

# Briefly noted

News in the [January 26, 2010](#) issue

**About one-third of the countries** in the world have high restrictions on religion, exposing almost 70 percent of the globe's population to limitations on their faith, according to the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. The analysis, released December 16, is based on reports from the U.S. State Department and human rights groups as well as national constitutions. Overall, one-third of the countries were found to have high or very high restrictions on religion as a result of government rules or hostile acts by individuals and groups. "The highest overall levels of restrictions are found in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Iran, where both the government and society at large impose numerous limits on religious beliefs and practices," the Pew Forum concluded.

**A poker-playing Catholic priest** folded his cards without winning the \$1 million prize but left the table with \$100,000 for his South Carolina parish in a tournament. Andrew Trapp said he will donate all of his winnings from the televised PokerStars.net Million Dollar Challenge to St. Michael Catholic Church in Garden City, which is close to raising the \$5 million it needs to build a new church. The Catholic Catechism warns that "games of chance" are "not contrary to justice" but can lead to problems when they deprive others of necessary funds or become addictive. Trapp, 28, said he did not consider the poker challenge gambling, since he did not wager any money. "It's like me getting on *Jeopardy* or *The Price Is Right*," he said. "I'm on a game-show that uses card playing as a medium for advancement."