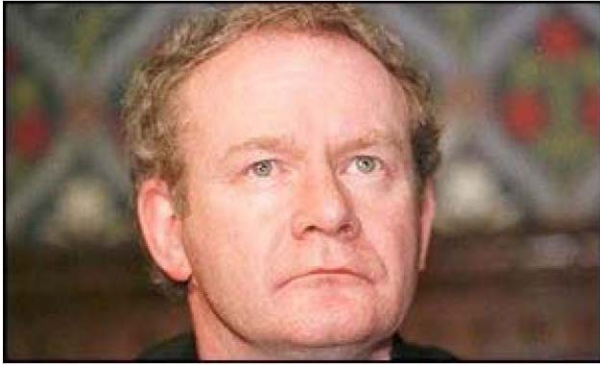




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Martin McGuinness leads attack on Christian schools



Martin McGuinness — an enemy of righteousness

It could only happen in Northern Ireland that a man who held a high rank in the terrorist organisation, the Provisional IRA, and in that capacity ordered terrorist attacks which resulted in the murder and maiming of a large number of men, women and children, during his many years of leadership, should now be heading a campaign to make the biblical disciplining of children within Christian schools illegal! He who led an organisation which forced its political will upon the populace by terror and

murder and which maintained its hold upon the nationalist community, from which it operated, by barbaric forms of intimidation such as kneecapping and punishment beatings, exile under threat of death, and tarring and feathering any one who dared defy its will, is now determined to stop Christians applying God's method of discipline to their own children.

Martin McGuinness has never once repented of or repudiated his activities as a terrorist, nor ever once voiced any criticism of the IRA for any of the murders it committed, including the murder of twelve Protestants in Enniskillen, back in 1987, as they stood at the war memorial to honour the dead of two world wars. If anything, he glories in his past.

McGuinness currently heads the Northern Ireland Department of Education. He has instructed his officials to prepare legislation which will outlaw the use of any form of corporal punishment within any school in Northern Ireland. If the proposals are given the support of the Northern Ireland Assembly, then the right of parents of children attending Free Presbyterian schools to have their children disciplined in accordance with the teaching of the Bible will be taken away. It is widely believed that, if McGuinness is successful, a banning of any form of physical punishment within the home will follow soon.

A memorandum issued by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland in the wake of the introduction of the new Education and Libraries Bill in the Northern Ireland Assembly, on 24th June past, comments on the relevant clause of the new bill.

"Clause 34 - Abolition of corporal punishment Clause 34 in effect abolishes corporal punishment in any school, institution of further education or setting where education is provided by arrangement with an ELB. This clause, together with paragraph 8 of Schedule 2, replaces all previous legislation on corporal punishment and extends the abolition to independent schools (not grant-aided). This change is required to ensure compliance with a judgement of the European Court of Human Rights."

This is the first time that the rights of a Christian have been challenged by legislation in Northern Ireland. It is no coincidence that the challenge is being headed up by a former commander and still close associate of the world's most notorious band of terrorist mur-



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derers, the Provisional IRA.

That challenge will have to be faced. We request prayer for those within the Northern Ireland Assembly who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to His word, and who will be resisting the introduction of these amendments to the law. We also request prayer for the Free Presbyterian Church as it is obviously the chief target of McGuinness' attack, since it is the only denomination operating Christian schools which apply the law of God in the matter of discipline.

To the discerning Christian the scenario facing the child of God in today's society has a familiar appearance to it. For years there has been an ebbing of the spiritual tide, as a result of the decline in faithfulness to God's Word and moral standards amongst professing Christians. The constant propagating of liberal and ecumenical views by church leaders, the denigrating of Bible Christianity, the rising tide of pleasure-seeking which has swept many genuine believers off their feet — all has contributed to the departure from God's Word evident within society today.

There has not been the resistance to these developments that there ought to have been, by the pulpits and the pews of those churches who have a name of standing against modernistic theology. Rather, we must admit to a spirit of compromise which has sought to respond to the demands for conformity to the world from within our own ranks, by meeting those demands half-way.

We have seen an introduction of social activities into worship in order to make this more palatable to those who were likely to drift from our assemblies if such changes were not introduced.

Readers of recent church history will find such manoeuvres familiar. They also know that they failed in the past and will, of course, fail in the present. Our enemy, the devil, has not failed to observe this spirit of retreat. In consequence, now is a good time to press forward and enlarge the breaches made from within. Hence this attack, the first of an increasing campaign it must be said, upon the standards of God's Word and the believer's practice of them.

The scene is reminiscent of the beginnings of the scene that is presented in the Psalm 83. There the psalmist refers to the former advances and spiritual flourishing of the people of God before they suffered a reversal in consequence of their backsliding. What a change then ensued! *Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself. So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name,* verses 12-18.

Three times in this psalm is the answer to the situation presented for our consideration. In verses 3, 7 and 19 there is the prayer: *Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*

Here is what is needed at this time amongst us — not just to meet the immediate threat



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posed by McGuinness, but the general threat of sin and worldliness.