

# Religion News: Vatican explores possibility of extraterrestrials

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## GateHouse News Service

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A five-day conference hosted by the Vatican gathered astronomers, physicists, biologists and other experts to consider the origin of life and its existence elsewhere in the universe.

According to wire reports, the director of the Vatican Observatory said the meeting focused on how different disciplines can be used to explore the issue of alien life and its effect on the Catholic Church.

The Vatican has come a long way in bridging the gap between science and religion; in 2005, the observatory brought together researchers for similar astrobiology discussions.

## Hindu villagers believe turtle is incarnation of God

Villagers in the eastern India district of Kendrapara are keeping a sea turtle because they believe it is an incarnation of the Hindu deity Lord Jagannath.

According to wire reports, wildlife officials want the animal back because turtles are protected in India; it is illegal to keep them without permission.

But the villagers say the turtle has holy symbols on its back, and people are gathering at a temple to chant hymns and offer gifts.

## Survey Says

A poll of scientists who are members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press in May and June 2009, found that 51 percent of scientists believe in God or a higher power.

-- *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*

## Good Book?

"The Future Church: How Ten Trends are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church" by John L. Allen Jr.

What will the Catholic Church be like in 100 years? Will there be a woman pope? Will dioceses throughout the United States and the rest of the world go bankrupt from years of scandal?

In "The Future Church," John L. Allen puts forth the 10 trends he believes will transform the Church into the twenty-second century. From the influence of Catholics in Africa, Asia and Latin America on doctrine and practices to the impact of multinational organizations on local and ethical standards, Allen delves into the impact of globalization on the Roman Catholic Church and argues that it must rethink fundamental issues, policies, and ways of doing business.

Allen, the Vatican correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter and a Vatican analyst for CNBN and NPR, shows that the Church will have to respond to changes.

## Get to Know ... John Gresham Machen

John Gresham Machen (1881-1937) was a Presbyterian theologian and Princeton Seminary professor.

As a New Testament professor at Princeton, he opposed modernist – or liberal – theology, and stood by his belief in reformed theology, which took a Calvinist approach and stressed the absolute sovereignty of God.

When Princeton Seminary was reorganized in 1929 to create a more moderate school, Machen formed the Westminster Theological Seminary as an orthodox alternative. Machen was concerned about the liberalism in the Presbyterian Church as a whole, and he ultimately withdrew and formed the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Machen died in 1937, but both institutions he founded exist today, and his textbook on New Testament Greek is still used in seminaries.

### **The Word**

Adhan: The Muslim call to prayer, typically from the minaret at a mosque. -- [www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org)

### **Religion Around the World**

Religious makeup of South Korea

Christian: 26.3 percent (Protestant: 19.7 percent, Roman Catholic: 6.6 percent)

Buddhist: 23.2 percent

Other or unknown: 1.3 percent

None: 49.3 percent

-- *CIA Factbook*

*GateHouse News Service*

<http://www.norwichbulletin.com/lifestyles/spirituality/x255180840/Religion-News-Vatican-explores-possibility-of-extraterrestrials>