

WorldWatch

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Drugs and Culture

According to *USA Today*, an estimated half-million schoolkids take powerful anti-psychotic drugs—*ten times* more than a decade ago. Experts worry that too many children are getting these drugs inappropriately to control aggressive behavior. Doctors wrote more than 33 million prescriptions for them in 2001, nearly 35% more than in 1999. Ninety percent of the world's supply of Ritalin is used in the U.S., and children use 80% of the U.S. supply. WorldNetDaily opines that this shocking increase in the use of anti-psychotic drugs has little to do with "need" but with "chemical parenting": Modern, two-income parents find it easier to administer mind-altering drugs than parental discipline and guidance. Later, studies show, this combination of absent parents and cocaine-like Ritalin leads to further substance abuse.

Archbishop of Canterbury

Selected by Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair, Dr. Rowan Williams was ordained as the new Archbishop of Canterbury in November. It is feared that his extremely liberal views will hasten the moral decline of Great Britain and of 70 million Anglicans worldwide. At 52, the youngest Archbishop in modern times, Dr. Williams is not required to retire until age 70. For the next 18 years the Church of England will be led by a man who:

- » openly endorses ordaining women and homosexual bishops;
- » does not condemn sex outside of marriage;
- » recently wrote a book encouraging devotion to the Virgin Mary; and
- » was inducted as a druid earlier this year in a ceremony that paid homage to the god and goddess of the land, a ritual nearer to Shintoism than Christianity.

Dr. Williams is also the first Archbishop since the Reformation selected from outside the Church of England; his religious roots are Anglo-Catholic.

Food Irradiation

The Food and Drug Administration now allows food producers to avoid using the word "irradiation" on labels. Instead, words such as "cold pasteurization" can be used. Critics say using different language is a way to hide what actually happens to the food. Studies indicate the process depletes vitamins A, E, and K and can deposit carcinogens in their place. When a piece of meat is zapped with 10 kilorays, or radiation beams, the surge of energy is equal in power to 150 million chest X-rays. Another consumer concern is that irradiation ignores the root cause of meat contamination: unsanitary practices at ranches and slaughterhouses. Feces infected with *E. coli* get into the meat because slaughterhouses are more interested in profitability than quality. Food irradiation could lull officials and consumers into accepting poor meat-processing practices.

Russian Abortion Woes

Russia's chief gynecologist reports that about 60% of all pregnancies in Russia end in abortion, and another 10% of pregnant women lose unborn children due to health problems. Russia ranks second in the world behind Romania in abortions per capita. Of some 38 million women of childbearing age, about 6 million are infertile, and medical authorities consider abortions a major cause of infertility. Half of Russian mothers do not get enough nourishment or vitamins while pregnant, and nearly 60% of all newborns last year were born ill. The 1991 Soviet collapse and economic turmoil has led to the disintegration of the state health care system—a key factor behind Russia's population decline: by about 4 million to 143.4 million since 1989.

Militant Islam

Daniel Pipes, founder of the Middle East Forum, believes the recent bombing of a Bali nightclub fits into a larger pattern. Militant Islam was once confined mostly to the Middle East, but it has recently spread elsewhere. This is especially evident in Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Nigeria, which have a combined population of about 494 million inhabitants, 378 million of which are Muslims—about a third of the world's Muslims.

» **Indonesia:** This Southeast Asian country, 88% Muslim, hosts Islamist efforts to impose Islamic law (Shari'a) through both legal and violent means. In all, Muslim-Christian clashes in Indonesia have killed more than 19,000 since 1999, displacing over 600,000 from their homes.

» **Bangladesh:** Islamists in this 83% Muslim country of South Asia aspire to establish a true "Islamic Republic of Bangladesh" with a constitution based on the Shari'a Law—much like Afghanistan under the Taliban. *The Nation* reports that Buddhists and Christians have been blinded, had fingers or hands amputated, or had iron rods nailed through their legs or abdomen. Women and children have been gang-raped, often in front of their fathers or husbands. Islamists have desecrated hundreds of temples and statues and looted or burned thousands of homes and businesses.

» **Nigeria:** Though the Nigerian constitution calls for separation of church and state, Islamists in this West African country have adopted or plan to adopt some version of Islamic law in 12 of its 36 states. Vigilantes enforce Islamic law with stoning, flogging, and chopping off hands. Solidarity visits from Sudanese, Pakistani, Saudi, Palestinian, and Syrian Islamists tie Nigeria to the wider forces of militant Islam.