

Dear Friends,

Religious practice and freedom determine individual, societal, and even international stability. This week we highlight new studies on the “Government Restrictions Index” and “Social Hostilities Index” on religion; on the role of religious practice on female mortality; and on the changing demographics of Christianity in America.

NEW RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



Religious Restrictions, Hostility, and Terrorism

The number of countries that experienced religion-related terrorist activities increased markedly between 2013-2014, despite a moderate decline in the number of countries with high religious restrictions. Christians faced harassment in the greatest number of countries, according to the recent [Pew Research Center Report](#).



Christian Demographics in America

While nominal Christians increasingly abandon their religious affiliation, church-going Christians remain relatively committed to their faith. The Austin Institute explains trends in Christianity in their [recent analysis of Pew data on trends in the United States](#).



Religious Attendance and Mortality among Women

Women who attend religious services weekly or more have a lower risk of dying from any cause, cancer, and cardiovascular disease than women who never worship, [says Shanshan Li](#) and colleagues at Harvard University. They conclude, “Religion...may be an underappreciated resource that physicians could explore with their patients, as appropriate.”

MARRIPEDIA ENTRIES RELATED TO THESE FINDINGS

- 1) [“Effects of Religious Practice on Society”](#)
- 2) [“Marriage and Religious Faithfulness”](#)
- 3) [“Effects of Religious Practice on Health”](#)

With an eye to the future of America,

Pat Fagan

Director of the Marriage and Religion Research Institute (MARRI)