

Headlines:

- Islam is the Fastest Growing Religion in the UK
- Sarkozy Blasted for Islam Meeting
- Sisi Leans on Al-Azhar to Reform Islam

Details:

Islam is the Fastest Growing Religion in the UK

The Church of England has lost nearly two million followers in the last two years and is on the brink of "extinction", it has been warned. The number of people in the UK who describe their beliefs as being Church of England or Anglican dropped from 21 per cent to 17 per cent between 2012 and 2014 - a loss of around 1.7 million followers. The number of Anglicans in Britain is now thought to stand at around 8.6 million. The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, has warned that unless urgent action is taken, the organisation is just "one generation away from extinction." The figures have been revealed as part of the NatCen's British Social Attitudes Survey, the UK's longest running poll of public opinion. Over the same period, the poll found that the number of Muslims in Britain grew by close to a million making it the fastest growing religion in the UK. 4.7 per cent of Britons now describe themselves as Muslim, amounting to 2.4 million. When asked about their religious belief, the survey found that the most common response was having no religion. 49 per cent of people do not describe themselves as having any belief. Peter Brierley, a former Government statistician who advises religious groups, said of the new figures: "It is very serious for the Church of England and they know it." "The problem is that it has a lot of elderly members, but when they die off there aren't enough younger people to replace them." [Source: *The Independent*]

Despite all the negative publicity surrounding Islam, Allah (swt) will make Islam succeed.

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ﴾

"It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allah dislike it." [Al Tawbah: 9:33]

Sarkozy Blasted for Islam Meeting

Sarkozy's right-wing party, rebranded as "The Republicans," on Thursday held a meeting on the "question of Islam" in France to debate "the place of religion" in secular France and more specifically "Islam in France." France has the largest Muslim community in Europe. The former president said on the eve of the closed-door meeting, "One shouldn't run away from debates," adding, "A country is like a family. You have to talk, you have to work things through." However, Muslim groups have boycotted the gathering as they warned that holding such events amount to "stigmatizing" the religion. "We can't participate in an initiative like this that stigmatizes Muslims," said Abdallah Zekri from the French Muslim Council, known by its French acronym, CFCM. Another top Muslim organization, the Union of Islamic Organizations of France, also said it had not been invited to the meeting, adding that they would not take part in "that type of debate." "To debate with a political group that has just been formed and that starts with Islam makes us a bit uneasy," said the union's president, Amar Lasfar. He also criticized Sarkozy's recent call for banning the veil in universities and substitute meals, which are not forbidden to Muslims, in schools. [Source: WorldBulletin]

Sarkozy is not the first, many have tried to put out the light of Allah. Allah (swt) says,

﴿يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَهُ أَنْ يُنَمَّ نُورُهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

“They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses except to perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it.” [TMQ: Al Tabwa: 32]

Sisi Leans on Al-Azhar to Reform Islam

In his battle against militant Islam, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is relying not just on bomber planes and soldiers but on white-turbaned clerics from Al-Azhar, Egypt's 1,000-year-old center for Islamic learning. He wants clerics to counter radicalism in the classroom. In a televised speech in January at an Al-Azhar conference center in Cairo, Sisi called for "a religious revolution" in Islam. Radicalized thinking, he told the audience of Islamic scholars, had become "a source of anxiety, danger, killing and destruction for the rest of the world." That had to change – and the scholars had a leading role to play, in schools, mosques and on the airwaves. "You, imams, are responsible before Allah. The entire world is waiting. The entire world is waiting for your next word because this nation is being torn apart." Surprised by the president's bluntness, the scholars went "white as sheets," some of those in the audience told a Western official. The president's warning is part of a much larger project. To contain the radical Islamist movement roiling his nation, Sisi has most conspicuously been using the law and brute force. But he is also promoting a more moderate and less politicized version of the faith. In that struggle the Al-Azhar institution is one of the most important fronts for Sisi – and for the wider region. The outcome of the struggle in Egypt, the intellectual and cultural capital of the Arab world, has ramifications far beyond its borders. To be successful, Sisi will need to achieve what many before him have not: balancing tough security measures with education to encourage a more moderate version of Islam. Past experiences in Egypt, Syria, Algeria, and Iraq show that attempts to crack down on extremism can also stoke it. So far the results of Sisi's drive have been mixed. Since Sisi seized power, though, Al-Azhar has purged Mursi-era professors and teachers, and returned to an appointment system in which the state plays a major role. It has also publicly backed Sisi's crackdown on the Brotherhood and militants. Al-Azhar's Grand Imam, Ahmed al-Tayeb, was one of a few public figures who flanked Sisi as he announced the military takeover in 2013 after days of mass protests against Mursi. The university has issued new rules stating that any student or faculty member who incites, supports or joins in protests that disrupt learning or promote rioting or vandalism will be expelled or fired. Beginning in 2013, Al-Azhar also started to simplify its curriculum to make it more compatible with the modern age, said Abbas Shuman, Al-Azhar deputy head. School text book passages describing the spoils of war and slavery have been removed, he said, because they were applicable during the Muslim conquests but are now considered out of date. In April, an official at the education ministry burned books in the courtyard of a private school, saying the literature included Islamic texts that incited violence. The action sparked ridicule from Islamists and secularists alike, who pointed out that some of the burned books had nothing to do with Islam. Nevertheless, Sisi remains committed to his drive against militancy and thinks Al-Azhar can do more to promote a moderate form of Islam. In a recent speech, he said: "We need to move faster and more effectively." [Source: Reuters]

Sisi is the real enemy of Islam. He pretends to be on the side of the Muslims, but at the same time he seeks to reform their Deen thereby making a mockery of Islam and pleasing the West.

﴿وَإِذَا لَفُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شِيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِؤُونَ﴾

“And when they meet those who believe, they say, "We believe"; but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say, "Indeed, we are with you; we were only mockers.” [TMQ: Al-Baqara: 14]