The Seminar on Religion and World Civilization is a program of the Center for Faith and Vocation at Butler University, promoting understanding of interfaith and intercultural relations through the discussion of religious issues in global perspective.

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DOES CHRISTIANITY HAVE A FUTURE IN EUROPE?

Tuesday, Sept. 18, 2007

In many European countries today, non-religious secularism appears to have pushed Christianity to the sidelines of society. Will the entry of Eastern European societies into the European Union change this? Will the surging Islamic factor? What is the future of Christianity in 21st-century Europe?

Speaker
Dr. Evert van der Zweerde is a philosopher and culturologist with expertise in both Western and Eastern European studies. He teaches at Radboud University in Nijmegen, Netherlands.

Respondent
The Rev. Indulis Paicis is a pastor at Martin Luther Church in Riga, Latvia.

SECULARISM AND ISLAM IN TURKEY TODAY

Tuesday, Oct. 16, 2007

For most of the 20th century Turkey was a rigorously secularist republic that discouraged or even banned most public expressions of religion. For the last two decades, however, Islamic forces have surged in Turkish politics and culture, and some observers believe they will eventually marginalize the Turkish secularist tradition. The debate over secularism and Islam is the dominant long-term issue in contemporary Turkish politics.

Speaker
Dr. Fatma Muge Gocek is a professor of sociology at the University of Michigan and the author of books and articles on the sociology of the Middle East, gender roles, Middle Eastern political cartoons and Turkish cultural history.

Respondents
Dr. Zeki Saritoprak is assistant professor of religion at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Aron Aji is dean of the College of Liberal Arts at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa.

IS INDIA STILL A SECULAR COUNTRY?

Wednesday, Jan. 30, 2008

Modern India has been a secular democracy since its independence from Britain in 1947, but for more than a generation the forces of Hindu nationalism have been an increasingly influential factor in Indian politics and society, generating tensions with other religious communities. Our panel will update us on Hindu nationalism in India today and offer an assessment of the long-range outlook for Indian secularism.

Speaker

Respondents
Dr. Nandini Ramaswamy, a political scientist from Chennai (Madras), India, is assistant director of institutional research at Butler University.

Dr. Chad Bauman is assistant professor of religion at Butler University and a specialist on religion in India.

ATHEISM RESURGENT?

Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2008

Since 9/11/01 there has been a surge of books and other public commentary in America and Europe promoting skepticism or atheism as antidotes to religious extremism and even to religion itself. Our panel will comment on recent contributions to the tradition of unbelief and assess its prospects in American civilization.

Speaker
Dr. Jennifer Michael Hecht is a philosopher, poet and cultural critic who has written award-winning books of poetry and intellectual history including *Doubt* (2003), which chronicles the history of skeptical and atheist thought since ancient times. She teaches at New York University and The New School in Manhattan.

Respondents
Dr. Stuart Glennan is professor of philosophy at Butler University and teaches a freshman course on “Faith and Doubt.”

Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso serves Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis. She is a nationally known author of children’s books and has recently published a work on midrash and spirituality, *God’s Echo*.

All seminars meet from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Krannert Room, Clowes Memorial Hall, on the campus of Butler University, 46th Street and Sunset Ave., Indianapolis. An informal reception follows each seminar. The seminars are free and open to the public. No reservation necessary.