

Daily media briefing

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Tue, 5 Sep 2023

[Praying Margate doctor overstepped the boundaries, tribunal hears](#)

A Christian doctor has been told by a medical tribunal that he "overstepped the boundaries" when he prayed with a patient.

BBC

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['The Church of England's death knell is ringing'](#)

'Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.' This would be a good line for the leaders of the Church of England to wake up to today. This week three different studies make clear how loudly the death knell is ringing for the Church'

The Telegraph*

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[Controversial 'cult' accused in graveyard 'desecration' row](#)

A man who describes a church he left as a "cult" says he is not surprised it is involved in a row after building an access road across a graveyard.

Nation Cymru

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Ireland: 'Priests were angry at me for speaking out over abuse' – Archbishop

The former Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin has revealed how he invoked the ire of other priests after speaking out over child sex abuse in the Catholic Church.

The Irish News

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French schools trial uniforms to tackle poor behaviour

French pupils at some state schools will be required to wear uniforms in an effort to tackle poor discipline, declining performance and tension over Muslim dress.

The Times*

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Pope Francis has a weakness for autocracies: the Kremlin appreciates it

"...Francis does seem to have a tendresse for autocracies (which anti-Catholics would doubtless see as unsurprising, given the way popes are accorded unquestioned authority). In 2018 he agreed to give the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) the right to nominate Catholic bishops, a policy never agreed by any of his predecessors, and described to me by a distraught Catholic priest as "an act of perfidy, stupidity and betrayal"

The Times*

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The Taliban's punishing war on women continues

"Day by day, the walls close in". "Suffocated". "Without hope". These are just some of the descriptions by Afghan women of the relentless announcement of restrictions imposed on their lives and rights since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021.

The National

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Mon, 4 Sep 2023

'Blasphemy law is no answer to bigotry in the wake of Denmark's Qur'an burnings'

"A proposed ban on abuse of religious objects only helps to silence critics and dissenters", writes Kenan Malik

The Guardian

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Church of England parishes close at record rate

The Church of England has been "dealt a death knell" as parishes close at a record rate, an investigation has revealed. Almost 300 have disappeared in the past five years alone, analysis of church data reveals, the fastest rate since records began in 1960.

The Telegraph*

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Christians in Wales protest Pakistan violence as they fear for family

Christians living in Wales are protesting against ongoing violence in Paksitan as they fear for the safety of their loved ones overseas.

Premier Christian News

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Clashes erupt in Sweden's third largest city after another Quran burning and at least 3 are detained

Clashes erupted in an immigrant neighborhood in Sweden's third largest city after an anti-Muslim protester set fire to the Quran, police said Monday.

Associated Press

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France's public schools will enforce a dress code banning abayas

French students won't get past the door if they show up for school wearing long robes, said Emmanuel Macron.

Associated Press

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Finnish evangelical duo wait as appeal court considers 'hate crime' acquittal appeal

Two evangelical Christians in Finland may not know until the end of November whether the country's court of appeals will sustain their 18-month-old acquittal on hate-crime charges.

The Washington Times*

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Germany: Bavarian deputy leader keeps job after antisemitism claims

The deputy premier of the German state of Bavaria, Hubert Aiwanger, will stay in his post following controversy concerning an antisemitic pamphlet written in the 1980s.

BBC

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US: NJ battles Christian group blocking beach on Sundays

New Jersey officials are in a stand-off with a local religious group that controls the resort town of Ocean Grove, which says thou shalt not go to the beach before noon on the Lord's day.

New York Post

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US: Missouri asks Supreme Court to consider jury disqualification over Christian beliefs

Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey asked the Supreme Court this week to hear a case over disqualifying jurors based on their Christian beliefs, saying the Constitution doesn't support religious discrimination.

The Washington Times

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Mob attacks on Christian churches and homes in Pakistan set off by false implication, police say

Last month's mob attacks on churches and homes of Christians in eastern Pakistan erupted after three Christians threw the pages of Islam's holy book outside the house of two others to falsely implicate them in a blasphemy case due to a personal dispute, police said Monday.

Associated Press

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Japan may seek to dissolve Moonies church in wake of Shinzo Abe killing

Courts may be asked to disband the Unification church amid criticism of ruling party's ties to organisation.

The Guardian

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Australia: Schools force Anglican backdown on statement opposing same-sex marriage

Principals at Sydney's Anglican schools will no longer be forced to sign a document affirming they believe marriage should only be between a man and a woman under a new proposal by the church that is set to abolish the controversial requirement.

The Sydney Morning Herald

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Fri, 1 Sep 2023

"We should separate Church and state!" Stephen Evans on Christianity's falling popularity – NSS interviewed

NSS chief executive Stephen Evans interviewed yesterday on TalkTV following a new survey revealing that more than half of Church of England clergy no longer believe the UK is a Christian country.

TalkTV

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Church of England clergy say UK 'not a Christian country' – NSS interviewed

NSS president Keith Porteous Wood interviewed yesterday on Times Radio following a new survey of Church of England clergy. Keith features from 1:04:11.

Times Radio

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Taxpayers fund mosques that host hate preachers

At least four mosques have received grants totalling millions of pounds with the largest of £2.2 million awarded to a Birmingham Islamic centre that has hosted a speaker who described Jews as 'people of envy'

The Jewish Chronicle

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Edinburgh council strip voting rights from religious representatives on education committee

Unelected religious representatives who sit on Edinburgh Council's education committee have been stripped of their voting rights after councillors overwhelmingly voted in favour of the change.

Edinburgh Live

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'Death of Christian Britain? It's good that people are turning away from church'

"Those lamenting the death of Christian Britain can dry their tears. The fact that more people in the UK are turning away from the established church is a good thing. It demonstrates a refusal to accept the imposed assumptions and values of a privileged institution."

The i

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Sectarian incidents in Northern Ireland rise to highest levels in six years according to PSNI

The number of recorded sectarian incidents in Northern Ireland is at its highest level since 2016, according to police figures.

ITV

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Religious leader who has led worship ceremonies in Milton Keynes is arrested for sex crimes

A religious leader who led Sikh worship ceremonies in Milton Keynes has been arrested and charged with a string of sex offences.

MK Citizen

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'Why Sweden tolerates Quran burning'

"Sweden has long been a country known for its commitment to tolerance and its embrace of human rights: a "moral superpower" devoted to foreign aid, progressive causes and support of developing nations. All the more surprising, then, that Sweden now stands accused of being a hotbed of Islamophobia and intolerance."

UnHerd

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More than 60 people arrested at same-sex wedding in Nigeria

Nigerian police raided an alleged gay wedding, which is illegal in the country, and arrested 67 people, officials said on Tuesday.

Evening Standard

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Why the Pope's message to young Russians has not gone down well in Ukraine

Pope Francis' video speech to the All-Russian Meeting of Catholic Youth in St Petersburg, urging them to "not forget their heritage" has caused quite a stir. Its tone-deaf praise of the heritage of "Mother Russia", which he urged his listeners to never give up, has been received badly in Ukraine.

The Conversation

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Thu, 31 Aug 2023

Most Church of England priests support gay conversion therapy ban

More than two thirds of Church of England priests back the government's plan to introduce a ban on conversion or so-called "gay-cure" therapy, with less than a fifth against it, a new survey has found.

The Times*

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'The Times view on the Church of England: Behind the Times'

'The Anglican church is not only trailing behind the liberal instincts of ordinary people, its doctrines do not even convince the majority of its own priesthood'

The Times*

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Student accused of terrorism wanted to argue against IS, court told

A PhD student accused of plotting to make a drone capable of delivering a bomb was "fascinated" by the Islamic State group because he wanted to argue against their views, a court has heard.

BBC

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Islamic charity says shared video clips are 'highly misleading' after government pauses funding

The Department for Culture Media and Sport confirmed that a £2.2m grant to the charity had been paused while allegations of homophobia and misogyny were investigated

Third Sector

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US cardinal, 93, not fit to stand trial over sexual abuse charges, judge rules

A Massachusetts judge has dismissed a criminal case charging the former Roman Catholic cardinal Theodore McCarrick with molesting a 16-year-old boy in 1974, saying the 93-year-old was not competent to stand trial due to dementia.

The Guardian

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BJP politician among six charged with gang-rape in India

A politician from India's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is among six people charged in connection with the alleged gang-rape of a 45-year-old woman and the harassment of her minor daughter in the western Indian state of Rajasthan.

Independent*

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Just 1 in 10 Chinese say they're affiliated with a 'formal' religion, study finds

Only 1 in 10 Chinese adults said they "formally identify" with a religion, even though many hold religious beliefs or observe religious traditions, a new study shows.

The Washington Times*

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French chess's new queen: Iranian exiled for shunning hijab

An Iranian grandmaster who was once barred from competition for refusing to wear the hijab has captivated the chess community by winning the French women's championship.

The Times*

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Wed, 30 Aug 2023

Britain is no longer a Christian country, say frontline clergy

Britain can no longer be described as a Christian country, three quarters of Church of England priests believe, according to a newly published survey.

The Times*

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Edinburgh's Catholic archbishop to appeal direct to councillors to retain voting rights for religious reps

Edinburgh's Catholic Archbishop is to make a personal plea to councillors not to take away the voting rights of religious representatives on the city's education committee.

Edinburgh Evening News

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'Outlawing Islamophobia: A Terrible Idea'

"In 2019, Labour adopted the definition of "Islamophobia" proposed by the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims (APPG). But this definition may only have impaired Labour's ability to protect people from discrimination regardless of their beliefs...It is a term that has been routinely used in ways that completely undermine any claim to serious meaning it may once have had."

Areo Magazine

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Kremlin says Pope's comments on Russian history are 'very gratifying'

The Kremlin on Tuesday described as "very gratifying" comments by Pope Francis urging young Russians to remember their history, saying that the Russian state had a rich legacy and that it was good that the Pope knew Russian history.

Reuters

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Australia: Military leadership 'protected' air force chaplain's abuser, royal commission hears

When the Rev Dr Nikki Coleman wanted to complain about the abuse and bullying she had experienced as an air force chaplain, she was told to deal with it herself. The senior chaplain she spoke to said she should think again and that her report could "cast aspersions on an innocent man".

The Guardian

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Pakistani ex-cricketer Khalid Latif 'offered money to kill' Dutch politician Geert Wilders

Dutch prosecutors have demanded a 12-year prison sentence if a former Pakistani cricketer is found guilty of incitement to murder Dutch politician Geert Wilders. Mr Wilders received death threats after saying he would organise a competition of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, which sparked outrage.

Sky News

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Muslim call to prayer can now be broadcast publicly in New York City without a permit

The Muslim call to prayer will ring out more freely in New York City under guidelines announced Tuesday by Mayor Eric Adams, which he said should foster a spirit of inclusivity.

Associated Press

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Uganda: Man faces death penalty for 'aggravated homosexuality'

A man in Uganda faces the death penalty after being charged with "aggravated homosexuality". His lawyer said the 20-year-old was the first to be prosecuted for the offence under new anti-LGBTQ legislation signed into law in May.

BBC

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'Despair is settling in': female suicides on rise in Taliban's Afghanistan

Since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in the summer of 2021, there has been a disturbing surge in the number of women taking their own lives or attempting to do so, data collected from public hospitals and mental health clinics across a third of Afghanistan's provinces shows.

The Guardian

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A year since Mahsa Amini's death, what's changed for women in Iran?

After the death of Mahsa Amini in police custody, women in Iran risked death, rape and blinding when they removed their headscarves and took to the streets in protest. After being brutally crushed, they're now changing tactics.

The Times*

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Tue, 29 Aug 2023

Government funding to charity halted after problematic videos emerge – NSS quoted

Recently announced government funding for an Islamic charity in Birmingham has been pulled after concerns were raised over videos appearing to express "misogynistic, homophobic and antisemitic views".

Civil Society

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'Why Prof Jay must impose an external Safeguarding Regulator on the CofE'

"So this is what Jay needs to do: recommend a truly independent Regulator, and recommend that parliament intervenes to create it. And that in respect of safeguarding at least, the CofE becomes subject to the Human Rights Act, freedom of information laws and the Nolan principles– the

mechanisms which underpin accountability and transparency in other public bodies..."

Surviving Church

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[Tory councillor arrested for 'hate crime' after sharing video criticising police](#)

A Conservative councillor was arrested for an alleged hate crime after re-tweeting a video criticising how the police treated a Christian street preacher.

The Telegraph*

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