Canadian Supreme Court supports religious freedom

Several years ago Quebec’s Education Ministry instituted a course called Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) that all schools in the province were required to teach, including private religious schools. ERC had to be taught from an objective, secular, cultural, and morally neutral perspective, meaning that teachers in religious schools had to teach the course from a nonsectarian perspective. The Catholic Loyola High School objected that their teachers should have the right to teach the course from a Catholic perspective. The government said No, and the school sued. The case ended up in Canada's Supreme Court, which ruled last March that Quebec had infringed on Loyola’s religious freedom. Commenting on the ruling, former Loyola principal Paul Donovan said, “[ERC has] laudable goals that we share and wish to inculcate in our students. However, we do not believe that religious values in the context of our school need to be suppressed to accomplish this.”—CBC News
Prophecies of Revelation Made Simple

The symbolism in the book of Revelation can be difficult to understand. Why should we care about churches from Bible times? What are the seven seals? Scrolls? Trumpets? Though the animals in the book of Daniel were confusing—the ones in Revelation are even stranger!

If you’ve ever found Bible prophecy difficult to understand, Prophecies of Revelation Made Simple is a perfect book for you. Author Seth Pierce uses creative illustrations and thoughtful questions that make the symbolism clear. He also explains what the prophecies meant for the apostle John and what they have to say to us today.

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Billy Graham Rapid Response Teams

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association established Rapid Response Teams (RRT) made up of volunteer chaplains who can respond to crises such as earthquakes, tornadoes, and mass shootings anywhere in the United States. Team members pray with people and counsel them. An RRT visited Ferguson, Missouri, after a grand jury cleared Darren Wilson, the white police officer who shot Michael Brown, of wrongdoing in the black teen’s death. Drug gangs at first demanded that the team leave town, but the team spent time talking with the gang leaders, after which the gangs actually protected the team. An RRT visited Ferguson again this past March following the
release of a U.S. Justice Department report of systemic bias against blacks by Ferguson’s police force and court system. When rioting broke out, uniformed team members talked with rioters and helped to calm the crowd down. —Reuters

Pastors approve marriage licenses
The Oklahoma House of Representatives passed a bill on March 10 that would remove the authority of the state to grant marriage licenses. Should the bill become law, couples wishing to get married would first seek the services of an ordained minister, who would sign their marriage license. The couple would then take the license to a county clerk, who would issue a certificate of marriage. Representative Todd Russ, who sponsored the bill, said that “marriage was historically a religious covenant first and a government-recognized contract second.” Critics of the bill warn that removing the government’s authority to regulate marriage could lead to other issues, such as polygamy. When asked about atheists and agnostics who don’t want an ordained minister to be involved in authenticating their marriages, Russ said, “They can file an affidavit of common-law marriage.” —Religion News Service

Percentage of countries where Jews have been harassed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2007</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2009</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2010</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2011</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2012</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2013</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: Pew Research Center
Who are the Adventists?

This sharing piece attractively explains who Seventh-day Adventists are and what they believe. It can be used for Bible study interests, new believers, pastor's class, evangelistic meetings.

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World Hijab Day

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, many American Muslim women who wore the hijab were bullied, robbed, and beaten. One of these was Nazma Khan, who immigrated to the United States with her parents from Bangladesh when she was 11. She chose to wear the hijab as a symbol of her faith and her belief in modesty. However, through late elementary school, high school, and college, she endured ridicule and harassment from fellow students. She said she lived in constant fear. Finally, she decided to initiate World Hijab Day (WHD) on February 1, 2013, and it was an immediate success. It has attracted the attention of Muslim and non-Muslim women in more than 140 countries. WHD literature has been translated into 56 languages, and it has been featured on mainstream news media around the world.—CNN.com
“France is a boat that is sinking.”

—French Jewish plumber David Cohen, commenting on the growing exodus of Jews from his country because of the threat they perceive from radical Islam.—

Christian Century