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Devilish debate on end for Church of England



AFP/File Photo: Aerial view of the Houses of Parliament in London. Lawmakers will no doubt have raised...

Thu Jan 10, 7:57 AM ET

LONDON (AFP) - Eyebrows were raised in the House of Commons on Thursday when a motion calling for the Church of England to be disestablished was listed with the number 666, symbol of the AntiChrist.

"This number is supposed to be the mark of the Devil. It looks as though God or the Devil have been moving in mysterious ways," said Bob Russell, a Liberal Democrat MP among those proposing the motion for debate.

"What is even stranger is that this motion was tabled last night when MPs were debating blasphemy," he added.

The motion calls for an end to the formal link between Church and State in England -- embodied in the monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, who is both head of state and head of the Church of England.

The number 666 is referred to in the Book of Revelations in the Bible: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred, three score and six."

"It is is incredible that a motion like this should have, by chance, acquired this significant number," said Russell.

Under the rules of the House of Commons the motion by backbenchers has little chance of actually being debated in parliament.

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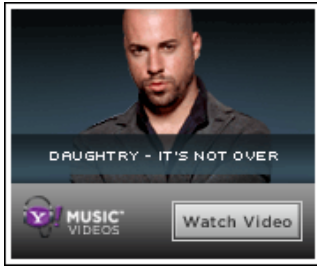
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