

Bible Society Newswatch 28 October 2011

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This week in the national press:

- St Paul's reopens promising resigned chancellor's voice will be heard
- Church orders second review of child protection in a week as safety officer faces sentencing
- Baroness Warsi: Britons should be proud of their Christianity
- Christian's pay slashed for views on gay marriage

This week in the Church press:

- Vatican calls for new authority to guide world economic policies
- Christian think-tank backs 'modest multiculturalism'
- Widdecombe calls on PM to act over persecuted church
- US Aid withdrawal hits BibleLands children's projects

Culture watch:

- Annual film competition puts Bible in the frame
- Homeless guides bring 'slum tourism' to London

This week in the national press:

St Paul's reopens promising resigned chancellor's voice will be heard

St Paul's cathedral will reopen today six days after it controversially closed its doors because of safety concerns over the Occupy London activists camped in its grounds. Closure critics included Lord Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, who said the cathedral authorities had swung between reclaiming a valuable role in hosting public protest' and acting 'like the temple which Jesus cleansed'. Yesterday Canon Chancellor, Revd Dr Giles Fraser, drew media attention as he resigned saying he feared church authorities would sanction the use of force to evict the 200 protestors. But, Bishop of London, Dr Richard Chartres, said he hoped the activists would now 'disband peacefully'. He invited protest spokesmen to be part of a public debate to be held by the cathedral with political, business and protestor representatives. He also offered to meet with Dr Fraser to 'ensure his voice continues to be heard'.

Sources: *The Times* (28/10); *The Telegraph* (28/10); *Evening Standard* (27/10)

- [http://www.thetimes.co.uk/ \(28/10\)](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/ (28/10))
- [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/ \(28/10\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/ (28/10))
- [http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/ \(27/10\)](http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/ (27/10))

Church orders second review of child protection in a week as safety officer faces sentencing

Just days after the Vatican ordered a toplevel enquiry into child abuse at a Catholic abbey and school in Britain, revelations in another part of the country have triggered a complete review of child protection operations in South West England. Earlier this week, the Vaticanbased Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith announced it was sending an apostolic visitation to investigate allegations going back four decades against Ealing Abbey and neighbouring St Benedict's school. Now it has come to light that Chris Jarvis, the officer responsible for child protection in the Catholic diocese of Plymouth, is to be sentenced for possessing thousands of images of children being abused. Bishop of Plymouth, Rt Revd Christopher Budd, has asked the NSPCC to conduct a review of child safety arrangements across Devon, Cornwall and Dorset.

Sources: *The Times* (25/10; 28/10)

- [http://www.thetimes.co.uk/ \(28/10\)](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/ (28/10))
- [http://www.thetimes.co.uk/ \(25/10\)](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/ (25/10))

Baroness Warsi: Britons should be proud of their Christianity

British Christians should not be afraid to speak publicly about their faith, Baroness Warsi, the Muslim cochairman of the Conservative Party, has said. Writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, she said the Government wants 'to create a country where people don't feel like they have to leave religion at the door...It means encouraging people to say that their faith inspires what they do.' Lady Warsi said it was 'a mistake' to 'compromise your identity' in an effort to build bridges with people of other faiths.

Source: *Daily Telegraph* (28/10)

- [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/ \(28/10\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/ (28/10))

Christian's pay slashed for views on gay marriage

A housing manager has been demoted after posting his thoughts on Facebook on Government plans to allow gay weddings in church. Adrian Smith (54) was found guilty of gross misconduct by the Trafford Housing Trust and saw his pay cut from £35,000 to £21,000 a year. In an online post that could be seen only by Mr Smith's friends, he had questioned whether the government should 'impose its rules on places

of faith and conscience'. The father of two is threatening to take his employer to court claiming damages equal to his loss of pay.

Sources: *Daily Mail* (23/10); *Daily Telegraph* (24/10)

- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/> (23/10)
 - <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/> (24/10)
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This week in the Church Press:

Vatican calls for new authority to guide world economic policies

A 'world political authority' or 'global government' should be set up to exercise stronger and more ethical controls over economic markets, a Vatican department has said. The 18page document 'Towards Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority' was released Monday by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. While endorsing aspects of globalisation that have spread prosperity, the document warned that inaction over unfettered economic liberalism and growing inequality would 'create a climate of growing hostility and even violence'.

Sources: *Catholic Herald* (28/10); *Church Times* (28/10); *The Tablet* (29/10)

- <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/> (29/10)

Christian thinktank backs 'modest multiculturalism'

A modest form of multiculturalism that treats each cultural and religious group fairly is the only way forward for an increasingly diverse society, according to Christian thinktank, Theos. While Prime Minister David Cameron and Chancellor Angela Merkel have both denounced multicultural policies as failures, Theos disagreed. Aspects of the policies may 'at times be dangerously flawed' writes Jonathan Chaplin in the Theos report *Multiculturalism: A Christian Retrieval*. However, Chaplin draws on Christian thinking to stress the need to 'pursue what may be called "multicultural justice"' in order to ensure fair treatment for all religious and cultural minorities. 'The UK does not want to become France which enforces a standardised version of national identity,' commented Theos director Elizabeth Hunter.

Source: *Baptist Times* (28/10)

Widdecombe calls on PM to act over persecuted church

The Government has been urged to take the same strong line against regimes that persecute Christians as it does to those which oppress gay people. Former Conservative minister Ann Widdecombe MP accused David Cameron's government of double standards after it gave notice that it would cut the overseas aid budget to nations that victimised gays. But at the same time, the Government has said nothing concerning the recent killing of Coptic Christians in Egypt, Ms Widdecombe said, and Britain is set to double its aid to Pakistan where Christian labourer Asia Bibi is threatened with execution for blasphemy. Meanwhile, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir has announced that Sudan will give state sanction to Sharia law and the Church of England Newspaper reports that government forces are driving Christians from their homes along the country's border with South Sudan.

Sources: *The Universe* (30/10); *Catholic Herald* (28/10)

- <http://www.totalcatholic.com/>

US Aid withdrawal hits BibleLands children's projects

A Christian charity which rehabilitates some of the Middle East's most vulnerable children has denounced a US government aid decision to withdraw funding without notice or explanation. BibleLands partners in Palestine told the shocked UK-based charity that the plug had been pulled on funds including \$100,000 pledged for a rehabilitation programme for disabled children in the West Bank. The withdrawal has hit BibleLands' plans to partfund the training of medics and therapists in the area, while another BibleLands partner offering psychosocial intervention for vulnerable children has also lost funding. BibleLands chief executive Jeremy Moodey said, 'There cannot be any sense or justice in the US Congress 'punishing' disabled children in the West Bank just because their president had the temerity to ask for UN recognition of the Palestinian state'.

Source: *Baptist Times* (28/10)

Culture Watch:

Annual film competition puts Bible in the frame

A 'contest based on the unlikely formula of cameraplusBibleequalsHollywood opportunity' is plunging aspiring filmmakers into the pages of Scripture, the Church Times reports. Enter the Pitch, a brainchild of Christian charity Bible Society, is now running its third competition. The challenge – to present a pitch for a short film based on the Bible – inspired the 2010 winner Rob McLellan to take a Steven Spielberg-esque spin on the Book of Joshua. The self-confessed agnostic with a sketchy knowledge of the Bible knew he'd found gold when he came across the siege of Jericho narrative and a prostitute helping spies. Now, having received £25,000 of

support and help from industry professionals, he's hoping for Hollywood gold as he meets with Californiabased film executives as the final part of his prize.

Source: *Church of England Newspaper* (28/10)

Homeless guides bring 'slum tourism' to London

Rough sleepers are giving London tourists a fresh eye on the city as they run five walking tours. Guides point out the capital's ancient and more recent buildings while offering their own outsider perspective: 'Behind you is the Leysian Mission, a philanthropic hospital that used to help poor people. It's now a luxury apartment block. The ones on top go for £2m,' Henri Sturmanis tells a group of Chinese tourists. Branded 'Unseen Tours' the project was dreamed up by Sock Mob, a volunteer network that befriends homeless people. Just as tourism in some of the most deprived corners of developing countries has taken off in recent years, the British initiative is flourishing and has birthed similar tours in Poland, Australian and the US.

Source: *The Independent* (22/10)

- <http://www.theindependent.co.uk/>

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