Danger in “spiritual but not religious”

The British Journal of Psychiatry published an article in its January 2013 issue reporting on a recent study, which concluded that people who claim to be spiritual but not religious are more likely to have mental problems. The lead researcher in the project, Michael King, who is a professor at University College in London, said that “people who have a spiritual understanding of life in the absence of a religious framework are vulnerable to mental disorder.” The study, which was based on interviews with 7,403 British people, was conducted in cooperation with the British government.—CNN

Yes and No at European Court

In October 2006, British Airways flight attendant Nadia Eweida, a Christian, refused to remove or cover up her cross necklace while at work. Put on unpaid leave, she took her case to court. In 2007, the airline changed its policy and re-hired Ms. Eweida. She pursued her case and it eventually reached the European Court of Human Rights, which ruled in her favor. However, the court ruled against Shirley Chaplin, a nurse, who was also told to remove her cross necklace at work, because the requirement in this case was for health and safety reasons.—Yahoo! News
Humanist chaplain

Stanford University in Stanford, California, has hired an atheist chaplain to minister to its nonbelieving students. John Figdor’s appointment has shocked some people, but he responds that “atheist, agnostic and humanist students suffer the same problems as religious students—deaths or illnesses in the family, questions about the meaning of life, etc.—and would like a sympathetic nontheist to talk to.” A graduate of Harvard’s School of Divinity, Figdor is one of 18 chaplains and other individuals who minister to the spiritual needs of Stanford’s students. —University World News

Must leaders abandon their faith?

The InterVarsity Christian Fellowship’s chapter on the campus of the University of Michigan has been told that it cannot be on the school’s list of approved student organizations unless it removes a statement in its constitution that requires its leaders to be Christians. The reason? The requirement violates the university’s nondiscrimination policy. Greg Jao, InterVarsity’s national field director, responded that “the university is sending the message that religious voices are suspect and should be marginalized. . . . I think the university’s decision will impact any religious group that’s being honest about their leadership criteria.” Several other universities in the United States have taken similar stands against student religious organizations, including Vanderbuilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. —Fox News

Bicycle ambulances

The Anglican Church of Canada is sponsoring a project that helps people in Mozambique to get help in a medical emergency: bicycle ambulances. The devices consist of a bicycle that pulls a stretcher on wheels. The stretcher has a canopy that shades the patient from the sun. The cost for one bicycle ambulance is a little over US$600. The project is co-sponsored by the Anglican Church’s Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The bicycles and stretcher-carts are built locally, and villages purchase and maintain them by charging villagers 20 Canadian cents per month. “The bicycle ambulances are a fantastic program that is helping communities come together,” says Simon Chambers, PWRDF’s communications coordinator. “It provides employment and saves lives.” Most of the project’s bicycle ambulances are operating in Mozambique, but the idea is also catching
on in a number of other African nations.—Anglican Church of Canada

**Americans who say God influences sport outcomes:**

- White evangelicals
  - 38%
- Catholics
  - 29%
- Southerners
  - 36%
- Midwesterners
  - 28%
- Northeasterners
  - 20%
- Westerners
  - 15%
- All Americans
  - 27%

Source: Public Religion Research Institute, based on interviews with 1,033 U.S. adults the weekend of the Super Bowl.

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“For us, there’s no other option than to hold to the tenets of our faith.”

—Sara Chang, InterVarsity staff member at the University of Michigan, commenting on the school’s refusal to allow her club to be a recognized student organization.—See news item above.

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