An interview with Paolo Prodi
The productive duality of religion and the State

Having made it possible to take separate views of the “twin cities” – spiritual and temporal – can European history continue to nurture the relationship between religion and politics? Or is it ushering us into an era where a double allegiance is becoming impossible to contemplate?

Jean-Louis Schlegel
Religious liberalism remains elusive

When wondering whether religions can move on and adjust to modern-day values, we have to ask ourselves whether there is, or ever can be, anything like a liberal theology.

An interview with Philippe Portier
Pope John Paul II and Europe

The late pontiff had come to develop a very consistent perspective on Europe, not just for the sake of history (the continent’s spiritual legacy and values) or geopolitics (resisting Communism), but also because he viewed the continent as the lynchpin for a worldwide expansion of Christianity.

An interview with Ryvon Krygier
Within Europe, the Jews

Can Europe still be the locus for a Jewish spiritual experience? Rabbi Krygier pleads in favour of gearing Judaism to the Diaspora, as this could highlight its proper religious contribution while not giving in to the lure of introverted retreat.

Denis Müller
The resourceful critical spirit of the Reformation

The Protestant spirit has never let go of its dual critical momentum, which lives on within Christianity and the Church as well as within the cultural and political spheres. What can it contribute further?

Johann Oeldermann
The Orthodox faith: “Europe’s spare lung”? 
Does the Orthodox Church bring the tradition to Europe that the continent needs for the sake of its own full-blown inspiration, in the process contributing to Europe’s spiritual integration? Or instead do its cultural and political spheres remain at some remove from ongoing shifts in the West?

**A debate between Michel Marian and Olivier Roy**

**The challenge of mainstreaming Islam**

Islam is here to stay in Europe and as a result, secularization is back in focus in public debates. But does Islam come as a challenge to any aspects of the secularized State, or does it instead, in its own way, bear witness to changes that are happening in all faiths?

**An interview with Fabrice Midal**

**Is the West an opportunity for Buddhism?**

Buddhism has long been seen as an opportunity to re-connect with the spiritual dimension in our countries, but a reversal in perspective may be useful today. Wouldn’t Buddhism stand to benefit from going out of its way and commenting on the state of the world more often than it currently does?

**Bérengère Massignon**

**The European Union: Neither God nor Caesar**

How does the European Union handle the relationships between confessional faiths and the unified body that it is striving to bring about? Being inherently pluralistic and at one remove from historical legacies, it is incumbent upon the EU to develop a fresh form of secularization.

**Françoise Champion**

**Beyond disestablishment. Europe’s religious connivance**

A country where the Church is still established – Great Britain – is an apt benchmark for the shifts in confessional appurtenances that pervade Europe’s many countries. A loss of influence by the Churches in Europe goes hand in hand with the rise of religion as an aspect of identity.

**Heiner Bielefeldt**

**Religious freedom: The ultimate criterion?**

More and more cases being brought to court revolve around the public status of faiths, while at the same time the law resorts to the principle of religious freedom in order both to allow and restrict expressions of faith. However, it does so to the detriment of other criteria such as the legacies of culture and tradition.

**Pierre Bréchon**

**Believing is in a state of flux**

An analysis of surveys of individual values and beliefs results in an atomized and highly individualized pattern of religious references.
Jean-Paul Willaime
*Ultramodern reconfigurations*

The time-honoured back-to-back contraposition of religion and the modern spirit is now giving way to a “post-secular” situation where pluralism, individual choice, and the pursuit of meaning mingle.

Blandine Chelini-Pont
*The discreet re-enchantment of confessional globalization*

By 2050, the religion with more believers than any other in the world is not going to be Islam but Christianity. Within the latter, however, the Roman Catholic Church will weaken and the Evangelical and Pentecostal constellations will dominate.

André Corten
*The Pentecostal transplant*

The Pentecostal Church has less to do with some re-enchantment than with an adjustment to the new, ongoing economic and social dispensation in both the southern and northern hemispheres. From this perspective, there is no doubting that globalization has a religious dimension.

Jean-Pierre Bastian
*When confessional plurality interferes with political dispensation in Latin America*

Far from steering well away from politics, Evangelical Churches demand recognition and in the process interfere with the confessional policies of some Latin American countries, forcing these countries into novel forms of secularity.

Ruth Marshall
*The whirlwind expansion of Pentecostal Churches*

“The miracle is to theology what the state of emergency is to politics.” A born-again faith with apocalyptic strains, Pentecostalism can go hand in hand with economic prosperity in as much as it can heal the woes of both body and soul.

Gilles Séraphin
*A view from Kenya and Cameroon: The springs of ebullience*

A comparison between these two African countries sheds light on the rise of those religious behaviours that look to God to provide and justify for earthly rewards, first and foremost including money and other riches.

David Palmer and Vincent Gossaert
*Religious self-assertions in China*

More than a Confucian revival has led to ongoing developments in China. The country stands as another instance of the gathering momentum of Evangelical-style Churches,
alongside the emergence of sects.

Hamit Bozarslan  
Secularity, religion, and the nation: The cases of Turkey, Pakistan, and Israel

A comparison between Turkey, Pakistan, and Israel highlights how the links between religion and the secularizing drive are often inseparable from the national factor.

Olivier Roy
The decoupling of religion from culture: A Muslim exception?

Faith is ebbing away from original cultures while religious practice eludes territorial confines. But then, as with Islam, so with other faiths.

Abdennour Bidar
Our responsibilities to Islam

The responsibility of a self-avowed “Muslim” scholar is to help Islam to break out of its ritualistic and dogmatic matrix.

Jean-Claude Eslin
Can Pascal illuminate our pathway to God?

To Montaigne, sceptical wisdom and practical life combine to provide the right path, which Descartes sees in thought and Pascal in the heart. How far can we now follow someone like Pascal, whom Paul Bénichou saw as both an arresting and a hectoring figure?

Stanislas Breton
Mediaeval lights

In this, his last writing before his death last year, Stanislas Breton revisits the point where the first synthesis was developed between reason and faith in the Muslim, Judaic, and Christian spheres.

Paul Valadier
Evil as ineradicable

The durability of religions is best understood once one realizes that they surpass cold rationalism when it comes to responding to the woes of the world and to the roots of evil that society claims it can eradicate.

Jean-Claude Monod
The secularisation of Christianity. The origins and shortfalls of a construction

Revisiting Hegel’s and Max Weber’s constructions of Christianity is an enlightening exercise (particularly with regard to the latter’s views on the role of Protestant cults). Heidegger’s own perspective on secularization steers it closer to paganism and an anti-Christian stance.
Pierre Zaoui
The louche atheism of contemporary French thinking

Today’s atheists are masters of rhetoric who claim that we can finally do without religion altogether. But then take another look at Spinoza and Nietzsche, and you realise that one can never really be finished with religion.

Suwwad Ayada
Islam: From political to aesthetical religion

A religion centred on Oneness and the Absolute, and at the same time one that can lead to the worst possible radicalism, Islam is also an aesthetical religion that scrutinizes the invisible that is embedded in the visible world and proceeds to reveal the “veiled” signs within.

Michaël Fœssel
The constraints of monotheism and the lure of paganism

While monotheism, together with the theological-political tradition that goes with it, is pulled toward Oneness and the Absolute, paganism has a fascination for Multiplicity. The pagan deviation effectively leads us on to an alternative perspective of the relationship between Oneness and Multiplicity.

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