



VOICE OF REASON

The Journal of Americans for Religious Liberty

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Religion, Politics and the Presidency

This election season has already become one of the most contentious as more candidates than ever vie for the Republican nomination, while leaving the Democratic race almost a foregone conclusion.

Religious issues have taken a backseat, particularly in the Democratic race, and there is little difference within the parties: almost all Republican candidates are pro-school vouchers, anti-abortion rights, and advance a novel view of religious liberty that will benefit mainly evangelicals. Democrats are generally opposed to vouchers and tax credits, in favor of abortion rights, and defend the Supreme Court's same-sex marriage ruling, which Republicans oppose.

Following is a thumbnail sketch of the candidates and their respective appeals to religious communities, starting with the Republicans in alphabetical order.

Jeb Bush, Florida's governor from 1999-2007, stresses his Catholic faith, to which he converted in 1995, nearly 24 years after marrying his wife in the Catholic chapel at the University of Texas.

As governor, Bush supported restrictions on abortion, favored faith-based social services, and fought for vouchers and tax credits to aid private, mostly religious, schools. Cathy Lynn Grossman wrote in Religion News Service (RNS) on June 16 that "faith infuses his governing choices and has long been more overt than his father or brother about campaigning and governing on a religion-based moral agenda."

But Bush has openly disagreed with Pope Francis's call for government action to deal with global warming and climate change and for ending capital punishment. Bush told the press, "I don't get economic policy from my bishops or my cardinals or from my pope." This comment provoked a critical response from Andrew Rosenthal in *The New*

York Times on June 17, "That's utterly insincere since Mr. Bush belongs to a modern Republican Party that is driven by Christian political belief, or claims to be, on a host of issues." Rosenthal said Bush "is perfectly o.k. with government imposing the religious values he shares" on abortion and gay rights and said Bush should read "the greatest speech about religion and politics in American history," namely John F. Kennedy's eloquent defense of church-state separation on September 12, 1960.

Bush began courting evangelical votes in his commencement address at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, founded by Rev. Jerry Falwell, where he told a cheering crowd, "Federal authorities are demanding obedience in complete disregard of religious conscience."

Ben Carson is a retired neurosurgeon and author of many best-selling books, especially his autobiography *Gifted Hands*. Carson is a Seventh-day

Adventist, the first presidential contender of that faith. When he announced his candidacy, Adventist officials issued a statement saying, in part, "It is important for the church to maintain its long-standing historical support of the separation of church and state by not endorsing or opposing any candidate."

Carson told CNN in November 2014 that he is "not really into a lot of religious dogma and rituals" but maintains a personal faith. He told Religion News Service in 1999 that "I'm not convinced that the denomination is the most important thing." But, as Melissa Nann Burke of the *Detroit News* wrote on May 6, "Some of his church's teachings are reflected in Carson's politics, including his endorsement of a six-day Creation over evolution and opposition to gay marriage."

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Planned Parenthood Funding Controversy Widens

The controversy over funding for Planned Parenthood continues. The U.S. House of Representatives voted 241-187 on September 18 to block federal funding for the embattled organization for one year. It was nearly a party-line vote. Only three Republicans joined 184 Democrats in opposition, while two Democrats supported 239 Republicans on cutting off the \$528 million annual appropriation. As Sarah Ferris wrote in *The Hill* September 18, "The vote is largely symbolic, as Democrats are expected to block the bill in the Senate."

The Senate, as expected, rejected the ban on September 24 by 52-47. That vote fell 13 short of invoking cloture, which requires 60 votes.

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Seven Republicans joined 45 Democrats in rejecting the cutoff, perhaps to keep the government open rather than to show support for Planned Parenthood. (Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky was the only GOP presidential candidate to vote with the Democrats, while Joe Manchin of West Virginia was the sole Democrat to join the GOP on this vote.)

The vote shows how polarizing and partisan the subject of abortion has become. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, both parties were split almost evenly on the issue (when there were still conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans). Now, 99% of Democrats and Republicans in the House are on opposite sides of the issue.

Videos purporting to show the organization's selling of fetal body parts have sparked the debate, and Planned Parenthood vigorously denied the accusations.

The issue has affected a number of state legislatures, including Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and New Hampshire, which promptly stopped funding. However, U.S. District Judge Kristine Baker ordered Arkansas to reinstate its Medicaid contract on September 18.

Republican legislators in Texas, South Carolina, Arizona, Kansas, Missouri, and Ohio have begun investigations of Planned Parenthood, while Idaho's Republican Gov. Butch Otter said, "Since there is no evidence that a crime has been committed, there are no grounds for a legal investigation."

Texas health officials announced in October a proposed ending for state Medicaid contracts with Planned Parenthood, which promptly indicated on October 19 that it would take legal action to challenge the decision. Also on October 19 a federal court temporarily blocked a similar effort in Louisiana, followed by a federal court ruling on October 28 stopping a cut-off in Alabama.

The federal government weighed in, warning states on August 12 that defunding may place them in conflict with federal law. Megan Cassella wrote in Reuters on August 12, "Federal law requires state Medicaid programs to cover family-planning services and supplies for anyone of child-bearing age. Ending the agreements with Planned Parenthood would limit beneficiaries' access to care and services from qualified providers of their choice, according to HHS." Both the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services warned officials in Alabama and Louisiana about the possible consequences.

Republican presidential candidates Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz,

Bobby Jindal and Carly Fiorina denounced Planned Parenthood, with Huckabee pledging he would use the Justice Department to "criminally prosecute" the group if he were elected president.

The New England Journal of Medicine came to the defense of fetal tissue research and Planned Parenthood in August. "Planned Parenthood, its physicians, and the researchers who do this work should be praised, not damned," said the respected journal, because the research "has benefited millions of people worldwide."

Planned Parenthood foes are now threatening state universities which conduct fetal tissue research. Wrote Brett Norman in *Politico* on October 2, "Officials of the nation's leading universities have watched with dread as the fallout from the Planned Parenthood sting videos has threatened to engulf labs that depend on fetal tissue for research. Now the abortion wars are raging on their doorsteps as lawmakers in Wisconsin and Ohio try to ban such research and other states limit access to the tissue. More than three dozen of the universities, including Harvard, Yale and Johns Hopkins, have been drawn into the fight despite their traditional deep aversion to an issue that can divide faculties and donors and draw the ire of anti-abortion advocates nationwide."

Added Dr. Edward Halperin, chancellor of New York Medical College, "This really isn't about science. This is really people making a point about abortion and it's outrageous."

Eight other states have seen bills banning fetal tissue research, according to the Guttmacher Institute. The Association of American Medical Colleges said it had "grave concerns" about these bills, which potentially destroy "an important body of research."

The House voted 236-193 on October 7 to create a new 13-member committee (officially an Energy and Commerce subcommittee) to investigate a wide range of activities associated with abortion, especially "medical procedures and business practices used by entities involved in fetal tissue procurement." The special committee will have eight Republicans and five Democrats and will have the power to examine the subject of federal funding for abortion providers (already banned for forty years by the Hyde Amendment) and can recommend changes in laws or regulations.

Democrats said the committee "is more interested in attacking Planned Parenthood than in an even-handed investigation of potential violations of the law." Nine Republicans joined 184 Democrats in opposition to the establishment of the committee, while two Democrats (Lipinski of Illinois and Petersen of Minnesota) supported the 232 Republicans. ■

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Presidency, *continued from page 1*

He provoked controversy when he said he “would not advocate putting a Muslim in charge of the U.S.” On other occasions he has spoken of the “Judeo-Christian” foundations of the nation. Criticism of Carson’s religion by Donald Trump seems only to have increased Carson support among evangelicals, especially in Iowa.

Chris Christie, the governor of New Jersey, is kind of a Northeastern cultural Catholic, who rarely addresses religious issues. But he remains somewhat conservative, vetoing a bill that would have legalized gay marriage in New Jersey before the Supreme Court decision. He is a graduate of Seton Hall University and sends his kids to Catholic schools. But he disagreed openly with his church on birth control and homosexuality. He gradually moved from pro-choice to pro-life on abortion-related issues.

Ted Cruz, a first-term senator from Texas, is a zealous Southern Baptist and outspoken advocate of Religious Right positions on every conceivable issue. He launched his campaign on March 23 at Liberty University.

He is particularly active in attempts to defund Planned Parenthood and to defend Kentucky clerk Kim Davis’s stand against same-sex marriage. After Davis was jailed by a federal judge for contempt, Cruz thundered that “Judicial lawlessness crossed into judicial tyranny.” As *The Economist* observed, on March 28, “Mr. Cruz’s conservatism is unsullied by any whiff of compromise.” He told the Iowa Faith and Family Coalition that “religious liberty is under assault at an unprecedented level.” Cruz’s father is a Cuban-born evangelist who combines Baptist and Pentecostal theology with an ardent Christian Zionism. So does Senator Cruz. RNS reported on August 6 that he was “booed off the stage” by Arab Christians after he said critics of the Netanyahu regime in Israel were “consumed with hate.”

Carly Fiorina, one of the outsider candidates who has never held public office (along with Trump and Carson), has rarely addressed church-state issues, except for her impassioned opposition to abortion and to Planned Parenthood. She also opposed same-sex marriage when living in California, where she ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate in 2010.

Fiorina was raised Episcopalian but is “an irregular churchgoer,” according to *The New York Times*. She told *Christianity Today* in an interview that she has been involved with Opportunity International, which describes itself as “a Christian non-profit that works to empower women and fight global poverty.”

Former Virginia governor **Jim Gilmore** is now president of a conservative research group called the Free Congress Foundation. He is a standard conservative on all church-state issues and a United Methodist. As governor he supported a mandatory moment of silence in Virginia public schools, which was upheld by the Supreme Court. He has consistently polled lower than 1% in national polls.

South Carolina Sen. **Lindsey Graham** has received relatively little attention. A Baptist, he is considered a moderate conservative in both religion and politics. He supports a law that would forbid abortion after 20 weeks. He said the U.S. is in “a religious war with radical Islam,” but he has denounced “a national religion” and called for a balance between the rights of same-sex couples and religious freedom.

Mike Huckabee, former Arkansas governor, is making his second run for the White House. In 2008 he received four million votes, about 20% of the GOP primary electorate, and carried several Southern states. His main appeal was to evangelicals, and more particularly to his fellow Southern Baptists. (He is an ordained minister.) He is outspoken against same-sex marriage and stole the show surrounding Kim Davis in Ken-

tucky, where he managed to muscle opponent Ted Cruz off the stage. His campaign is almost solely aimed at evangelicals, as he rails against “the criminalization of Christianity.” In 2008 he had almost no appeal to Catholic and mainline Protestant voters. The *Washington Post* called him a “down-home populist” who is intensely disliked by the business wing of the party. Though an ultra-conservative, he opposed school vouchers as governor. His poll numbers have steadily declined since April, with so many other candidates making strong appeals to the evangelical 40% of the GOP’s likely primary voters.

Bobby Jindal, the outgoing governor of Louisiana, has been a vocal advocate of school vouchers and opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage. Born of Hindu immigrant parents from India, Jindal converted to Catholicism after a brief evangelical stopover. He calls himself “an evangelical Catholic.” RNS labeled him a “stalwart of the Religious Right who has fashioned himself as an outspoken conservative and champion of religious believers, especially conservative Christians.”

Ohio Gov. **John Kasich** has stressed economic issues and rarely mentioned the social ones. His claim to fame, however, rests on support for school vouchers and charter schools, which he claims as successes though criticism of their record is widespread. He supported Ohio’s ban on gay marriage and voted for the Defense of Marriage Act years ago as a member of Congress, but he said on June 26 after the Supreme Court decision, “It’s the law of the land and we’ll abide by it. It’s time to move on.”

He was raised Catholic by his Croatian and Czech parents in a blue-collar town in western Pennsylvania, but moved away from his childhood faith, later joining St. Augustine Anglican Church in Westerville, Ohio, one of the breakaway parishes of the Episcopal Church. His new faith is conservative, but Kasich has come across as a liberal evangelical, stressing support for the poor and down-and-out. Elizabeth Stoker Bruenig, writing in the *New Republic* on July 21, observed, “John Kasich’s compassionate Christianity could raise hell in the GOP primary.” She praised his “strong strand of Christian reasoning,” but doubted whether it “will get him to the White House.”

George Pataki, a two-term governor of New York who defeated Mario Cuomo in 1994, is almost invisible in the polls. He opposes religious freedom laws aimed at gay and lesbian citizens and generally supports abortion rights. Pataki signed legislation as governor that required insurers to provide contraceptive coverage for women. He also tried to restore the death penalty and favored cuts to Medicaid funding for abortions, according to RNS. He is a Catholic but several of his positions clashed with the state’s bishops.

Rand Paul, the junior senator from Kentucky, follows somewhat the libertarian and non-interventionist policies of his father Ron Paul, who ran for the GOP nomination in 2008 and 2012. But the senator has become more conservative on church-state issues, favoring restrictions on abortion and advocating school vouchers. He has shifted to the right on same-sex marriage, calling it “a moral crisis that allows people to think there could be some other sort of marriage.” He told a gathering

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Presidency, *continued from page 3*

of clergy in March that “The First Amendment says keep government out of religion. It doesn’t say keep religion out of government.”

His father appealed to a relatively small percent of Republican voters who are religiously unaffiliated, but Rand, a Presbyterian, has moved toward the evangelical base.

Marco Rubio opted to run for President rather than a second term as U.S. Senator from Florida. He has taken conservative positions on all church-state issues, opposing almost all abortions, and proposing a federal tax credit for private schools.

Rubio is young and articulate and has an interesting religious background. Originally Catholic, he became a Mormon for a few years while living in Nevada, but reverted to Catholicism when he returned to his home state of Florida. Later he attended a Baptist-flavored megachurch called Christ Fellowship from 2000 to 2004. Finally, his religious search ended in an intense renewal of Catholic faith. (Still, in his autobiography, *American Son*, he says he and his family often attend Christ Fellowship on Saturday night before Mass on Sundays at St. Louis Church.) He often speaks in a religious language that resonates with evangelicals. While his appeal to some Catholic and Hispanic voters is obvious, his supporters are playing the Mormon card in Nevada, an early caucus state where 25% of Republican primary voters are Mormon. *The Economist* on September 26 concluded that Rubio “appeals to both the business establishment and to doctrinaire conservatives.”

Rick Santorum, a former Pennsylvania congressman and senator, received 20% of the 2012 primary vote when he sought the GOP nomination. He ran considerably stronger among evangelicals than among his fellow Catholics. He opposes abortion, same-sex marriage, the teaching of evolution, and favors home schooling. With so many other candidates vying for this constituency, his support has dwindled.

Donald Trump, it goes without saying, has been the elephant in the room since he launched his campaign and quickly jumped into the lead in almost all polls until late October, when Ben Carson moved ahead.

The real estate mogul has not spent much time addressing church-state issues, focusing instead on anti-immigration rhetoric and appeals to nativism. His pro-choice position on abortion, expressed in a 1999 interview, has changed into opposition to most abortions.

But he has dragged religion into his campaign in a number of ways. Calling himself a “classic WASP” and a Presbyterian, he has rarely been seen in any church. And while he told the Christian Broadcasting Network in 2012 that he collects Bibles, his knowledge of it seems thin, according to various interviewers. His unsympathetic references to Ben Carson’s Seventh-day Adventist faith “will fail miserably,” said numerous evangelical clergy interviewed by the *Des Moines Register*.

Trump has also been a member of the Marble Collegiate Church in New York City, founded by Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, the creator of a feel-good, positive-thinking theology. (The only U.S. president to be connected with Peale’s church was Richard Nixon, who attended occasionally and befriended Peale, who in turn supported him openly against JFK, mainly on anti-Catholic grounds, in the 1960 election. This prompted Adlai Stevenson to quip, “I find St. Paul appealing and St. Peale appalling.”)

The Democrats

Former Secretary of State and U.S. Senator **Hillary Clinton** is an active United Methodist. She has aligned herself with the Social Gospel orientation of liberal Protestantism and has credited her faith with shaping her political and cultural values, especially support for human rights and human dignity.

She is ardently pro-choice, pro-public education, and her views on gay marriage have evolved, as have President Obama’s.

In a town hall meeting in Las Vegas in August, Clinton responded to a question about her views toward church-state issues. “I am very supportive of the separation of church and state. I think it’s good for both the state and religion. And we have so much diversity of thinking in the country, and part of the reason why this American experiment has lasted is because there’s a lot of different ways for people to express themselves, to believe what they want to believe, or choose not to believe, so I think the separation of church and state has served us very well, and I will certainly defend it.”

Clinton launched a “Faith Voters PAC” on June 17 to rally religious progressives in all traditions, a kind of Religious Left to challenge the monopoly of the Religious Right.

Martin O’Malley, a former two-term Maryland governor, is a liberal Catholic who supported same-sex marriage in a hard-fought but successful 2012 referendum. His views and policies on abortion, education, immigration, and the death penalty are in the progressive mold.

Bernie Sanders, a long-time congressman and senator from Vermont, is an unreconstructed independent and democratic socialist who joined the Democratic Party in April, just before announcing his desire to become the party’s standard-bearer in 2016. The Brooklyn native is Jewish and would become the nation’s first Jewish president. But he is also highly secular and considers himself Jewish in a cultural sense.

Lauren Markoe, national correspondent for RNS, explained in an April 29 profile: “Sanders is the presidential contender most willing to dissociate himself from religion. Though he identifies as Jewish and by Jewish law is Jewish, he has freely acknowledged that he is not a religious person. He scored a solid zero from Ralph Reed’s Faith and Freedom Coalition in its most recent scorecard and a 100 from the abortion rights group NARAL Pro-Choice America.”

On all church-state issues he is a solid separationist. Though a defender of Israel, he boycotted Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech to Congress decrying the Iran nuclear deal, which Sanders favors. (His second wife, incidentally, is an Irish Catholic who told an interviewer in 1996 that she practices Catholicism in her own way.) Sanders has praised Pope Francis and says he finds himself “very close to the teachings of Pope Francis.”

Sanders spoke to the student body at evangelical Liberty University (on Rosh Hashanah!), praising the Golden Rule and invoking social justice as a universal principle common to all religions.

In our next issue, we’ll look at how the various candidates are appealing to the major religious constituencies, including the “nones.”

Al Menendez

Back Issues of *Voice of Reason*

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Annual Report Highlights Global Threats to Religious Freedom

The State Department issued its annual report on the state of religious freedom on October 14. Secretary of State John Kerry explained: “The purpose of this annual report is to highlight the importance of religious freedom not by lecturing but through advocacy and through persuasion. Our primary goal is to help governments everywhere recognize that their societies will do better with religious liberty than without it. The world has learned through very hard experience that religious pluralism encourages and enables contributions from all; while religious discrimination is often the source of conflicts that endanger all.”

He added, “I should emphasize that the concept of religious freedom extends way beyond mere tolerance. It is a concept grounded in respect for the rights and beliefs of others. It is deeply connected to our DNA as Americans – to everything that we are and everything that we came from. It’s a concept that is based on respect, and respect, in turn, demands legal equality. It demands that the practitioners of one faith understand that they have no right to coerce others into submission, conversion, or silence, or to literally take their lives because of their beliefs.”

David Saperstein, Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, said, “There is an absolute and unequivocal need to give voice to the religiously oppressed in every land afraid to speak of what they believe in; who face death and live in fear, who worship in underground churches, mosques or temples, who feel so desperate that they flee their homes to avoid killing and persecution simply because they love God in their own way or question the existence of God.”

The report, now in its 17th year, found various kinds of religious oppression. Governments have failed to protect minorities from “non-state actors,” i.e. extremists and terrorists, in Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Burma. These abuses were most prominent in the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and throughout Asia. Sri Lanka and Russian-separatist regions in eastern Ukraine have also witnessed increases in government-sanctioned persecutions or ignored actions against religious minorities.

The report also condemned religious freedom violations, abuses and restrictions involving governments. “People cannot enjoy religious freedom unless they have both the right to express their beliefs freely and change their religion without facing persecution, violence, or discrimination. The threat and enforcement of blasphemy and apostasy laws during the year had a significant impact on the ability of individuals to exercise freedoms of expression and religion and resulted in deaths and imprisonment.” Nations cited were Pakistan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, India, Iran, China, Vietnam and Russian-occupied Crimea.

There were some positive developments in 2014. These included Egypt, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan, where religious persecution declined.

The United States did not remain silent in light of the evidence of abuses. The report asserted: “Freedom of religion is a first of many inalienable rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and other laws. We believe freedom of religion is a universal right that governments should neither be able to grant nor withhold. The United State strongly believes that protecting freedom of religion promotes mutual respect and pluralism, and is essential to human dignity, robust civil society, and political and economic development. Around the world, we focus on concrete, positive steps to support government and civil society groups in combatting religious intolerance and promoting respect for religious freedom for all.”

U.S. disapproval of these actions was swift: “During the year most embassies raised the issue of religious freedom routinely and at high levels. Ambassadors, chiefs of missions, and embassy staff in all corners of the globe engaged with government officials, religious leaders, and advocacy groups to promote religious freedom and respect for religious diversity. Where there were new and ongoing cases of repression of members of religious minorities, detentions, and governmental and/or societally driven discrimination and violence, the U.S. engaged officials up to the highest levels, calling for peace and respect for the rule of law. In several countries, the U.S. partnered with civil society and faith-based organizations to support religious freedom programs, promote interfaith dialogue, exchange ideas, and work together toward more peaceful and tolerant societies.” Some countries which received quiet U.S. intervention included Ethiopia, Brunei, Indonesia and Nepal.

The U.S. role was vigorously defended. “While the violation of religious freedom contributes to instability and economic stagnation, respect for religious freedom paves the way for a more secure, peaceful, and prosperous world.”

Secretary Kerry’s closing remarks were eloquent and reflected long-standing U.S. values. “We all have a responsibility to affirm our faith in the principles of religious freedom that the world community has endorsed so many times and that have helped to uplift America and define our country since the 17th century, when Roger Williams issued his call for soul liberty, and when, some years later, Seneca chief Red Jacket told a missionary delegation from Boston, ‘Brother, we do not wish to destroy your religion. We only want to enjoy our own.’ That’s the fundamental principle of tolerance that guides us, and it is a value worth fighting for.” ■

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Church and State in the Courts

A challenge to the contraceptive opt-out rule under the Affordable Care Act was accepted by the U.S. Supreme Court on November 6. The case will be heard in March. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit held on September 17 that several evangelical nonprofits should be able to avoid the accommodation provided, though seven previous appeals courts ruled that the religious concerns of religious nonprofits did not outweigh the government's interest in providing free birth control for employees under a third-party insurance carrier. That ruling triggered the High Court's decision to review the issue again.

The Eighth Circuit's three-judge panel concluded that Heartland Christian College, Dordt College, Cornerstone University, and CNS International Ministries, all based in Missouri and Iowa, maintained a "sincere religious belief that their participation in the accommodation process makes them morally and spiritually complicit in providing abortifacient coverage."

The Tenth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had granted a stay of its earlier decision against the Little Sisters of the Poor. The Supreme Court granted seven petitions that will be consolidated into one case.



Washington State's supreme court ruled on September 4 that charter schools are unconstitutional. Chief Justice Barbara Madsen concluded that charter schools are not "common schools" because they are governed by appointed rather than elected school boards. "Money that is dedicated to common schools is unconstitutionally diverted to charter schools," Madsen wrote for a 6-3 majority.

A coalition including the League of Women Voters, the Washington Education Association, the Washington Association of School Administrators, and the NAACP, filed suit in July 2013 charging that government support of charter schools "improperly diverts public school funds to private organizations that are not subject to local voter control."

Washington State voters narrowly approved a charter referendum 50% to 49% in 2012, after rejecting similar proposals in 1996, 2000, and 2004.

The nine existing charter schools vowed to remain open by raising \$14 million in private donations, even as the Charter Schools Association plans to petition the supreme court to reconsider its ruling. (Charter school supporters spent \$17 million in the 2012 referendum.)



In a puzzling decision, a federal judge ruled on August 31 that employers do not need to provide insurance coverage for contraception if their objections are based on "moral philosophy" rather than religion. Judge Richard J. Leon of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia held in favor of a group called "March for Life," which describes itself as a "nonprofit, nonreligious pro-life organization." The government argued that the group "is not religious and is not a church," and therefore is not entitled to an exception.

Judge Leon wrote that giving religious groups special treatment amounts to "regulatory favoritism" and that "moral philosophy" should

be accorded the same exemption as religious belief. The decision will likely be appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.



A statue of Jesus that has stood in Montana's Flathead National Forest for six decades does not violate the Establishment Clause, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled on August 31. The liberal San Francisco-based court agreed with a lower federal court that there were "secular rationales for its continued authorization," noting its "historical significance for veterans" and its "inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places."

The three-judge panel unanimously concluded that the U.S. Forest Service's "permit authorization did not constitute an endorsement of religion." The appeals court noted that the statue is "privately owned and maintained" and that "there is nothing in the display or setting to suggest a religious message."

The statue was erected in 1954 by the Knights of Columbus to honor local veterans from the U.S. Army's Tenth Mountain Division, which fought in the Italian Alps during the Second World War. It was challenged by the Freedom From Religion Foundation.



Christmas comes earlier every year, and not just in stores. A student at Concord High School in Elkhart, Indiana, and his father filed suit in October, seeking to block the annual "Christmas Spectacular" program held in December. Backed by the Freedom From Religion Foundation, suit was filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana on First Amendment grounds.

Most of the program is secular and comes under the auspices of the performing arts department, but the last 20 minutes of the pageant have a definite religious tone. The school superintendent defended the event and said participating students who object to the religious portion can opt out of the performance.

The Newseum Institute's Religious Freedom Center, which was queried by *Washington Post* writer Lindsey Bever, recommended the following guidelines: "Holiday concerts in December may appropriately include music related to Christmas and Hanukkah, but religious music should not dominate. Any dramatic productions should emphasize the cultural aspects of the holidays. Nativity pageants or plays portraying the Hanukkah miracle are not appropriate in the public school setting."

The suit asks the federal court to order Concord High School to remove the nativity scene in 2015 and subsequent years.

Another controversy in Belen, New Mexico, may end up in court. The city, which is 70% Latino, wants to retain a Nativity scene on city property, and city officials are contemplating sale of the land to a private owner. The Freedom From Religion Foundation has threatened legal action if the scene is not removed from public property and says it might bid on the property and replace the art with "a monument to nonbelievers."

New Mexico Senate majority leader Michael Sanchez, a Democrat from Belen, supports the city and says Freedom From “does not understand our culture and traditions in New Mexico.” The state is noted for historic religious art, a blending of Spanish Catholic and Native American traditions. AP reported that “many New Mexico municipalities maintain Catholic and Christian images on public lands, largely due to their historic significance.” That includes the New Mexico State Capitol.

A suit challenging crosses on the city seal in Las Cruces failed in federal court in 2005.



Mississippi, the only state that bans same-sex couples from adopting children or serving as foster parents, has decided to defend its law in a suit brought by Roberta Kaplan. Gov. Phil Bryant, a Republican who is running for re-election, and Attorney General Jim Hood announced their decision on September 14. Legal writer Ian Millhiser said their defense violates U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the Windsor and Obergefell decisions. Mark Joseph Stern, who covers law for Slate, wrote, “The Court has long held that a law that punishes children in order to express moral disapproval of their parents violates the Equal Protection Clause.”



Muslim plaintiffs challenging the New York Police Department Muslim surveillance program won a major victory in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. In *Hassan v. City of New York* the appeals court on October 13 overruled a district court and said the plaintiffs have standing to sue in federal court to vindicate their religious liberty and equal protection rights. The court majority concluded: “The City... argues that Plaintiffs have suffered no injury-in-fact because it has not overtly condemned the Muslim religion.... This argument does not stand the test of time. Our Nation’s history teaches the uncomfortable lesson that those not on discrimination’s receiving end can all too easily gloss over the ‘badge of inferiority’ inflicted by unequal treatment itself. Closing our eyes to the real and ascertainable harms of discrimination inevitably leads to morning-after regret.”

The court added, “We are left to wonder why we cannot see with foresight what we see so clearly with hindsight – that loyalty is a matter of the heart and mind, not race, creed, or color.”



A federal judge in Pennsylvania ruled on August 28 that a Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of Connellsville Junior High School “runs afoul of the Establishment Clause.” Judge Terrance McVerry held that a granite monument, donated in 1956, does not meet constitutional standards. He wrote that his ruling “is in no way meant to denigrate the sincerely held religious beliefs of the citizens and elected officials in the Connellsville community who rallied in support of keeping the monument.... When, however, our government, at whatever level, departs from mere acknowledgement of our religious history to endorsement of a particular religious message, as set forth in the Ten Commandments, it has gone too far.”



Two federal courts in the Midwest are resolving disputes involving Muslim-Americans. In one, a jury awarded \$240,000 to two Muslim truck drivers who were fired for refusing to transport alcohol because it violated their religious beliefs. The company refused to accommodate their religious needs, and the U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois ruled in the workers’ favor. A federal jury awarded compensatory and punitive damages on October 20.

In Michigan, the U.S. Department of Justice filed suit on October 26 against Pittsfield Charter Township for denying a zoning approval for the Michigan Islamic Academy. The group sought to build a school on a vacant parcel of land. “Religious freedom is a cornerstone of our society, and that freedom includes being able to create the institutions and physical spaces needed for worship, religious education and other aspects of religious exercise,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Vanita Gupta, head of the Civil Right Division.



In a highly unusual case, a marine has challenged her demotion and bad-conduct discharge by invoking the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Lance Corporal Monifa Sterling placed a Bible quote on her desk and computer at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina in 2013. When she refused to remove it, she was court-martialed. Her conviction was upheld by the U.S. Navy-Marine Corps Court of Criminal Appeals, which cited “military discipline, instinctive obedience and unit cohesion” as necessary requirements for a military career.

On October 28 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces agreed to hear Sterling’s court-martial challenge. Michael Doyle, a reporter for McClatchy-Tribune Information Services, said the case is important. “In reviewing the case, the higher military appeals court will address questions including whether the staff sergeant’s order burdened an exercise of religion and, if it did, whether it was narrowly tailored to serve a compelling government interest.” ■

Biden Stresses Importance of Religious Freedom

“Freedom of religion in America is called the ‘first freedom.’ It’s not just codified in our constitution as the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights. We were the first nation to do it that way. But freedom of religion is the freedom to believe or not believe, the freedom of conscience that is so cherished, I would argue the fundamental cherished root of the United States of America....

“So we defend religious liberty, not just because it’s a moral imperative, because it improves and will improve the security of people everywhere against violent extremists....

“The ultimate strength of America does not lie in the example of our power; it lies in the power of our example.”

— Vice President Joe Biden

Remarks October 18 on the occasion of his reception of the Greek Orthodox Church’s Athenagoras Human Rights Award.



Voucher Watch

• Former House Speaker John Boehner's one legacy, according to many observers, was his advocacy of school vouchers. Boehner "helped create and kept alive a private school voucher program over the past 12 years, one which sent 6,252 students to parochial or other private schools," wrote Rachel Weiner in *The Washington Post* on October 5. "It's unquestionably a defining characteristic of the Boehner speakership," added former aide David Schnitger.

Boehner brokered several deals with the Obama White House, which wanted to phase out the program. District of Columbia Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton has been and remains a long-time foe of the program. "I'm opposed to what amounts to a pet project that was imposed on the District without any consultation. I can understand his devotion to Catholic schools, but the point here ought to be what is in the best interest of the district's children."

Various reports have found that the program has been poorly managed and lacked oversight. Other studies found that no statistically significant improvement has been recorded in math or reading skills.

A majority of the D.C. Council urged Congress on October 8 to end the voucher program. Eight members, led by Independent David Grosso, told House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), "Today a majority of the D.C. Council, elected by the residents of Washington, D.C., made it clear to Congress that we do not want to see an expansion of public money spent on private schools. D.C.'s public education system was at a different place when Congress put in place the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship program, though even then local officials opposed it. But in the last eight years there has been a significant change in D.C. public schools both in terms of the quality of programs and the number of options from which parents can choose."

"The Unpopularity of Vouchers"

Regarding Valerie Strauss's October 16 Answer Sheet column, "Despite the council's objections, Congress seems determined to continue D.C. school vouchers" [Metro]: In opposing expansion of the D.C. school voucher program, the Obama administration is in sync with the majority of Americans. The 2015 Gallup education poll showed Americans opposed to vouchers by 57% to 31%. (The D.C. vouchers are paid for by taxpayers nationally.)

In 28 state referendums from coast to coast between 1966 and 2014, millions of voters rejected vouchers or their variants by an average margin of two to one. In 1981, D.C. voters rejected a tax-credit voucher plan by 89% to 11%, and this month a majority of the D.C. Council expressed opposition.

Edd Doerr
President, Americans for Religious Liberty
The Washington Post
October 25, 2015

The opposition failed, as expected, the next day when the committee approved, on a party-line vote, a five-year reauthorization of the program. The full House passed the D.C. voucher extension on October 21 by a vote of 240-191, with eight Republicans voting against vouchers and two Democrats in favor.

The Senate, however, is closely contested. A companion bill reauthorizing the D.C. vouchers through 2025 was introduced by Senators Ron Johnson (R-WI), Tim Scott (R-SC), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Cory Booker (D-NJ). Both Feinstein and Booker had voted against a national voucher bill in July.

Even if it passes the Senate, it will probably be vetoed. The Administration's Office of Management and Budget issued this statement on October 20: "Rigorous evaluation over several years demonstrates that D.C. vouchers have not yielded statistically significant improvements in student achievement by scholarship recipients compared to other students not receiving vouchers. In addition, H.R. 10 would extend this voucher program to a new population of students previously attending private schools. Instead of using Federal resources to support a handful of students in private schools, the Federal Government should focus its attention and available resources on improving the quality of public schools for all students."

• A recap of the continuing gains of vouchers and tax credits makes sobering reading. The pro-voucher American Federation for Children, whose president is right-wing zealot Betsy DeVos, issued a report in September showing that \$1.5 billion in public money goes to private (mostly religious) schools in 2015. This is more than double the \$714 million in 2010.

Twenty three states (plus the District of Columbia) have some sort of voucher or tax credit program, with 400,000 students participating (up from 183,000 in 2010). Most have Republican governors and Republican majorities in their legislatures. Surprisingly, the South has become the bastion of private-school aid. In a region which once had the lowest level of religious school enrollment, every Southern state but Texas has joined the voucher stampede.

There are also programs in Montana, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Kansas, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Ohio in the Midwest and West. The only northeastern states providing such programs are Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

Six states account for the vast majority of students participating in voucher or tax credit programs. Florida leads the pack with 101,353, followed by Arizona (55,688), Pennsylvania (45,879), Indiana (38,278), Ohio (35,279), and Wisconsin (28,399).

• There seems to be no end in sight for increased revenue for voucher schools in Wisconsin. Molly Beck reported in the *Wisconsin State Journal* on September 3 that voucher schools will receive \$258 million for the 2016-2017 school year, up from \$236 million this year and \$146 million in 2011. This has been one of the signal "accomplishments" of Gov. Scott Walker.

Beck also reported that the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) estimated that public school funding will be reduced by \$83 million to offset increases in school voucher spending. LFB forecast that "between \$600 million and \$800 million would be diverted from public schools over the next ten years."

Vouchers range from \$7,210 to \$7,856 per student. School vouchers continue to spread. Added Beck, "Gov. Scott Walker and Republican lawmakers have created new voucher programs in Racine and state-

wide to join the program in Milwaukee, created in 1990 as the country's first. Milwaukee and Racine school districts have been allowed to raise property taxes to offset their reductions in state aid."

• Nevada's wide-ranging voucher program, euphemistically called "education savings accounts," was challenged in court on August 27 by ACLU of Nevada. The organization's legal director, Amy Rose, said, "Parents who want their kids to go to private school are absolutely free to do so. Just not at taxpayer expense."

The Republican-enacted and supported program allows all of the state's public school children to receive \$5,100 to \$5,700 to transfer to private, mostly church-related, schools. Nevada's constitution bans the use of "public funds of any kind or character whatsoever" from supporting sectarian purposes in Article XI, Section 10. Another provision, Article XI, Section 2 requires the legislature to provide for a uniform system of common schools.

ACLU's senior staff attorney for its Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Heather L. Weaver, noted, "The voucher program will use taxpayer dollars for religious education and indoctrination at a number of religious schools, many of which discriminate in admissions and employment. The program would be a huge loss for religious liberty if implemented."

Most applicants for the new voucher program are from affluent neighborhoods, reported the Las Vegas Review-Journal on November 2. The analysis of data from the state treasurer's office found over half of

the 3,100 applications were from residents in the top 40% of household income, compared to only 10.7% of applications from households with the lowest median income. The largest number, 124, came from a single zip code with the highest income residents. Only nine came from the poorest neighborhoods. Republican lawmakers sold the program as a way to help "disadvantaged children in low-income areas."

• A national poll of 4,083 adults conducted by Education Next, a publication of the conservative Hoover Institution at Stanford University, found only 34% in favor of tuition vouchers, down from 37% in 2014. This is similar to the 31% support for school vouchers in this year's PDK/Gallup poll.

• Saving Catholic schools through tax credit programs has become a top priority of Catholic school leaders and the political arm of the church. State Catholic conferences in New York and Illinois continue to pressure legislators to adopt tax incentives and have closed dozens of schools. In other states that have these programs, such as Pennsylvania, Florida and New Hampshire, church lobbies are seeking increases in amounts allowed. Sister Dale McDonald, director of public policy for the National Catholic Educational Association, admitted to Crux national reporter Michael O'Loughlin on August 19, "If it goes to ballot, it's much harder to get something than if it goes through the legislative process." Perhaps she was referring to the overwhelming rejection of vouchers and tax credits by voters in 28 referenda since 1966. ■

Updates

Brown Signs Death with Dignity Bill

California Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation on October 5 that allows terminally ill patients to end their lives under certain conditions. Two doctors must determine that a patient has less than six months to live before prescribing a lethal dose of medication.

Both houses of the legislature passed "The End of Life Option Act." Brown, a lifelong Catholic and former Jesuit seminarian, sought advice from medical and religious leaders before giving his assent. In his official statement the governor wrote, "I do not know what I would do if I were dying in prolonged and excruciating pain. I am certain, however, that it would be a comfort to be able to consider the options afforded by this bill. And I wouldn't deny that right to others."

Catholic Church officials strongly opposed the law and called for a veto. A major proponent was the Oregon-based group Compassion and Choices. Religion News Service (RNS) senior correspondent Cathy Lynn Grossman wrote on October 1, "A Gallup Poll in May found that 68% of Americans support the idea of physician-assisted dying. State-wide polls show a majority of Californians agree, including 60% of Catholics and 57% of evangelicals."

California joins Oregon, Washington, Montana and Vermont in allowing physician-assisted suicide for the gravely ill. In New Mexico the state supreme court may take up the issue, and "campaigns are under way in 24 states and the District of Columbia," says RNS.

Christian-Only Prayers in Arizona Town?

The town council of Coolidge, Arizona, voted 4-2 in September to limit its opening prayers to only Christian groups. Councilman Rob Hudelson, also a Baptist minister, "made clear his views that the United States is a Christian nation," according to the local newspaper, the

Coolidge Examiner.

From 1996 to 2006, the council opened its meetings with prayers delivered mostly by local clergy. The practice had gradually fallen off. Then, suddenly on September 22, the council abandoned the proposal after city attorney Denis Fitzgibbons warned that the rule would "establish Christianity" and lead to a lawsuit.

Dahlia Lithwick, legal reporter for Slate, observed on September 22: "Ironically, the original resolution, which would have restricted prayers to those from ministers of religious establishments that stood within city limits, probably would have achieved the same ends as the unconstitutional new amendment, but in the kind of sneaky, subversive way that would have avoided an ACLU lawsuit. According to the *Coolidge Examiner*, it's unclear whether there are even any religious establishments in Coolidge that don't consider themselves Christian in the first place. Still, why do with trickery what you can accomplish with an overt embrace of religious intolerance? Ask Donald Trump and Ben Carson. It's rapidly becoming the American way."

Religion Riles Sooners

The granite monument of the Ten Commandments was removed from the Oklahoma State Capitol grounds on October 5. The Oklahoma Supreme Court ordered its removal in a June ruling, saying the state constitution prohibited public support for any religion. It was moved to private property when a judge again denied a request from state Attorney General Scott Pruitt.

Pruitt, meanwhile, issued an opinion October 6 that public prayer before high school sporting events was legal. The Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association (OSSAA), which oversees extracurricular events for public schools from grades seven through 12, has prohibited public prayers at playoff games and championship events since 1992. It is not required to follow the attorney general's opinion and indicated

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that its prayer policy will remain in effect.

The *Oklahoman* newspaper reported on October 6 that OSSAA “remains concerned about turning over the public address system at public event sites for the reading of prayers or religious messages.”

Federal Government Fines Church

The federal government’s Department of Labor (DOL) has sued a fundamentalist Mormon sect \$1.9 million for violating child labor laws. On September 9 DOL filed administrative action against the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (FLDS) for hiring children to harvest pecans in southern Utah and northern Arizona, where the breakaway religious group allegedly controls the local government. *The Hill’s* correspondent Lydia Wheeler wrote, “FLDS leaders are accused of directing schools in Hildale, Utah and Colorado City, Arizona, to close so children, at least 175 of them under the age of 13, could harvest pecans. At least 1,400 FLDS children and adults allegedly worked in the fields for no compensation.” FLDS leaders apparently violated a 2007 court order that restrained them from transgressing child labor laws.

DOL administrator David Weil commented, “For years, these employers have trampled on the rights of workers, both children and adults, and violated our child labor laws forcing minors to work for them. Such disregard for the rights of all workers, especially children, will not be tolerated.”

At-risk Students Are Fewer in D.C. Charter Schools

Charter schools in D.C., often lauded as the “best” charters in the country, may not be so good after all. Nearly 90% of charter elementary schools serve a smaller portion of “at risk” students than their neighboring traditional public schools. This is the conclusion of an analysis of data by the District of Columbia’s Office of Revenue Analysis.

Education writer Michael Alison Chandler reported in *The Washington Post* on October 8: “Students considered ‘at risk of academic failure’ – a new category being used in the District – include those who are in foster care or homeless, who are receiving welfare benefits or food stamps, or who are performing at least a year behind in high school. The D.C. Council has approved extra funding for these students, because they have greater needs and are considered harder to serve.”

Still, the D.C. Public Charter School Board claims to serve a greater portion of deprived, special education, and African American students.

But the data from the Revenue Office disputes this, and finds that the greatest difference is in the poorest areas. “Where 75% or more students are at risk, the at-risk population in nearby charters is lower by at least 10 percentage points,” analysts found.

Catholic Financial Losses: Worse Than Reported

The U.S. Catholic Church has incurred \$4 billion in costs related to the priest sex abuse crisis since 1950, according to the *National Catholic Reporter* on November 2. Jack Ruhl and Diane Ruhl wrote that this figure comes from “an extensive investigation of media reports, databases and church documents.” Even the \$4 billion figure may be too low because of different “reporting standards for public disclosure of financial records for U.S. Catholic dioceses.” ■

International Updates

Bangkok: Several newspapers have reported that there is a vigorous move afoot to establish Buddhism as the “official state” religion. A committee, appointed by the ruling military junta, to draft a new constitution, is under pressure from Buddhist activists to enshrine Buddhism by law. *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent Molly Jackson reported on October 25: “But even though roughly 95% of the country practices Buddhism, it has never been proclaimed ‘official,’ despite enjoying some legal protections. Previous attempts to toughen up penalties for ‘offending’ or ‘contaminating’ the religion have ended in failure and protests.” She added, “Theravada Buddhism shapes life in Thailand so much that it might be mistaken for the official faith: By law, the King must be Buddhist, and he outfits the country’s famous Emerald Buddha in a new seasonal costume three times each year on the grounds of the Grand Palace.”

But militant Buddhists want more recognition. Leading activist Korn Meedee told the *Bangkok Post*, “We want to eradicate non-pure forms of Buddhism. Without protections, Buddhism is in decline.”

The Monitor continued, “Some worry that an official Thai religion would further consolidate political power that is already concentrated in the hands of the ruling junta, which took power amid chaotic protests in 2014, and the royal palace, which has little nominal power but holds immense sway in Thai politics.” The king, who is 87 and has ruled for almost 70 years, is reported to be in declining health.

Kathmandu: Nepal’s parliament, called the Constituent Assembly, has refused to reestablish Hinduism as the state religion. Hinduism had been the established religion for centuries under a monarchy, until the monarchy was abolished in 2006. It was replaced by a secular state. More than two-thirds of the assembly voted against a Hindu state on September 14. Hindu nationalists clashed with police after the vote. A new constitution has yet to be ratified.

London: Parliament rejected the Assisted Dying Bill that would have allowed doctors in the U.K. to prescribe lethal injections to some terminally ill patients with less than six months to live. The vote on September 11 was 330-118. It was opposed by the Church of England and by Prime Minister David Cameron.

London: *The Guardian* reported on September 30 that “virtually all religiously selective state schools” are violating rules regarding admissions policies. Education correspondent Sally Weale reported, “A quarter of the schools investigated were found to be religiously selecting in ways deemed unacceptable even by their own religious authorities.... There was also widespread lack of clarity surrounding the frequency and duration of religious worship expected of parents. A number of schools were found to have discriminated on the basis of race or gender, and some did not make clear how children with special educational needs were admitted.”

The findings were based on a report prepared by the British Humanist Association and the Fair Admissions Campaign, both of which oppose funding of religious schools and oppose religious education in state schools. These groups examined policies in 70 out of 535 “religiously selective secondary schools” in England.

Prof. Stephen Gorard, of Durham University’s school of education, observed, “This is at least part of the reason why the pupil intake to faith-based schools tends to be socially segregated. Faith-based schools take fewer pupils with any measure of disadvantage than their

neighbourhood would imply. This then makes the pupil body appear easier to teach, and leads to the mistaken conclusion that such schools are somehow better in terms of performance.”

Naypyidaw, Myanmar: President Thein Sein of Myanmar (formerly Burma) signed into law on August 31 the fourth religious restriction bill championed by right-wing Buddhist nationalists. The government has denied that the bills are aimed at the 5% Muslim minority, but critics, such as Human Rights Watch, said the laws “set out the potential for discrimination on religious grounds.” The bills provide punishments for those who have more than one spouse and for those who live with an unmarried partner. Laws restrict religious conversion and inter-faith marriage. A population control bill forces some women to space three years between births of children. The last was clearly aimed at Muslims, since Buddhist extremists claim that Muslims are going to overtake and outbreed the nation’s 89% Buddhist majority.

Reuters reported on August 31: “The measures are part of four ‘Race and Religion Protection Laws’ championed by the Committee for the Protection of Nationality and Religion.” The news service added that there may be political implications. “Myanmar, which will hold its first democratic national poll in more than two decades on November 8, has seen a flowering of anti-Muslim hate speech since the military gave up full power and opened up politics and the economy in 2011.”

Ottawa: The newly resurgent Liberal Party, led by Justin Trudeau, son of a former Prime Minister, swept to a landslide victory on October 19. The party, which had run third in 2010, won 184 seats to the Conservatives 99, and carried every province except Alberta and Saskatchewan. Domestic issues and Harper fatigue, referring to the general feeling that Prime Minister Stephen Harper did not deserve a fourth term, were the primary reasons for the sweep.

The Conservatives tried to raise the “niqab” issue, aimed at the relative handful of Muslim women who wear the face-covering veil, at citizenship ceremonies. Harper even suggested that the federal government might follow Quebec’s example and ban the veil in all federal workplaces. National press coverage was withering in its criticism, accusing the Conservatives of pandering to religious prejudice to gain votes. *The Toronto Star* editorialized: “Harper and the Tories have spent much of this election campaign fanning socially corrosive hostility toward Muslims and pandering to nativist sentiments by hyping a manufactured issue: the veil.... Meanwhile, the Harper government should remember that this is a country built on tolerance for minority rights.”

There are no exit polls in Canada, but the Conservative government ran third in Quebec and did poorly in Ontario. If it hoped for a victory based on religious animosity, it failed, according to leading Canadian political observers.

Toronto: Two Ontario teenagers were victims of religious discrimination, the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal ruled on August 20. The youngsters had given several weeks’ notice that they planned to take off a holy day central to their Mennonite faith. This was Himmelfahrt, the Mennonite equivalent of Ascension Day, which is celebrated throughout Christendom 40 days after Easter Sunday. The brother and sister were dismissed in 2014. The Canadian Press reported that “the tribunal ruled that the company (Country Herbs) made no effort to accommodate their religious beliefs.” The vegetable grower was ordered to pay \$26,117 in damages and lost wages.

The Canadian Press also reported that a Buddhist man, serving a life sentence for murder, was not a victim of discrimination after the federal government ended contracts with minority-faith chaplains in

2012. Both the Canadian Human Rights Commission and a federal court dismissed his challenge that he had “a right to spiritual guidance.”

Vatican City: On June 5 Pope Francis appointed Libero Milone, former CEO of a global auditing firm in Italy as its first auditor-general. He will report directly to Francis and will be able to review the finances and management of every Vatican department. According to Reuters correspondent Philip Pulella, “The Vatican bank, which had been embroiled in numerous scandals in the past, has enacted a wide-ranging drive to tighten financial governance and eliminate abuse.”

Alexander Stille reported in *The New Yorker* on September 14, “The Catholic Church is estimated to own 20% of all real estate in Italy, and a quarter of all real estate in Rome.... Propaganda Fide, the Vatican

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ARL in Action

- ARL and its 55 allies in the National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE) called on Congress to reject reauthorization of the D.C. School Voucher Program (H.R. 10).

In an October 6 letter to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, the coalition concluded: “The D. C. voucher program fails to offer D.C. students better educational resources, greater opportunities for academic achievement, or adequate accountability to taxpayers.”

NCPE reminded House members of the importance of public education: “Our public schools have great value, but they are undermined by private school vouchers. Open and nondiscriminatory in their acceptance of all students, American public schools are a unifying factor among the diverse range of ethnic and religious communities in our society. Public schools are the only schools that must meet the needs of all students. They do not turn children or families away. They serve children with physical, emotional and mental disabilities, those who are extremely gifted, and those who are learning challenged, right along with children without special needs.”

- ARL and its fellow members of the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination (CARD) urged nine federal agencies to reform rules that currently apply between the federal government and faith-based agencies in order to insure stricter adherence to constitutional principles.

The agencies involved are the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, and Veterans Affairs. Also included is the Agency for International Development.

A letter sent to all of these agencies on October 6 stated: “CARD is a broad and diverse group of leading religious, civil rights, education, labor, health, and women’s organizations formed in the 1990s to monitor legislative and regulatory changes impacting government partnerships with religious and other non-profit organizations and, in particular, to oppose government-funded religious discrimination.”

President Obama’s executive order of February 5, 2009, embodies these principles, but not all agencies have issued compliance regulations.

International Updates, *continued from page 11*

entity that sponsors religious missions abroad, owns an estimated ten billion dollars in real estate, concentrated mainly in Rome, and including some of the city's most beautiful historic palaces."

Stille concluded that financial reform is a certainty under this pope. "All the Vatican entities are now being asked to comply with international accounting standards and oversight."

Victoria, Australia: Religious instruction in which only 20% of primary school students participated will be ended next year, the local government of Victoria announced on August 20. It will be replaced by a program stressing ethics and respectful interpersonal relationships. Education minister James Merlino told the Australian Broadcasting

Company, "You can't have 20% of school kids undertaking special religious education, while the other children are not getting teaching or learning, during precious curriculum time." The present program was taught from a clearly evangelical perspective by volunteers for Access Ministries, and lasted a half hour weekly. The number of students enrolled in religious instruction classes plummeted from 100,000 to 53,000 in the last three years.

The Age newspaper praised the changes: "The elimination of religious instruction classes from state school hours will free up student communities for practical and essential learning. The inclusion of social awareness issues, such as domestic violence and managing relationships, is vital for developing well-informed, mature and capable individuals who can find their place in the world – and surely that is the essence of education." ■

Books and Culture



Madison's Music: On Reading the First Amendment, by Burt Neuborne. The New Press, 2015, 260 pp., \$25.95.

This brilliant reflection on the First Amendment is a joy to read. Hailing the First Amendment as a "remarkable poem to democracy and individual freedom unlike anything the world has ever seen," the author emphasizes what James Madison held sacred – freedom of conscience.

Many readers may not know that Madison's original version contained a freedom of conscience clause in addition to the Free Exercise and non-establishment clauses. "The version of the Bill of Rights that passed the House and went to the Senate contained all three clauses. The Senate deleted Madison's proposed conscience clause at the last minute, leaving the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses to open the Bill of Rights." It wasn't until the Vietnam War era that the Supreme Court inserted "an implied right of secular conscience into the text of the First Amendment, finally correcting the Senate's erroneous rejection of Madison's proposed conscience clause in 1789."

Neuborne argues: "The modern Free Exercise Clause, as tweaked by the Supreme Court, requires us to tolerate conscientiously driven private behavior to the outer limits of a free society's capacity for such tolerance. Conversely, Madison's Establishment Clause imposes strong preventive restrictions on the capacity of true believers wielding governmental power to use that power to impose their religious beliefs on others." But there is a caveat. "Conscience is not a license to harm others. Freedom of conscience does not empower even a true believer to shift the costs of her belief to others."

He believes, as do most legal scholars, that there is an inherent tension, which he dubs a "potentially discordant relationship," between the two clauses. The present Supreme Court's answer to the tension "seeks to tame the paradox by leveling both religion clauses down so that they don't clash." However, "In the end, neither text nor history can fully resolve the paradox of two religion clauses pulling in different directions. But Madison's respect for the enormous power of religion, for good or ill, is the key to understanding them as powerful protections from and of the force of the religious impulse."

Neuborne is a professor and the founding legal director of the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law School, which has done admirable work in defending the right to vote and in fighting voter suppression.

— *Al Menendez*

American Secularism: Cultural Contours of Nonreligious Belief Systems, by Joseph O. Baker and Buster G. Smith. New York University Press, 2015, 293 pp., \$27.00 paperback, \$89.00 hardback.

Polls have shown that about a quarter of Americans now live outside the bounds of traditional religions. But behind that fact lies a very diffuse reality. As sociologists Baker and Smith show in this important new book, "The diversity of secularity is evident between and within the four broad categories of atheist, agnostic, nonaffiliated believer, and culturally religious." The authors trace the complex history of the various movements away from traditional religion in America from the Deism of Jefferson, Franklin, Paine, Ethan Allen and others near the end of the 18th century, through the freethought movements of the 19th century, to the various forms of secularity of more recent decades.

They not only analyze these four strains of secularity, themselves quite diverse, but use mountains of up-to-date polling, statistical and demographic data on the age, educational level, socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, political orientation, family formation, etc. of these to present a surprisingly complex portrait of this large and growing sector of the U.S. population. And they compare this sector with the even more varied and changing strains of traditional religion. Baker and Smith use the term "cosmic belief systems" to encompass both traditional religions and the secular movements, though I would prefer to use the equally catch-all term "lifescapes."

This indispensable book upends a host of myths accepted by all sides.

— *Edd Doerr*

Religion in the Oval Office: The Religious Lives of American Presidents, by Gary Scott Smith. Oxford University Press, 2015, 647 pp., \$34.95.

In this volume the author explores the religion of eleven presidents, chronologically from John Adams to Barack Obama. Included are Adams, Madison, John Quincy Adams, Jackson, McKinley, Hoover, Truman, Nixon, George H.W. Bush, Clinton and Obama.

He notes the paradox of the subject of presidential religion. "While the First Amendment separates church and state, it has not divorced religion from politics." He cites recent polls showing that a majority of Americans want a president to have strong personal religious beliefs but a majority also think a president's religious beliefs should "never" influ-

ence his federal policy decisions.

Smith quite properly criticizes many writers in this historical subgenre for superficiality for limiting their studies to a president's personal religious views and church attendance. "While these religious biographies expand our knowledge of their subjects, they pay little attention to the role of religion in presidential campaigns, presidents' relationships with religious groups, or the influence of their faith on their policies."

"Faith has played a very important and often controversial role in the lives of American presidents." Of our current president, he writes, "Barack Obama's faith has significantly influenced his life, and it has been both widely misunderstood and highly controversial... Numerous analysts argue that Obama is a philosophical pragmatist who has been strongly influenced by Reinhold Niebuhr."

His overall conclusions make this book essential. "The faith of many presidents is difficult to decipher. The complexity and inconsistency of their convictions, changes in their beliefs over the years, their reticence to discuss their personal religious beliefs, and the incongruity between their words and deeds make assessing their faith very challenging." It is also "difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle the personal religious convictions of presidents from their use of religion to serve partisan political purposes."

All of these presidents "adopted an ecumenical religious perspective" and "accommodated their personal religious convictions and practices to the expectations of the nation's civil religion."

These realities are likely to continue. "Although the founders wisely separated church and state, faith and the presidency and religious belief and politics, have been inextricably joined. Therefore, the nature of presidents' faith and its effect on their positions, decisions, and actions is very likely to remain both captivating and controversial."

This is an impressive examination of a complex subject.

— Al Menendez

Faith Ed: Teaching About Religion in an Age of Intolerance, by Linda K. Wertheimer. Beacon Press, 2015, 211 pp., \$25.95.

This book is a respected journalist's argument for more teaching "about" religion in our public schools as, among other things, an antidote for intolerance. The quotes around "about" are because that is what the Supreme Court said 50 years ago could be done in its rulings against school sponsored devotions. The book is based largely on her investigating the issue in a half dozen school districts around the country. She points to the experiments and mistakes that have been made, presents some ideas on what to do and what not to do, and concludes that "Sadly, there has never been a nationwide movement to make the world's religions a more integral part of education."

So why is there so little teaching about religion in our public schools? Here are some of the reasons. Few social studies teachers are trained or equipped to teach about religion and there are generally no suitable textbooks. It goes without saying that only certified, properly trained social studies teachers should be allowed to do the job and then only using textbooks suitably vetted by experts and accessible to parents and others. Teaching about religion is controversial, with conservatives generally opposed to objective, neutral treatment of the subject. Social studies teaching is being crowded by the overemphasis on testing confined largely to math and reading. Our public schools nationally are underfunded and inequitably funded, constantly faced with budget cutting and class size increases.

Wertheimer discusses the use of school field trips to houses of worship, but, with over 13,000 school districts and time and money constraints, field trips are impractical and almost impossible to manage

fairly. One of the few experts she cites is Charles Haynes, yet Haynes was the co-creator of a curriculum on religious liberty in 1989 that was truly awful, one that I critiqued in an article (see *Voice of Reason*, number 30).

Yes, we should teach more about religion and religious liberty in our public schools, but that does not top the list of our priorities, especially in light of the current war on public education.

— Edd Doerr

The First Primary: New Hampshire's Outsize Role in Presidential Nominations, by David W. Moore and Andrew E. Smith, University of New Hampshire Press, a division of University Press of New England, 2015, 286 pp., \$29.95 paper.

Appearing just in time for the coming election is this highly readable history of the New Hampshire presidential primary. The first "presidential preference" vote in 1952 was pivotal to the process. Gen. Dwight Eisenhower defeated Sen. Robert Taft on a write-in campaign in a high-turnout Republican primary. Ike resigned his NATO position and returned to the U.S. to fight for the nomination, eventually becoming our 34th President. In the Democratic primary that year, Tennessee Sen. Estes Kefauver beat President Harry Truman, which led to Truman's decision not to run again.

As the authors say, "New Hampshire is the most important contest in securing the presidential nomination... and will continue to be critical for the next presidential nominees."

The primary has been particularly important for Republicans: 13 of the 16 candidates who won the New Hampshire primary went on to secure the nomination. Democrats are not as dependent on the outcome here, as only 9 of their 16 winners in the Granite State ended up as the party's eventual nominee.

Two of the best chapters look at the demography and political profile of the state in great detail. "New Hampshire is a highly educated, upper-middleclass, low-poverty, white, suburban state with a lower-than-average religious population." It's the only Northeastern state "that has experienced significant population growth in recent decades." Also, 38% of its voters are registered "undeclared," compared to 33% Republican and 29% Democratic. But many of the undeclared vote Democratic, giving the state's electoral vote to the Democrats in five of the last six elections.

Religion is a factor that differentiates New Hampshire from the South and West, especially among Republican voters. "Perhaps the most important reason that the New Hampshire GOP electorate differs so dramatically from other states is the relative unimportance of religion and the lack of evangelical Protestants." New Hampshire is second only to next-door Vermont in the percentage of unaffiliated residents and is second lowest on the importance of religion in the residents' lives, according to Gallup and Pew researchers. Even the Republican primary electorate is more secular, and nearly half call themselves moderate or liberal.

Change is evident, in recent decades, since so many new voters are from out-of-state. "New Hampshire Republicans have become somewhat more conservative and to a lesser degree, so have New Hampshire independents. Democrats have become somewhat more liberal during the same period." In general, "The New Hampshire Republican electorate has stayed moderate to conservative over the past twenty years, and this has left it somewhat out of step with the national Republican party, especially on social and moral issues."

People interested in politics should read this book. Candidates and their advisors and campaign staff should definitely read it.

— Al Menendez
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Books and Culture, *continued from page 13*

The Francis Effect: A Radical Pope's Challenge to the American Catholic Church, by John Gehring. Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 266 pp., \$32.00.

Though often used interchangeably, progressives emphasize social justice, solidarity and community and broad economic issues, while liberals, especially in the U.S., are rooted in individualism, equality, choice, and identity politics. That's why Pope Francis may justly be called a progressive pope but not a liberal one.

The author defines Pope Francis as a radical, in the original sense of the word meaning roots. "His paradigm for renewal is different and unlikely to fit easily into secular categories of left and right." Gehring argues that the "American bishops have been handed a rare opportunity to mirror the tone, style, and substance of Pope Francis in ways that could help untangle them from the culture wars and reclaim a broader moral agenda."

The author shows how the U.S. culture wars have affected Catholics at the lay and clerical level, causing disruption and disillusion. He criticizes "a sophisticated Catholic right movement in the United States, a nexus that includes top CEOs, Republican politicians, prominent cardinals, and wealthy philanthropists." He adds, "Buoyed by a generation of more conservative bishops appointed by Pope John Paul II, these Catholic activists, intellectuals, and media figures spoke loudly, organized strategically, and played a key role in influencing the American Catholic narrative." This has "marginalized Catholic leaders who once operated at the center of American political and moral discourse." The result is clear. "Because of geopolitical changes and the rise of the culture wars, the U.S. church has played a less central role on the international stage."

Gehring calls for a return to "progressivism," which is particularly sought by "millennials" (those ages 18-33) and Latinos, who will increasingly decide the destiny of U.S. Catholicism.

Warning that "This is a crossroads moment for the Catholic Church in the United States," he adds, "Whether U.S. Catholic leaders will embrace the pope's call for a 'new balance' in the church and reclaim a broader moral agenda in the public square will depend in part on how sharp divisions over Catholic identity play out in the years ahead."

— Al Menendez

A Cross of Thorns: The Enslavement of California's Indians by the Spanish Missions, by Elias Castillo. Craven Street Books, 2015, 249 pp., \$19.95.

Many people, especially in the Native American community, have expressed disappointment that Pope Francis canonized Junípero Serra during his recent visit to the United States.

Elias Castillo's remarkable book starts with a concise history of Spain's brutal conquest/colonization of the Americas, followed by a detailed, well-researched, documented account of the chain of Franciscan missions in California started by Spanish friar Junípero Serra in 1769. Under Serra's leadership California's numerous small Indian tribes

("tribelets") were subdivided into 21 missions, where they were forcibly converted, brutalized, and essentially enslaved, their native cultures destroyed. Attempts by Indians to resist were put down by force. And the missionaries were even harsher than the Spanish civil and military authorities.

Castillo notes that California's civil governor from 1775 to 1782, Felipe de Neve, opposed Serra's regressive actions. He writes that Neve "believed that all human beings, including Indians, had basic rights that could not be denied. One of those rights was personal freedom, something that Serra simply could not condone. Men like Neve believed that religion was neither sacrosanct nor necessary to guarantee a moral society. Serra, in contrast, was mired in church dogma, which he had twisted into a terrible, dark benevolence. He maintained that the baptism of Indians granted him the responsibility to deny them liberty, based on his belief that only by shielding the baptized Indians from what he considered the coarseness of normal human life would they ascend to heaven upon their deaths – which was a tragically frequent outcome."

Not long after Mexico's independence was won in the 1820s, the missions were finally abolished in the 1830s. But the damage to the Indians was nearly complete and irreversible, their numbers decimated by both Spanish brutality and their lack of immunity to European diseases. Mexican rule was not much better than Spanish rule. And when California was incorporated into the U.S. at the end of the Mexican War, conditions for what remained of the Indians were not much better. To this day California's Indians have yet to see anything resembling justice.

Castillo mentions Washington Irving's criticism of Mexico's treatment of the Indians and then concludes: "For California's Indians, ravaged first by the Spanish and Franciscan friars, life was a never-ending nightmare. Even into the early twentieth century, the coastal Indians were denigrated and considered subhuman. The suffering they endured for more than 100 years was a legacy of the religious fanaticism, cruelty, and arrogance that began in 1769, directed by Franciscan friar Junípero Serra."

— Edd Doerr

A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars, by Andrew Hartman. The University of Chicago Press, 2015, 342 pp., \$30.00.

This insightful study of the culture wars that have transformed American politics for the past half-century argues that this has been a particularly bitter struggle because "The issues at stake in the culture wars were real and compelling." They have affected education, the entertainment culture, law and legislation, and almost all aspects of culture, broadly defined.

These issues even transcend partisan politics. "Even after the conservative movement had long captured the Republican Party, and even after a conservative Republican Party had controlled the White House for twelve years, right-wing culture warriors were insecure about their power."

The Christian Right was (and still is) the primary player, and some of the influence has negatively affected public education. "The Christian Right ultimately reduced the impact of secular schools not by changing them to reflect their values but by abandoning them altogether."

Hartman explains that culture change affected religious conservatives (and some others) profoundly. "Those who resisted the cultural changes set into motion during the sixties did so out of a profound

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sense of loss. The world they cherished was evaporating.”

This opposition to what they saw as “normative” has resulted in near-intransigence. But their overall impact on society has been limited. “A growing majority of Americans now accept and even embrace what at the time seemed like a new nation. In this light, the late-twentieth-century culture wars should be understood as an adjustment period. The nation struggled over cultural change in order to adjust to it. The culture wars compelled Americans, even conservatives, to acknowledge transformations to American life. And although acknowledgement often came in the form of rejection, it was also the first step to resignation, if not outright acceptance.”

— Al Menendez

Public Funding of Religions in Europe, edited by Francis Messner. Ashgate, 2015, 320 pp., \$134.95.

Here in America we enjoy a higher degree of religious liberty and religious diversity than any country the world has ever known, thanks to our Jeffersonian/Madisonian constitutional tradition of separation of church and state. Unfortunately, that separation is under increasing attack by assorted conservatives, wannabe theocrats and profiteers. This book by a variety of European scholars can only heighten our appreciation for that separation. This moderately informative book looks at the various systems for public financing of religion in Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, the UK, Italy and Turkey (which of course is not part of Europe).

That said, it must be added that the book is an overpriced, poorly edited mishmash that omits more than it should have included, overall a dismal disappointment. While it contains a goodly amount of historical information, it contains next to nothing about Europe’s religious demography and its ongoing changes, except for some useful material about Belgium. There is virtually nothing about how much money actually flows to religious institutions, nothing about Italy’s system for voluntary refusal to pay the tax for religion, nothing about how an increasing number of Germans are choosing to drop their church membership in order to avoid the 8-9% church tax, nothing about the Europe-wide tax support of faith-based schools, not a word in the chapter on the Netherlands about Abraham Kuyper, the preacher/writer/politician who pushed through the Dutch system of full tax support for faith-based schools. The material about France’s 1905 church-state separation law and its slow abandonment is biased against

the law.

We do learn that there is opposition in the U.K. to “religious tests for admission to publicly funded schools with a religious character,” that 19th century Swiss Protestant theologian Alexandre Vinet did gain a certain following with his advocacy of American-style separation. One of the best chapters is the one on Turkey by three Turkish scholars, who discuss the gradual evolution of that country away from the Kemalist separation reforms of the 1920s and 1930s toward increasing Islamization and who present a seven-point recommendation to move Turkey toward a U.S.-style separation of religion and government.

— Edd Doerr

Inventing American Religion: Polls, Surveys, and the Tenuous Quest for a Nation’s Faith, by Robert Wuthnow. Oxford University Press, 2015, 247 pp., \$29.95.

Wuthnow’s newest book is not a scathing indictment of religious surveys but a gentle reminder that the interpretation of polls should be approached cautiously. “My argument is that the polling industry has influenced – and at times distorted – how religion is understood and portrayed, particularly in the media but also to some extent by religious leaders, practitioners, and scholars.”

Polling has a long history, which the author reviews, and really took off in the 1930s when the Gallup Polls achieved prominence. Wuthnow notes that “polling was based on a branch of mathematics called probability theory and was always subject to a statistical margin of error.”

He reiterates that “polls about religion were probably useful and apparently could be trusted, but needed to be subjected to more detailed analysis and perhaps include more detailed categories.” But polls in recent years, while “cheaper, more efficiently administered, and more frequently conducted than ever before” have a declining response rate and a growing perception among the public about whether results are trustworthy. “The statistical validity of these studies, of course, varies with sample sizes, response rates, and the screening questions used in the first place.”

This is an absolutely essential read for anyone interested in the state of American religion. The author is director of the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University and he knows whereof he writes.

— Al Menendez

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Books and Culture, *continued from page 15*

The Twilight of Social Conservatism: American Culture Wars in the Obama Era, by John Dombrink. New York University Press, 2015, 272 pp., \$89.00 hardback, \$27.00 paperback.

Political scientist John Dombrink pulls together a mass of demographic research, polling data, and media commentary from left to far right to suggest that “the vitality of major social conservative ideas from the culture war era has faded.” He devotes much of the book to the reproductive rights and same-sex marriage issues, but mentions not a word about the raging Republican/conservative war on public education through vouchers, tax credits and charter schools. Nor does he devote serious attention to the climate change controversy or the impact of the tsunamis of cash flowing to conservative politics, the conservative gerrymandering of state legislative and congressional districts, or vote suppression moves. In sum, I am sorry to say, this book, though somewhat useful, is of less than optimal value.

— Edd Doerr

Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity: The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom, by David L. Schindler and Nicholas J. Healy Jr. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015, 477 pp., \$45.00.

This is the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, known for its reformist policies and its adoption of a new and expansive view of religious liberty. How the Catholic Church's leaders moved from a centuries-old preference for a more restricted and limited view of religious freedom is exemplified by this quote from the Declaration: “The right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person...and this right...must be acknowledged in the juridical order of society so that it becomes a civil right.”

Clearly aimed at a specialist audience, the authors include early drafts of the document, historical and theological background, and admit

that “the Declaration on Religious Freedom faced steep challenges and objections.”

“Fifty years later, the teaching of *Dignitatis Humanae* has lost none of its importance for the Church's encounter with the modern world. The affirmation of religious freedom bears witness to the transcendent dignity of the human person.”

— Al Menendez

Funding Religious Heritage, edited by Anne Fornerod. Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015, 248 pp., \$124.95.

Among the ways that European countries differ from the U.S. are these: Europe has hundreds of thousands of properties (churches, monasteries, convents, rectories, cemeteries, monuments, libraries, works of art, etc.) of religious, cultural, historical and esthetic/artistic importance or value; religious participation has been declining there much more rapidly than in the U.S.; Europe lacks the church-state separation principle embedded in U.S. law and culture. (Even in France, where church and state were supposedly separated in 1905, the situation is muddled.) These religious and cultural properties, and their maintenance and restoration, are generally supported directly or indirectly by public funds and to a small degree by private funds.

This interesting book by various European scholars explains these bewilderingly complex and evolving matters in Britain, Spain, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia, and Turkey, and provides insight into their long, complicated histories. We in the U.S. can be thankful that our country made a fresh start, which made the job of Jefferson and Madison easier than it would have been in the “Old World.”

— Edd Doerr