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For more than two decades, Religion Watch has covered religions around the world, particularly looking at the unofficial dimensions of religious belief and behavior.

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# 'Evangelical Catholic' politicians finding Republican vote

The two-decade alliance between conservative Roman Catholics and evangelicals on moral and social issues is having political repercussions, with several leading Republican politicians drawing on both traditions for inspiration. In a *Religion News Service* report (June 16), Sarah Pulliam Bailey notes that the surprising victory of Dave Brat in the Virginia primary is one example of this Catholic-evangelical-hybrid politician—he is a Catholic but also a graduate of Calvin College

and Princeton Theological Seminary. Brat is described both as a Calvinist and a Catholic and is also part of the movement seeking to link libertarian economics with Catholic social teaching. Other similar politicians include Ted Cruz, a Southern Baptist, and Marco Rubio, a Catholic who also attends an evangelical church. Heading into the 2014 midterm elections, observers find fewer strictly evangelical Republican Party emerging

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# Two-tiered Buddhism being replaced by more fluid approach

The long-time divide between ethnic and convert based Buddhism in the U.S. is showing signs of giving way to a more fluid situation where Buddhist groups reach out beyond their traditional followings, according to a study in the *Journal of Global Buddhism* (Vol. 15, 2014). In a survey of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), one of the largest ethnic Buddhist groups, Anne C. Spencer finds that the denomination is becoming increasingly diverse demographically, attracting converts to its services, and is now more likely to be held in English outside of immigrant neighborhoods rather than traditional Japanese. Although the BCA has not been oriented toward meditation, its temples are now offering this practice, as well as drawing non-Asians to its more traditional specialties of social activities (such as flower ar-

ranging) and chanting of sutras. Spencer concludes that the BCA is showing characteristics of both the ethnic and convert movements—a direction more Buddhist groups may move toward as they adapt to the religious marketplace.

A similar process may be taking place in South America, with one example being Soto Zen Buddhism now reaching and engaging people of other ethnic backgrounds in Peru after decades of seeking to preserve its Japanese cultural identity, according to Germain McKenzie-Gonzalez of Catholic University of America. In a paper presented at the June conference of the Center for Studies of New Religions (CESNUR) at Baylor University, which RW attended, Gonzalez traced the two waves of immigration

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Packaging for Saffron Road's halal-certified Chicken Pad Thai noodle dish. // Image courtesy of Kate Tayloe, via AmericanHalal.com

## Keeping food halal and aiming for non-Muslim market

Just as kosher food found a following beyond its Jewish market, Islamic halal products are seeking to reach non-Muslim mainstream American consumers, according to two reports. *The New York Times* (June 13) reports on the successful efforts of Adnan A. Durrani to market his Saffron Road halal frozen food entries to the popular store chain Whole Foods. Durrani first launched his product at Whole Foods during the controversy about building a Muslim center on ground zero in New York in 2010, which led to blog attacks on the stores for running a Ramadan promotion of Saffron Road products. Durrani publicly defended his company in the media and deployed

his own team of bloggers, including a rabbi. The free publicity caused Saffron Road's sales to shoot up by 200 percent that Ramadan. More recently, Durrani has been able to draw non-Muslims to his products by using the "kosher model" of serving yet transcending a communal constituency.

Sue Fishkoff, author of the book *Kosher Nation*, says that "What it takes for an ethno-religious food to cross over into the mainstream... is a perception that this food has something of value that other food does not"—in other words, convincing consumers that halal food is purer and of higher quality because it has been produced under religious supervision, even if that

religion still lacks mainstream acceptance. Another article in the *New York Times* (June 15) reports on a similar venture by New York City halal street food sellers to take their business nationwide. Halal Guys is one of the longest-running and best known street cart foods in New York. Now the owners plan to turn Halal Guys into a fast food chain, starting restaurants in Los Angeles, along the East Coast, across Canada and the Middle East. Asked if he is concerned about the franchise's association with Islam in some parts of the U.S., Halal Guy's chief marketer said that by the time the restaurants reach Chattanooga, "there will be so much good buzz, they will be excited to try it." ■

## 'Evangelical Catholics' *(cont. from p. 1)*

leaders than in previous years and more who are Catholic but with evangelical backgrounds and tendencies.

This new wave of “evangelical Catholic” politicians is widely considered to be a political asset rather than the liability it might have been in the past. Wheaton College political scientist Amy E. Black notes that while evangelicals are a solid voting bloc in the Republican Party, Catholics have more recently become swing voters, making it a necessity for politicians to appeal to both groups. The new breed of politicians has been better able to speak the language of evangelicals

and Catholics, while a candidate such as Paul Ryan struggled with this style in 2012. Bailey notes that the evangelical Catholic cross-pollination has its roots in such efforts as Evangelicals and Catholics Together initiative, started by the conservative ecumenical magazine *First Things*, in the 1990s. Princeton University’s Robert P. George concludes that what once may have been based on a “marriage of convenience” between evangelicals and Catholics on such common issues as pro-life activism has developed into a “spiritual fellowship that I think was not anticipated at the beginning by anybody.” ■

## Two-tiered Buddhism *(cont. from p. 1)*

from Japan (between 1888 to 1936) that led to the first Soto Zen presence in Peru in 1903. Religious life connected immigrants with their original culture, allowed them to maintain their traditions and helped them find their place in a new cultural environment. Over time, however, for various practical reasons, more and more became Roman Catholic—to the extent that more than 90 percent of Peruvians of Japanese origins today belong to the Roman Catholic Church. But a second stage was initiated in 1997, with a group of Peruvians of other origins who desired to practice Zen meditation. They received support from a Soto Zen monastery in Brazil, a country that is now the stronghold of Soto Zen Buddhism in South America and has developed missionary work. In 2005, an Argentinian-born nun moved to Lima in order to take care of the new Soto Zen community, including a few people of Japanese descent.

Thus, Soto Zen in Peru has switched from an immigration-based to an affiliation-based model, with

weekly lectures on Soto Zen, celebrations in public parks, etc. Other cities (e.g. Cuzco) are also visited by the group and sacred sutras have been translated into Spanish. Several participants would still like to see

more adaptations to a non-Japanese environment, but ordained members seem reluctant to push adaptations too far. Soto Zen is able to attract attention because it offers something new for most Peruvians. Meditation proves attractive, and there is a niche among middle-class, educated people, where it can find followers. Various channels of communication have been developed (including a presence in social media). While there are some 50 active participants in the core group at this point, there appears to be a potential for growth. However, the tension between the fidelity to Japanese real tradition, on the one hand, and adaptation to the South American environment, on the

other hand, may present a hurdle.

*(Journal of Global Buddhism, <http://www.global-buddhism.org/15/spencer14.pdf>.)* ■



**"Religious life connected immigrants with their original culture, allowed them to maintain their traditions and helped them to find their place in a new cultural environment."**



## WHAT THE

# CURRENT RESEARCH

## REVEALS ABOUT TODAY'S RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT

**01** **Disclosing one's faith in applying for jobs may be detrimental for job hunting in the U.S., particularly if you are a Muslim, according to a study by University of Connecticut researcher Bradley Wright.** In *Christianity Today* magazine (June), Wright reports on a study he conducted with Michael Wallace where they created four different kinds of resumes with similar work experience (evenly divided between men and women and with names lacking obvious ethnic or religious connection) but with different campus religious groups randomly selected that each fictitious job seeker was involved with—Jewish, Muslim, atheist, evangelical, Catholic, pagan, a made up religion of “Wallonian” (to see if employers would discriminate against a religion that did not exist) and a control group that made no religious reference.

The researchers sent out 9,600 resumes in New England and the South and found that applicants involved with Muslim student groups on their resumes got significantly

fewer responses than other applicants; they got 12.6 percent response for every 100 resumes sent—40 percent fewer callbacks than the resumes for the control group. Pagans got the highest for the religious groups, at 17.5 percent, while evangelical, Catholic, Jewish, and Wallonian resumes were in the middle, in the 16 percent range, and atheists somewhat lower (15.1 percent).

(*Christianity Today*, 465 Gunder-  
sen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188.)

**02** **Recent research suggests that polarization, more than secularization, will be the major religious dynamic in religion for the near future—a finding that is supported by a new study in the *Sociology of Religion* (Summer).** A feature of polarization in this context is that there will be bottoming out of religious decline, creating a strong secular-religious divide with the loss of nominally religious individuals. Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme (Oxford University) looked at survey data from regions within the U.S., Canada and the United

Kingdom from 1985 to 2009-2010 and finds such a pattern, especially in more secular areas. Rather than seeing a decline into “nothing” (complete secularism) in Great Britain and the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, Canada, “populations are becoming ever more split between the poles of the unaffiliated and religiously committed.” In less secular areas, such as the U.S. and other parts of Canada, the religiously committed group started declining, rather than bottoming out, during these years, but they also show a larger nominally affiliated middle-ground group, which actually grew in Northern Ireland, the Canadian Atlantic provinces and Quebec between 1985 and 2009.

Meanwhile, in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (June), Marion Burkimsher confirms that secular countries in Europe do show a pattern of “bottoming out” in religious decline. Studying various indicators of religious

► **Cont. on page 5**

## Current research *(cont. from p. 4)*

trends, such as youth religious attendance and attendance levels of those born between 1950 and 1981, the researcher finds three patterns: decline in the Catholic countries where attendance rates have been higher than in other parts of Europe (Italy, Slovakia and Portugal do not show such decline); growth in ex-communist countries such as Romania and Russia; and in strongly secular countries, stability in the Czech Republic and even some religious increases in Scandinavia. Burkimsher notes that in 2012, the vast majority of countries studied had youth attendance levels in the range of 3 to 19 percent, and, of those, “none seemed to be continuing on a sustained downward trajectory.”

*(Sociology of Religion, [\*rel.oxfordjournals.org/content/current; Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/>\*](http://soc-</a></i></p>
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**03** **Going back to pioneer French sociologist Emile Durkheim, the religious connection to suicide has been a classic sociological problem. In fact, recent research supports his argument that Catholic affiliation tends to decrease its occurrence.**

Writing in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (June), Benno Torgler and Christoph Schaltegger find that Catholic-Protestant differences in the occurrence of suicide that Durkheim found still holds true. The sociologists used data from the various cantons, or subfeder-

al states, of Switzerland and also from the European Values Study (EVS). They find a negative correlation between the proportion of Catholics in a canton and the number of suicides per capita. They control for such factors as childhood religious experience, exposure to alternative religious beliefs, the importance of family and church attendance and still find the correlation. The finding is supported by their analysis of the EVS' rates of suicide acceptance in 414 European regions inhabited by Protestants and Catholics. Belief in sin, the after-life, and the importance of God in one's life served to inoculate individuals against suicide, including those Protestants who were more active churchgoers. ■

## *Vatican's diplomacy revives under Pope Francis*

**A**fter a period of inactivity and withdrawal, Pope Francis has put the Vatican “back on the geopolitical map,” as well as rejuvenating the Catholic Church's interreligious and ecumenical work, writes John Allen in the *Boston Globe* (June 8). Allen writes that the pope's recent prayer summit for peace brings together Israeli President Shimon Peres and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Francis' invitation to Eastern Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, whom he prayed with during his recent

trip to the Holy Land, added an ecumenical dimension to the diplomacy. Allen cites Vatican observers have argued that the world's oldest diplomatic corps was approaching irrelevance under Pope Benedict XVI.

He adds that the prayer service served as a channel of “backdoor diplomacy that did not exist before.” Francis' decision to hold the interfaith prayer service was an astute recognition that in the Middle East “religion comes first,” and that problems have to be engaged on a spiritual level, says Abd Al Al-Majeed, mufti

of Bethlehem. The event also “solidified a Vatican recipe for making prayer with the followers of other religions theologically acceptable,” Allen writes. Past efforts at joint prayer with other religions have raised criticisms from the church's traditional wing, saying it encourages the view that religious differences don't matter. Francis managed to avoid trouble by arranging that there was no single moment of joint prayer between the pope, Peres and Abbas, but rather three separate prayers for Muslims, Christians and Jews. ■

## ***Jehovah's Witnesses wielding influence on religious freedom in European court***

**F**rom 1964 to August 2013, a total of 209 cases related to Jehovah's Witnesses were filed at the European Court of Human Rights. Not only the Witnesses, but all religious minorities have gained from those legal battles for the rights of groups to exist, especially in new member countries of the Council of Europe, said James T. Richardson (University of Nevada) at the CESNUR conference in Waco, Texas. Moreover, according to Richardson, there seems to have been a "mutually beneficial interaction" between courts and the Witnesses, with Witness cases being used "to expand authority and establish individual rights as well

as judicial autonomy." Richardson describes the Witnesses as possibly "the most litigious of all religious organizations." It is well-known that the many court cases initiated by the Jehovah's Witnesses at U.S. courts in the 1930s and 1940s contributed to the progress of freedom of association, freedom of expression and rights to conscientious objection. The Witnesses have won 50 cases at the Supreme Court.

Richardson notes that in the 1950s a similar pattern started in Canada, contributing to the movement toward the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Richardson's analysis seems to make clear that a similar process has been

taking place in Europe, especially since the famous *Kokkinakis v. Greece* case (1993), in which a violation of Article 9 (religious freedom) of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was found for the first time. It marked the start of "a flood of successful Article 9 cases," said Richardson. Witnesses cases have included a variety of issues. The Witnesses have also been successful at the level of national constitutional courts. Over time, this contributes to diminishing discrepancies across European countries in the way they deal with issues of religious freedom. ■

## **Renewed Croatian nationalism showing church support in Bosnia**

**W**hile Bosnia has been hailed as one of the more successful efforts of international peacekeeping, Croatia nationalism is making a comeback in the nation with some help from elements of the Catholic Church, reports *The Economist* (June 25). The magazine notes that the release and return to Bosnia of Croatian nationalist Dario Kordic, after serving 17 years of a 25-year prison sentence for his role in a massacre of Muslim civilians in 1993, has helped revive hard-line nationalist sentiment. Kordic was given a "hero's welcome" by prominent Catholic bishop Vlado Koscic.

A service to celebrate Kordic's homecoming was held at Zagreb's main place of Catholic worship, "prompting a peace-minded NGO to stage a demonstration outside the cathedral . . ."

Kordic's supporters claim that as a political leader he did not bear direct responsibility for the killings and that the court did not pay enough attention to the Croats killed by Muslims during the conflict. The recent violent attack against a professor who criticized the return of Croat nationalism has created foreboding in the Bosnian-Croat heartland of Mostar. Although church-run

peace and reconciliation efforts have spoken against a return to violence, the magazine concludes that "peace-minded Catholics" are facing a double challenge. "On one hand, they are trying to discourage their Catholic and Croat co-religionists from relapsing into chauvinism; on the other, they see among their Muslim neighbors a resurgence of hard-line Saudi-influenced Islam which has little interest in co-existence. A few hundred Muslims from around Sarajevo have gone to fight in Syria. In Bosnia, as in many European countries, people await the return of these mujahideen with trepidation." ■

## Persian Gulf nations showing new religious tolerance

Religious tolerance is growing in the Persian Gulf over the past six years, going beyond the practical concern of accommodating the large migrant worker populations in the region, reports the *National Catholic Register* (June 15). One example of greater religious freedom is the construction of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Arabia in Awali, Bahrain, which will be the largest Catholic church in the Persian Gulf, on land donated by King Hamad bin Isa al Khalifa. Driving the trend is the increased number of Christian guest workers, mainly from India and the Philippines and “initiatives by wealthy rulers to open up the region to the world,” writes Victor Gaetan. The large numbers of guest workers in the region, totaling over 3 million, has led to a spate of building large church complexes—from the 2,700-seat Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in 2007 to the addition of Protestant, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox churches in an area of Qatar known as “church city.” Qatar’s openness to churches is significant because the country follows

the strict Wahhabi school of Islam and until recently did not allow the practice of the Christian faith.

Although churches are not allowed in Saudi Arabia, the new cathedral in Bahrain will likely serve the worker population of 1.5 million Catholics in the country who only have to cross a 15-mile causeway to attend Mass. Churches have been allowed in Bahrain and Kuwait for decades, but the recent expansion of churches in the region is “more than an attempt to contain” foreign populations and is a “positive opening” to the outside world, according to Allan Keiswetter of the Middle East Institute in Washington. Another unusual gesture in Doha, Qatar is the inclusion of Georgetown University in its invitation for American universities to open campuses in the country. The core curriculum is the same in Washington as in Doha—all students have to take theology and philosophy, which include Bible and Muslim-Christian relations courses.

(*National Catholic Register*, <http://www.ncregister.com>) ■

## Muslim societies target real and symbolic atheism

Just as atheism is gaining a more public profile in the West, atheists are becoming more visible in the Muslim world, while becoming stigmatized by Muslim leaders at the same time. *The Global Post* (June 12) reports that a growing number of Saudis are privately declaring themselves atheists. Caryle Murphy reports that the evidence for this trend is more anecdotal than scientific but the instances of people claiming atheism are “persistent.” One human rights atheist says, “I know at least six atheists who confirmed that to me. Six or seven years ago, I wouldn’t even have heard one person say that. Not even a best friend would confess that to me.” The greater willingness to identify as an atheist—at least two Gulf-produced television talk shows recently discussed it—may be a factor in why the Saudi government has made talk of atheism a terrorist offense. The March 7 decree from the Ministry of Interior prohibited, among other things, “calling for atheist thought in any form, or calling into question the fundamentals of the Islamic religion on which this country is based.”

Statistically speaking, the rate of professed atheism in Saudi Arabia is low. A 2012 poll by

WIN-Gallup International of about 500 Saudis found that 5 percent described themselves as “convinced atheist.” This was well below the global average of 13 percent. But whether they identify as atheist or not, there is more of a tendency to question Islam than was previously the case, especially on social media sites. A Saudi journalist adds that the idea of being irreligious and even atheist is spreading because of the discrepancy “between what Islamists say and what they do.” The Islam and science blog *Irtiqua* (May 5) notes that there are an “increasing number of atheist stories coming out from the Muslim world.” In some cases, it is about an individual proclaiming his or her atheism, as is the recent case in Indonesia when a man publicly declared his atheism on a Facebook page started by Indonesians living in the Netherlands, and was then imprisoned for 19 months on the charge of “inciting religious hatred.” But other instances of atheism in Muslim societies are more about “governments or political groups silencing opponents by calling them

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# High-tech revolution makes further gains among Israel's ultra-Orthodox

Efforts to turn Israel's burgeoning ultra-Orthodox population into soldiers under the new law lifting their long-time exemption from the mandatory two-year stints in the army has had the unintended effect of solidifying a high-tech revolution in Haredi ranks. *The Christian Science Monitor* (June 1) reports that "Through a program known as a hesder yeshiva, the men spend their daytime hours poring over religious texts and engaging in vigorous theological debates—the bedrock of a Haredi man's often lifelong education. But in the evenings, they apply those critical thinking skills to the 1,000 hours of cyber training required as preparation for their military service" in Israel's renowned cybersecurity force. The program "parallels broader efforts to inte-

grate Israel's burgeoning ultra-Orthodox, or Haredi, population into the workplace—many of them into hi-tech positions, one of Israel's biggest areas of growth and an easier way to support a large family than low-skilled labor."

Ultra-Orthodox participation is also expanding in academic programs, including at leading technological schools like the Technion. Ninety percent of Haredim in the Air Force already serve in high-tech jobs. In the world of start-up firms the government recently announced a new program to provide Haredi entrepreneurs with 85 percent funding for hi-tech ventures. The field has also been ideal for Haredi women, who often serve as the family breadwinners while their husbands study. ■

## *China's Christians—70 million and highly educated*

It seems credible to estimate that there are now more than 70 million Christians in China, with a large proportion of them highly educated, said sociologist Rodney Stark (Baylor University, Waco) at the CESNUR conference in Waco, Texas. Like other scholars interested in the issue of the current state of religion in China, Stark was faced with the uncertainties related to statistics. Figures of 130 million Christians in China are often circulated, sometimes even 200 million, but those are based on no solid evidence. However, it is known that Christian groups officially registered under the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) number some 16 million adherents, but such figures include neither the unofficial Catholic parishes, nor the tens of thousands of house churches currently active. Stark and colleagues estimate that the current number of Chinese Christians is over 70 million, a figure based on a 2007 survey that they then supplemented with more recent research. This means that Christians would currently make more than 5 percent of the Chinese population, i.e. about as many as members of the Chinese Communist Party.

Stark's data also show that Christianity is spreading more rapidly among the more affluent people.

In an article coauthored with Ph.D. student Xiuhua Wang (Baylor University) and recently published this year in the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* (vol. 10), Stark emphasizes the impact of Christianity and rates of conversion to the appeal of the religion among Chinese students. More educated Chinese are more likely to become Christians, although the least-educated people are the second group most likely to convert. Educated converts tend to associate Christianity with Western modernity. Moreover, the authors note that in several other Asian countries, college-educated people are also more likely than less educated people to be Christians, while the more educated they are, the less likely they will be Buddhists. There are strong variations in the percentages of adherents of each religion from one country to another, but the same pattern in China is found among Christians in South Korea (36 percent), Hong Kong (22 percent), Singapore (18 percent), Taiwan (7 percent) and Japan (3 percent), "in all six of these Asian nations, it is the more-educated who are most likely to have become Christians."

(*Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, <http://www.religjournal.com>.) ■



## Muslim societies target atheism *(cont. from p. 7)*

atheists,” as was the case during riots in Bangladesh last year.

Blog editor Salman Hameed writes that “doubters of all shades (from deists to hardcore atheists) have always been present in all societies, and Muslim countries are no exception. The sudden increase of such stories is probably due to a combination of

reasons. On the one hand, you have the globalization of [the] religion-atheist debate (one can be a participant... from a computer anywhere in the world) and a related increase in the number of people who declare themselves to be atheists. On the other hand, the social upheavals (and political turmoil in many cases) of the past

few years are leading to intolerance toward religious minorities... and atheist boogeymen [as has been the case in Egypt]. In addition such stories become a rallying cry for fundamentalists as well as good material for newspapers in the West.”

*(Irtiqa, <http://www.irtiqa-blog.com>). ■*

### EXPLORE THIS ISSUE'S



# FINDINGS & FOOTNOTES

**01** With the resurgence of far right parties in Europe, there is also renewed concern about the connection of the right to religion and particularly its opposition to Islam. The current issue of the *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* (April) devotes most of its pages to a unique movement known as the New Right. The New Right, known as the Nouvelle Droit (ND) in its French birth place, has existed for close to 40 years, mostly as an intellectual and cultural movement more than a political one. A noteworthy aspect of the ND's is many of its thinkers' sympathy, if not support, for paganism and occult thought in their concern for recovering indigenous Euro-

pean traditions and cultures and opposition to universalistic liberal democracy, particularly as expressed by the U.S., and, in some cases, monotheism. The issue features a lengthy article by Tamir Bar-On, who charges that New Right ideas are now reaching the political mainstream and inspiring much of the nativist, anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic new right parties growing in Europe and Russia, even including the far right violence of Anders Breivik in Norway in 2011. In a response, Alain de Benoist, one of the ND's intellectual architects, argues that the ND is only a loosely-based cultural and intellectual movement that transcends the right and left and has little to do with the rightist political upsurge or anti-Islam

sentiment, with its main thinkers actually opposing such currents.

Aside from these polemics, the issue carries a noteworthy article on the ND and traditionalism, which teaches that there is a common mystical core in the world's religions that can serve as an alternative to the materialist philosophy of the modern world. Author Stephane Francois writes that there is no one approach of the ND to traditionalism, with some disavowing the philosophy altogether. While traditionalism has turned some in the ND toward the occult and pagan sources, for others, it has paradoxically meant a return to traditional forms of monotheism, such as sufi Islam, Catholicism

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## Findings & Footnotes *(cont. from p. 9)*

and Eastern Orthodoxy. The issue concludes with an interview of John Morgan, a founder of *Arktos*, a publishing house and website based in India and Michigan that has been influential, along with the U.S.-based website *Counter-Currents*, in translating ND writings into English as well as promoting an agenda that includes decentralizing and reconnecting nature and spirituality in America. For more information on this issue, visit:

<http://msupress.org/journals/jsr/>.

**02** Naomi Schaeffer Riley's book *Got Religion* (Templeton Press, \$19.96) brings together reporting and analysis of recent research to answer the crucial question posed in the book's subtitle: "How Churches, Mosques and Synagogues Can Bring Young People Back." The 165-page book consists of a series of well-drawn examples of what various congregations, movements and denominations are doing right in luring back the millennial generation to greater religious participation and involvement. In the introduction, Riley rightly notes the huge question mark this generation throws over the future of religious institutions in the U.S., even if they may not be in the vanguard of secularization, young adults' high rate of non-affiliation has become a cause for concern and even pessimism across the religious spectrum. The author makes the case that American religious institutions have reinvented themselves in the past and show signs of doing so currently, even if such efforts are coming as much from the margins

as the centers of American religion.

Riley's case studies go beyond providing journalistic snapshots of such efforts as they discuss particular trends these congregations are addressing. Her profile of a conservative Presbyterian church in New Orleans highlights how the congregation's emphasis on serving the local community is addressing young adults' interest in creating and sustaining a sense of place. The case study of Mormon wards for singles shows how they help young adults take up responsibilities in the church. An examination of cooperative ministry between evangelicals and mainline Protestants suggests young people's affinity for collaboration; and Riley's treatment of Next, a program for "alumni" of young Jews who have gone through the Birthright Israel movement, which sponsors young adults to go to the Holy Land, makes Judaism less intimidating by taking rituals out of the synagogue.

**03** Stephen M. Cherry's new book *Faith, Family, and Filipino American Community Life* (Rutgers University Press, \$27.95) suggests Filipino-Americans are poised to play an important role in U.S. Catholicism-- not least because they show unusually high levels of loyalty to the church—if they can overcome their many internal conflicts. The book focuses on the Filipino American community in Houston, Texas, but Cherry's detailed examination shows the unique forms of association that provide transnational

links between Filipinos around the world. Filipino Americans have made the immigrant transition by retaining a strong degree of Catholic identity and support for church teachings. The parish often serves as the center of their social life, but Filipino community involvement also consists of vast arrays of overlapping religious, ethnic, political and family groups that crisscross the Philippines and immigrant communities. These include popular charismatic prayer and Marian devotional groups, Masonic clubs and extended family ("barangay") associations run by godparents, who might not be biological relatives.

These groups show the high rate of voluntarism among Filipino Americans, more than native born Americans, but they also often experience interpersonal conflicts and split off from each. But Cherry writes that the rigid hierarchical structure of the church holds this diversity together as a single family. He adds that community involvement extends beyond the church and the ethnic group, particularly evident in Filipino pro-family as well as pro-immigrant activism. With their population growth in the U.S.—through immigration and high birth rates—and healthy numbers of religious vocations, Filipino Americans (at least the first generation; Cherry does not address the second generation) will put a distinctive stamp on U.S. civic life and Catholicism—conservative on family issues, charismatic in spirituality yet also with a strong presence of women in lay leadership positions and high political involvement. ■



## ON / FILE

### A CONTINUING SURVEY OF NEW GROUPS, MOVEMENTS, EVENTS AND PEOPLE IMPACTING RELIGION

**01** Overseas adoption has become a major concern of many evangelicals, but a less publicized movement has been growing among some evangelical churches dedicated to supporting prospective foster families in the U.S. Known as the **127 movement**, it was first started as a project in Colorado in 2004 to provide the state mandated orientation and training to prospective foster parents but with a Christian perspective. The group's members acted as a support network to families that ended up fostering and then adopting a child. Since then other faith-based projects have started that seek to provide similar support structures to state-run foster systems. (Source: *Sojourners*, June)

**02** The formation of the **Nurturing Communities Project** in the last few years and the publication of *The Intentional Communities Handbook* in 2013 suggest growing connections and interchange between older intentional Christian communities, including the Bruderhof, and more recent movements, such as the New

Monasticism. The project took shape as Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, a founder of the New Monasticism, which stresses urban engagement and communal living (in various degrees), collaborated with David Janzen, a leader of Reba Place, a Mennonite community that has existed for over 50 years. The project brings communities together for annual gatherings as well as offering mentoring by more experienced leaders of older communities. The anabaptist Bruderhof movement, which is associated with the Hutterites, is an active participant in the network.

The interchange and consultation with established communitarian leaders is important because new communities often phase out of an initial period of high energy as leaders and followers face interpersonal conflicts and a loss of enthusiasm, leading to a pattern of decline. The recent publication of *The Intentional Com-*

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## Findings & Footnotes *(cont. from p. 11)*

munities Handbook, written by Janzen, serves as an instructional manual for would-be communitarians covering such matters as the question of whether one is called to community living, decision-making, gender parity, racial reconciliation, and ways to promote both bonding (internal cohesion) and bridging (engagement with the surrounding community) social capital. (Source: *American Communal Societies Quarterly*, April.)

**03** The formation of a Christian political party among the dalits, or “untouchables,” in India represents the first such political effort by this caste. The party, called the **Indian Christian Secular Party**, put up more than 60 candidates, the majority of them Dalit Christians. The party is an expression of increasing frustration that the other parties have not strongly opposed discrimination against Dalits, especially Christian ones. While Dalits are in all of India’s religions, Christian and Muslim dalits have not received the privileges given to Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh dalits that provide free educations and set quotas for government jobs and positions in the legislature. Alongside discrimination against Christian dalits, the party is also concerned about anti-conversion laws that target Christian churches engaged in evangelism and have led to anti-Christian violence. One observer noted that because Christians are undercounted in India as they remain Hindu on government registers, the new party can make an impact on elections with their nominal presence. (Source: *World Watch Monitor*, May 12.) ■

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