chief executive and ordained Anglican priest, should not be judged on an ITV drama that "diverges from established public fact", a spokesman for the Bishop of St Albans has said.

The Telegraph*

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Dutch lawmaker Geert Wilders has withdrawn a 2018 proposal to ban mosques and the Quran

Dutch election winner Geert Wilders made a key concession to potential coalition partners on Monday, announcing that he's withdrawing legislation that he proposed in 2018 that calls for a ban on mosques and the Quran.

Associated Press

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Drop celibacy rule for priests, says top adviser to Pope Francis

Catholic priests should be allowed to marry, a senior Vatican official has said, reopening a debate that has troubled the Pope.

The Times*

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TB Joshua exposé: How the pastor covered up fatal Lagos building collapse

New evidence has been unearthed that the late Nigerian megachurch leader TB Joshua hid dead bodies and intimidated families, to cover up his role in the collapse of a building which killed at least 116 people at his church in 2014.

BBC

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Iranian Christian convert faces imprisonment

A 60-year-old Iranian Christian convert will begin serving a six-year prison sentence for purportedly "acting against national security by promoting 'Zionist' Christianity".

Iran International

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How to deal with same-sex unions? It's a question fracturing major Christian denominations

In a religion that stresses God's love for humanity – divisions over marriage, sexuality, and inclusion of gays and lesbians are proving insurmountable for the foreseeable future in many sectors of Christianity.

Associated Press

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Mon, 8 Jan 2024

Charity Commission investigates after preacher claims Zionists are plotting to 'control the world'

An Islamic preacher has been accused of using anti-Semitic tropes in a London mosque by claiming Zionists are plotting to "control the world" by manipulating banks, media organisations and regimes.

The Telegraph*

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Jewish pupil assaulted outside school in 'free Palestine' attack

A Jewish teenager was assaulted outside his school by two attackers who tried to force him to say "free Palestine", his head teacher said.

The Times*

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Young Britons exposed to online radicalisation following Hamas attack

There has been an unprecedented 12-fold increase in hateful social media content being referred to specialist police officers since Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October, according to the UK's Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit.

BBC

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Megachurch leader raped and tortured worshippers, investigation finds

Evidence of widespread abuse and torture by the founder of one of the world's biggest Christian evangelical churches has been uncovered.

BBC

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Iranian woman whipped 74 times for refusing to wear hijab

An Iranian woman received 74 lashes for refusing to wear the hijab, defying the strict dress code even as she was taken to be whipped.

The Telegraph*

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Taliban arrest women for 'bad hijab' in the first dress code crackdown since their return to power

The Taliban have arrested women in the Afghan capital for wearing "bad hijab," a spokesman at the country's Vice and Virtue Ministry said Thursday.

Associated Press

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Afghan women accuse UN envoy of normalising Taliban education ban in open letter

Over 70 Afghan women have written an open letter to United Nations chief Antonio Guterres against UN's head of Afghan mission Roza Otunbayeva's latest remarks on education of Afghan girls in Islamic madrassas.

The Independent*

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India court restores life prison sentences for 11 Hindu men who raped a Muslim woman in 2002 riots

India's top court on Monday restored life prison sentences for 11 Hindu men who raped a Muslim woman during deadly religious rioting two decades ago and asked the convicts to surrender to the authorities within two weeks.

Associated Press

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Australia: Jewish leaders target Islamic clerics in legal action

Islamic clerics accused of preaching hate and inciting violence could be hit with legal action as Jewish leaders claim anti-Semitic remarks are not being prosecuted.

Canberra Times

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Australia: Religious groups argue for right to hire, fire staff based on sexuality

The Minns government has been warned that attempting to stop religious schools from hiring or firing staff because of their adherence to "Christian ethos", including sexuality, would be a breach of religious freedoms.

The Sydney Morning Herald*

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Fri, 5 Jan 2024

Leicester Cathedral gains top grant from £42-million government pot

The cathedral received £600,000 towards a restoration project that included complete renewal of the lighting, heating, and wiring.

Church Times*

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Assisted dying around the world - 13 countries let terminally ill die with dignity

We revealed 71% of Mirror readers want the terminally-ill to be allowed to die with dignity.

Mirror

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Isle of Man: Public opinion sought on bishop's voting rights

People have been asked to share their views on whether the bishop should have the right to vote in Tynwald.

BBC

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Bishop of Gloucester criticises shops for selling Easter eggs

The Bishop of Gloucester has criticised two supermarkets for having Easter eggs for sale while "it is still Christmas".

BBC

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MPs to debate call for the British Jewish History Month

Nickie Aiken MP has secured a Commons debate aimed at recognising contribution made by British Jews to UK life.

Jewish News

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IS claims responsibility for deadly Iran bombings that killed 84

The Islamic State group has said it carried out a bomb attack in Iran on crowds marking the anniversary of Qasem Soleimani's assassination.

BBC

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Vatican: same-sex couples ruling is not endorsement of homosexuality

New practice does not endorse homosexuality but is not heretical, Catholic church says amid opposition from some bishops.

The Guardian

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US puts Azerbaijan on religious freedom watchlist

The move follows fears for Christian heritage after the country seized back an ethnic Armenian enclave.

France 24

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Thu, 4 Jan 2024

Consultation launched into future of Bishop's vote

Mr Hooper says removing the vote is something which he and his party believe is fundamental to democracy - since the Bishop isn't elected by the public.

Manx Radio

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Assisted dying should be legalised, says TV star Sue Johnston

Actress joins a chorus of prominent people to speak out in favour of changing the law.

The Telegraph*

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Two-thirds of NI pupils say the curriculum does not prepare them for leaving school

Only 22.8% of pupils surveyed said they felt RSE had been adequately taught in their school.

Belfast Telegraph

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MP writes to home secretary over Sikh activist's sudden death

A senior Conservative MP has written to the home secretary expressing his concern over the sudden death of a Sikh activist in Birmingham last year.

The Guardian

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Ugandan LGBT activist in critical condition after stabbing

An LGBT rights activist in Uganda, where sexual minorities have faced a wave of abuse since a harsh anti-gay law was enacted last year, was stabbed on Wednesday.

Reuters

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Algeria defender given 8 month suspended sentence for inciting religious hatred

The Nice criminal court ruled that Atal must also pay a €45,000 (£38,886) fine for posting an antisemitic video on his Instagram account.

BBC

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Italian priest struck off for calling Francis an ‘anti-pope usurper’

Priest in Tuscany compares Francis unfavourably with Pope Benedict in New Year's Eve address shared online

The Guardian

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US: Kim Davis handed new legal bill in gay marriage licence case

She said she did not comply with the couple's request for a marriage licence because she believes marriage is between a man and woman, citing her religious beliefs as an evangelical Christian.

BBC

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How religion and politics will mix in 2024 – three trends to track

Religion is likely to play a big role in voters' choices in the 2024 presidential election – much as it did in previous years.

The Conversation

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‘In Modi’s India, Gandhi has become irrelevant’

"Seventy-five years after his assassination, Gandhi — the man who led India out of British rule, revered in the West as the exemplar of nonviolent protest — has become a casualty of India's lurch toward Hindu nationalism", writes Rana Ayyub.

The Washington Post*

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Bomb blasts near Iranian commander’s grave kill nearly 100

Soleimani was Iran's most powerful military figure before he was assassinated in Iraq, and is revered as a national hero by the Islamic regime and its supporters.

Financial Times*

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- [5](#)
- [6](#)
- [7](#)
- [8](#)
- [9](#)
- [10](#)
- [11](#)
- [12](#)
- [13](#)
- [14](#)
- [15](#)
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