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### Holy See accused of flouting UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

At the plenary session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on Tuesday 15 March 2011, Keith Porteous Wood of the National Secular Society accused the Holy See of contravening its duties under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in relation to child abuse. [Read More »](#)

### Church-state confrontation over gay marriage could be solved with disestablishment

A major confrontation between the Church of England and the Government is brewing over gay marriage and civil partnerships. [Read More »](#)

### Ed Miliband on “faith schools”

Labour leader Ed Miliband was asked by *Totally Jewish* magazine his opinion of faith schools. His response was reassuringly unenthusiastic. [Read More »](#)

### E. Sussex & W. Lancashire latest councils to cut school transport subsidies

East Sussex County Council is proposing to cut transport subsidies for children attending faith schools from January next year – saving it £500,000 annually. And West Lancashire County Council has given notice that [it intends to severely curtail its denominational school transport](#)

[subsidies](#) in order to save £2m a year. [Read More »](#)

## **Join the 'Protest the Pope' March Against The State Visit of Pope Ratzinger**

The Big Pope-Nope march through London that is the centre-piece of the Protest the Pope campaign, will take place today Saturday 18 September at 1:30pm in London – on the same day and near where the pope will be preaching in Hyde Park. [Read More »](#)

## **NSS Speaks Out**

The NSS in the week's media [Read More »](#)

## **Have you been a victim of Catholic child abuse?**

The NSS is planning a series of events in protest at the presence of the Pope in Britain in September. We are looking for people who have been victims of abuse by the Catholic Church who are prepared to speak about their experiences to journalists and in public. If you are a survivor and want to tell your story, please contact [tas@secularism.org.uk](mailto:tas@secularism.org.uk). [Read More »](#)

## **How much longer can Ratzinger hold out?**

The Pope is under intense pressure as the revelations begin to mount and move ever closer. Will he even be in office in September? [Read More »](#)

## **Religion and politics in the news**

With the election looming, here's a round-up of how, when and where religion is attempting to sway the political process: [Read More »](#)

## **NSS Bulletin now on-line**

The spring issue of the NSS quarterly [Bulletin](#) was posted to members a fortnight ago. It sets out our achievements over recent months and other information of interest. Members may also wish to review the on-line version as it contains highlighted links to a considerable quantity of interesting related material. [Read More »](#)

## **European court rules that religion cannot be part of identity cards**

The European Court of Human Rights ruled this week that listing religions on identity cards, whether obligatory or optional, is in violation of human rights. The court was ruling on a case brought by a Turkish citizen who is a member of the Alevi community. [Read More »](#)

## **President to speak at Fabian Conference**

The President of the National Secular Society, Terry Sanderson, will be on the platform of the Fabian Society's annual conference in London tomorrow in a debate about "Faith & Secularism" together with Government Minister Sadiq Khan. The NSS will also have a stall at the conference, promoting the organisation and offering information about secularism. [Read More »](#)

## **Alpha Course in schools – the dissenter**

Sixteen year old Maxine Mackintosh has written about her experience of an Alpha Course being run in her school, warning her fellow pupils about the organisation. [Read the excellent article she wrote for her school magazine.](#)

The NSS would like to hear from any other pupils or students who have personal experience of the course. [Read More »](#)

## **Creationist car dealer closes showrooms on Sunday**

Christian used car salesman Sir Peter Vardy, whose state-funded academies teach creationism, is now carrying his religious zeal into his own business. [Read More »](#)

## **Government appoints "faith advisors" to bring religion further into policy-making**

The Government this week appointed thirteen "faith advisors" to bring religion to the heart of the Government's policy-making. Communities Secretary John Denham — a self-professed non-believer — said that religion was not just something the Government should call on "as a prop" when it had problems to solve, but should be respected in its own right. [Read More »](#)

## **Murphy O'Connor will not enter the Lords**

*The Sunday Telegraph* reported last week that the former Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cormac Murphy O'Connor, will not be taking up Gordon Brown's offer of a seat in the House of Lords after all. [Read More »](#)

## **From the web**

Another fascinating [debate from Intelligence Squared](#) with the proposition "Atheism is the new fundamentalism". Slugging it out are Richard Dawkins and AC Grayling vs Richard Harries and Charles Moore, former editor of the *Daily Telegraph*. The result is – well, you'll see. [Read More »](#)

## **"Faith schools" – the cracks are showing**

Religious schools have had a bad press this week, denting their own propaganda that they are the answer to all our educational prayers. [Read More »](#)

## **New hope for an end to religious monopoly on Thought for the Day**

New hope was expressed this week that the long-running campaign to open up the BBC programme *Thought for the Day* to non-religious voices may be about to make a breakthrough. [Read More »](#)

## **Editorial by Terry Sanderson**

Bishops panic at the prospect of being chucked out of the Lords  
Church of England bishops are becoming restive at the prospect that the Government might recommend a wholly elected House of Lords (a Senate as it would be). [Read More »](#)

## **MEPs Vote to Protect Religious Slaughter**

European Ministers have made a mockery of new legislation aimed at ensuring animals do not suffer 'any avoidable distress or pain', by voting to require States to make exemptions for 'cultural traditions and religious rites'. [Read More »](#)

## Tony Blair's latest "faith" initiative is likely to do more harm than good, says NSS

The National Secular Society has dismissed Tony Blair's latest effort to "foster understandings between religions" in schools as a menace to the work of bringing people together. [Read More »](#)

## Between a rock and a hard place

*John Hein, Editor of ScotsGay, gives a personal account of a four hour session of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland last week at which the thorny issue of homosexuality nearly tore the Kirk apart.* [Read More »](#)

## Religion is searching for a new purpose

Churches are a bit adrift at the moment, desperately seeking a new purpose now that hardly anyone is buying in to their primary product, religion. Sometimes the results of this effort to realign themselves can seem rather desperate. [Read More »](#)

## Murphy O'Connor will bring the House of Lords into disrepute, says NSS

If the retiring Cardinal of Westminster, Cormac Murphy O'Connor, is given a place in the House of Lords, it will make the most eloquent case yet for the abolition of the second chamber, said Terry Sanderson, president of the National Secular Society. [Read More »](#)

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