

Faith Digest

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Views on homosexuality bar foster couple. Two judges in England banned a Christian couple from foster care because they oppose homosexuality—a stance the judges said has no place in the laws of Britain. Owen and Eunice Johns, of Derby, England, already have fostered 15 children, but the High Court in London ruled the Pentecostal couple no longer can continue the practice because their anti-gay views are legally wrong. Lord Justice James Lawrence Munby and Justice Jack Beeston said under 21st-century British law, the rights of homosexuals “should take precedence” over the rights of religious faiths. The two judges decreed Britain had evolved into a “largely secular,” multicultural society whose laws “do not include Christianity.”

FBI sued over mosque surveillance. The [American Civil Liberties Union](#) and the [Council of American-Islamic Relations](#) filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles, charging the FBI targeted Muslims for surveillance based solely on their religious affiliation and thereby violated their constitutional rights. The lawsuit says the FBI’s Los Angeles office paid Craig Monteilh of Irvine, Calif., to “indiscriminately collect” phone numbers, e-mail addresses and other personal information on Muslims in Southern California. Monteilh worked undercover 14 months between 2006 and 2007, doing most of his surveillance at the Islamic Center of Irvine but also targeting other Southern California mosques, according to the suit. The FBI denied allegations it was guilty of religious profiling. “The FBI investigates allegations of crimes, not constitutionally protected activities, including the exercise of religious freedom,” the agency said in a public statement. “The FBI does not investigate houses of worship or religious groups but individuals who are alleged to be a threat to national security or involved in criminal activity.”

German bishops offer cash to abuse victims. Germany's Roman Catholic Church is offering cash payments of up to 5,000 euros (\$6,925 in American currency) to victims of child sexual abuse in a yet unknown number of cases, some dating back decades. The bishops' offer includes higher payments for victims of especially serious crimes. Other funds will be made available to pay for psychotherapy and couples counseling for victims. Additionally, a 500,000-euro prevention fund will be created, the bishops said.

Islam topped news coverage. Islam was the most frequent topic of religion news coverage in 2010, as the media doubled the amount of time and space devoted to religion compared to 2009. An analysis by the [Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life](#) found more than 40 percent of religion coverage centered on three issues—plans to build an Islamic cultural center near Ground Zero, a Florida pastor's threat to burn the Quran and commemorations of the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The study, in conjunction with the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, marked the first time since 2007 that neither the Catholic Church nor religion and politics ranked as the No. 1 news story.

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