

leading one Muslim commentator to thank Trump for provoking sentiments that made him feel truly American. Buddhists vs. Muslims # In Myanmar, also known as Burma, Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state were reported to be facing the " final stages of a genocide " after hundreds were killed in massacres egged on by Buddhist extremists. The government sees the Rohingya as foreigners, even though many have lived in the country for generations. Pope Francis, poverty and climate change # The pope's visit to North America was spectacular and -- aside from the Kim Davis kerfuffle -- it went off without a glitch. # He inspired Latino immigrants and spoke words pleasing to the ears of both Republicans and Democrats. # But perhaps more of the Francis effect was felt in his visit to three of the poorest countries in the hemisphere: Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay. In one of the most noteworthy speeches of his pontificate, on July 9 in the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz, he denounced what he called a " new colonialism " of the poor and said the unfettered pursuit of money is " the dung of the devil. " # And through Laudato Si, his encyclical on the environment, the pope joined other major religious leaders to make a strong moral case for an agreement on climate change, which was reached on Dec. 12 in Paris. Supreme Court ruling, religious-freedom laws # It's hard to overstate the significance of the June 26 ruling that legalized same-sex marriage in all 50 states. It cemented a paradigm shift that has been years, if not decades, in the making. It pushed homophobia to the fringes. And it prompted soul-searching among many evangelical Christians who saw the ruling as a