Religion in the News

Pentagon OKs religious garb: The U.S. military has issued guidelines allowing greater latitude for service members to wear turbans, head scarves, yarmulkes, and other religious clothing with their uniforms unless the items would interfere with good order and discipline. The new rules also allow long hair, beards, tattoos, and piercings for sincerely held moral principles or religious beliefs. However, military personnel must seek accommodation each time they change assignments. Religious right groups have criticized the new rules on the grounds that they elevate the rights of non-Christians over those of Christians. Secular groups have cautioned that the new rules must not be used as excuses to proselytize.—Reuters

Is polygamy OK?: On December 14, Judge Clark Waddoups of the United States District Court for the District of Utah ruled that Utah’s prohibition of polygamist cohabitation violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. Waddoups upheld the state’s prohibition of bigamy—the legal marriage of three people to
each other. However, he argued that sexual relationships between consenting adults have to do with the “right of privacy that protects all people so long as they do not harm others.”—Christian News

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Canadian law school approved: For the better part of a year, Trinity Western University (TWU) in Langley, British Columbia (BC), sought approval to open Canada’s first faith-based law school. The university encountered severe opposition to its proposed law school from certain legal organizations because of its code of conduct, which states, among other things, that students and staff must abstain “from sexual intimacy that violates the sacredness between a man and a woman.” However, in mid-December last year, the Federation of Law Societies of Canada announced its preliminary approval of the university’s proposed law school. BC’s Advanced Education minister, Amrik Virk, also gave his approval, saying that his decision was based solely on the quality of the proposed program. The school’s curriculum will emphasize charity, not-for-profit law, and rural practice—areas that tend to be neglected by other law schools in Canada, which focus on larger practices. —Christian Week

Christians shelter Muslims: The dominant religion in the Central African Republic is Christianity. However, in March 2013, an Islamist militia called Seleka took control of the government and began terrorizing Christians and destroying their churches
and shops. December saw the worst of the attacks on Christians. But this past January, the tide turned in favor of Christians when the Christian anti-balaka militia began killing Muslims. Terrified Muslims began fleeing the country in droves. Entire cities have been emptied of Muslims and their mosques destroyed. Nearly 190,000 Muslims have sought refuge in neighboring countries. However, many Christians are coming to the rescue of these Muslims, offering them protection in their churches. A Catholic parish in the northwestern part of the country is sheltering more than 2,000 Muslims who can’t flee, and a Roman Catholic archbishop invited the president of the Islamic community, Omar Kobine Layama, to live with him on the church compound. —Christina Headlines

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Church’s seashell pediment: The Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston, Massachusetts, has come up with a unique design for the front of the church: not a cross, but the lines of the inside of a nautilus seashell against a bright blue background. The design is controversial, to say the least. Jep Streit, the dean of the cathedral, said, “The nautilus . . . creates its shell by outgrowing each previous compartment. It’s always moving into a new, bigger space, and it can never go back.” And he added that “this is a perfect metaphor for a spiritual journey.” Donald Lipski, the artist who created the design, said, “I was trying to think of a symbol or an image that would be spiritual but not religious.”
However, critics point out that Christian churches and the symbols they use must, by their very nature, be religious.—*Huffington Post*

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As Quoted

“*You can’t call yourself a Christian if you kill your brother.*”

—Roman Catholic Archbishop Dieudonne Nzapalainga of the Bangui Archdiocese in the Central African Republic, commenting on the recent spate of Christians persecuting and killing Muslims.—See above, *Christians shelter Muslims*