

# THIS WEEK IN CONSCIENCE & JUSTICE

[WWW.CJCOUNCIL.ORG](http://WWW.CJCOUNCIL.ORG)



Friday, March 14, 2025



## City crews have begun removing the 'Black Lives Matter' street mural in D.C.

Crews in Washington, D.C., have begun removing the city's "Black Lives Matter" street mural, a notable symbol of the 2020 protests against the killing of George Floyd, after a Republican bill targeting the mural threatened city funding.

In June 2020, the city painted the phrase "Black Lives Matter" on the pavement in uppercase, yellow letters covering two blocks on 16th Street, about a quarter mile from the White House.

In 2021, Mayor Muriel Bowser said the mural would become permanent to commemorate the protests. But last week, Rep. Andrew Clyde, R-Ga., introduced a bill calling for the city to paint over the mural and rename the area Liberty Plaza – or lose federal funds.

"The mural inspired millions of people and helped our city through a very painful period, but now we can't afford to be distracted by meaningless congressional interference," Bowser wrote on X

A group of people gathered nearby to see the painting in its final moments on Monday.

[npr.org](https://www.npr.org)

## Top News

- City crews have begun removing the 'Black Lives Matter' street mural in D.C.
- Columbia protest leader's arrest tests immigrants' free-speech rights
- Syria's Druze seek a place in a changing nation, navigating pressures from the government and Israel
- How common is religious fasting in the United States?



Ash Wednesday at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Houston. (Raquel Natalicchio/Houston Chronicle via Getty Images)

# Columbia protest leader's arrest tests immigrants' free-speech rights

Federal agents' arrest of Columbia University protest leader Mahmoud Khalil — a lawful permanent U.S. resident with a green card — is being criticized by free-speech advocates who see it as a chilling escalation of President Trump's immigration crackdown.

Why it matters: The White House doesn't see Khalil's arrest as a First Amendment issue. It says his actions — helping to lead campus protests against Israel's treatment of Palestinians last year — run afoul of President Trump's recent executive order banning antisemitism.

- And in a move that critics say is aimed at silencing campus protesters, Trump's administration is indicating that Khalil's actions against U.S. foreign policy positions justify revoking his green card — a move that could lead to deporting him.

State of play: Green card holders — there are about 13 million in the U.S. — typically must break the law to be deported. There's currently no allegation that Khalil, a Syrian national, committed a crime.

- But the Department of Homeland Security has been investigating him and gathered evidence



Columbia University student Mahmoud Khalil talks to reporters last June. Photo: Selcuk Acar/Anadolu via Getty Images

that he was actively supporting Hamas, but not materially supporting the terror group, a White House official said.

- Secretary of State Marco Rubio was presented with evidence from the DHS review and determined that Khalil acted against U.S. foreign policy positions, the official said.
- U.S. law allows the secretary of state to deport a green card holder if that person is deemed to have "potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States."

[axios.com](https://www.axios.com)

## Syria's Druze seek a place in a changing nation, navigating pressures from the government and Israel

Syria's Druze minority has a long history of cutting their own path to survive among the country's powerhouses. They are now trying again to navigate a new, uncertain Syria since the fall of longtime autocrat Bashar Assad.

Members of the small religious sect find themselves caught between two forces that many of them distrust: the new, Islamist-led government in Damascus and Syria's hostile neighbor, Israel, which has used the plight of the Druze as a pretext to intervene in the country.

Syria's many religious and ethnic communities are worried over their place in the new system. The transitional government has promised to include them, but has so far kept authority in the hands of the Islamist former insurgents who toppled Assad in December — Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS. That and HTS's past affiliation with Sunni Muslim extremist al-Qaida, has minorities suspicious.

[apnews.com](https://www.apnews.com)



The Rev. William Barber speaks during an Ash Wednesday demonstration against the Trump administration on Capitol Hill, March 5, 2025, in Washington. (RNS photo/Jack Jenkins)



A crowd listens to the Rev. William Barber during an Ash Wednesday demonstration against the Trump administration on Capitol Hill, March 5, 2025, in Washington. (RNS photo/Jack Jenkins)



# How common is religious fasting in the United States?



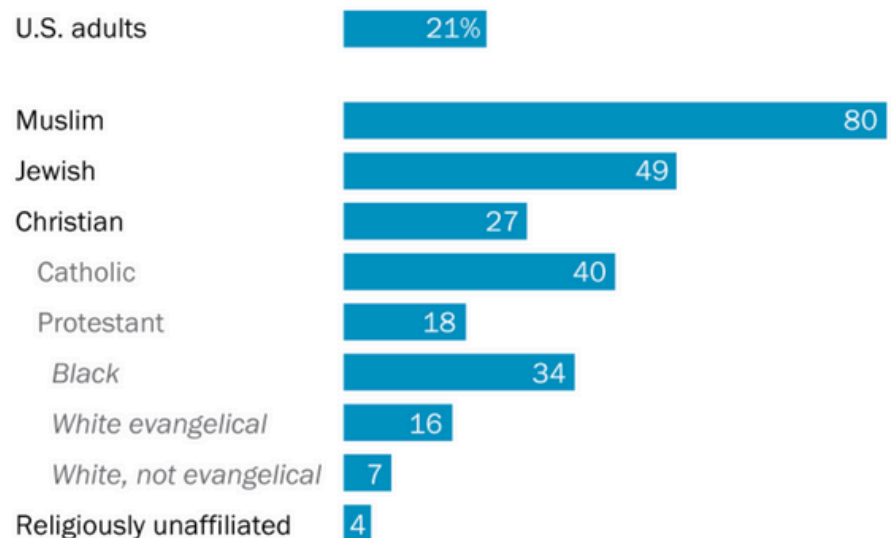
Muslims are currently observing Ramadan, a holy month when people fast by abstaining from certain activities, including eating and drinking, during the day. Many Christians, Jews and adherents of other religions also practice some form of fasting at certain times of the year. Many Catholics, for example, recently fasted for Lent by abstaining from meat on Fridays, among other things.

In the United States, 21% of adults overall say they fast for certain periods during holy times, according to a Pew Research Center survey from February. Muslim Americans are by far the most likely to say they fast for religious reasons, followed by Jewish Americans, Catholics and Black Protestants.

While the February survey includes people of all religious backgrounds, we do not have large enough samples to report on the fasting habits of smaller groups, such as Hindus, Buddhists or Orthodox Christians.

## 1 in 5 Americans fast for religious reasons

*% who say they fast for certain periods during holy times*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 13-25, 2024.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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OUT!

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25-28 SEPT.

# CJC2025

## ANNUAL CONVENTION

### OVERCOMING SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

**EMBASSY SUITES**  
800 Monroe Street, SW  
Huntsville, AL 35801



<https://register.adventsourceevents.org/2025CJCConvention>

REGISTER HERE



[cjcouncil.org](http://cjcouncil.org)

NEXT FRIDAY!!!



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

# Women of Faith

BELIEF BEYOND BARRIERS: HOW FAITH EMPOWERS WOMEN TO LEAD CHANGE

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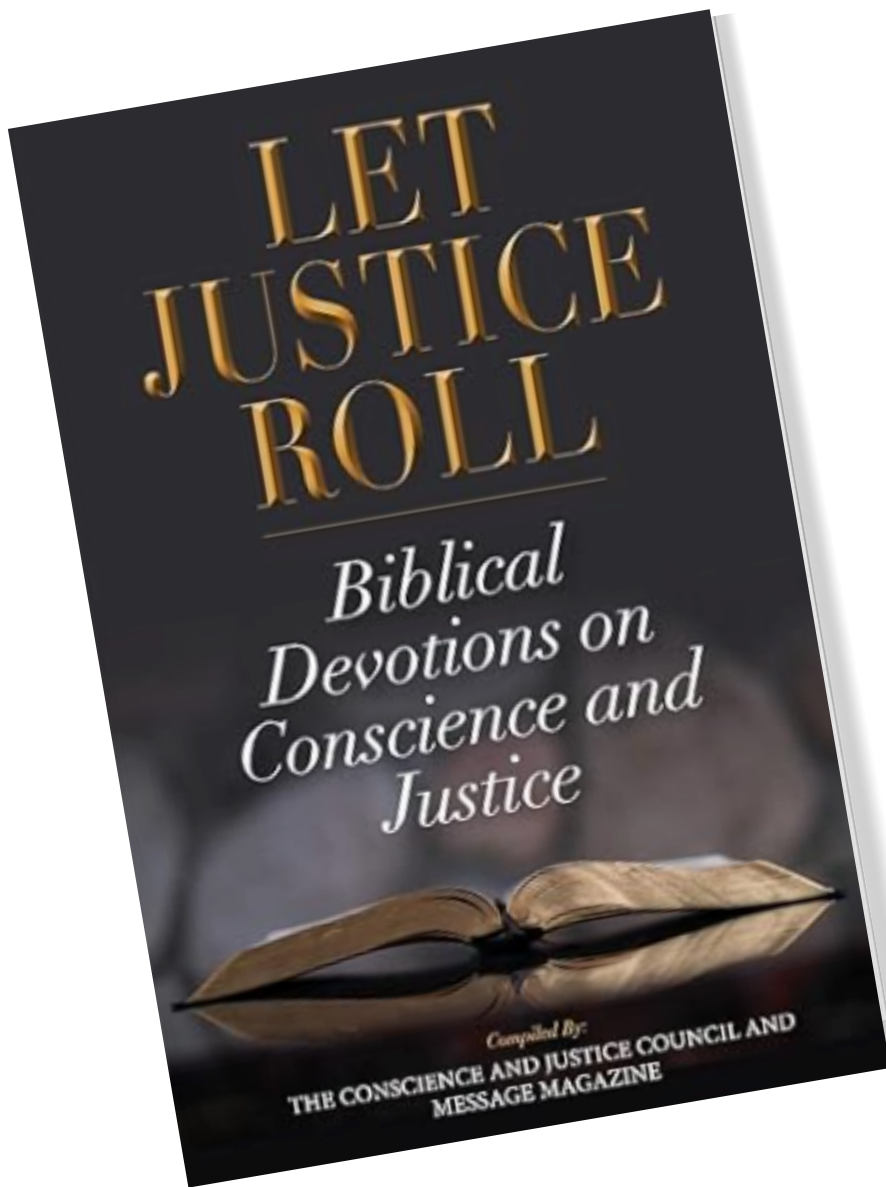
**EDWARD WOODS III**  
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**FRIDAY  
MAR 21** | **8 P.M. EST  
7 P.M. CST**

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LIVE STREAM  
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TUNE IN TO  
PANEL  
DISCUSSION!





## Let Justice Roll: Biblical Devotions on Conscience and Justice

"Let Justice Roll" is a compelling devotional that walks the reader through 365 days of biblical insights in freedom of conscience, and social justice. This compilation of articles represents the work of a nationwide network of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) advocates and other connected community activists.

The components of conscience and justice ministry include conscience, discipleship, engagement, fellowship, the power of the Holy Spirit, love, and prophecy. This is a must-read book for all followers of Christ and those who seek spiritual growth. Get ready to explore the profound biblical insights in this masterful book.

Order your copy [HERE](#)



## OUR PURPOSE

This newsletter aims to highlight news articles relating to religious liberty, civil rights, and social justice. The Conscience & Justice Council desires to be attuned with society so that we may change the nation by impacting one community at a time. Articles linked above are meant to provoke thought and discussion on important topics, and do not always express options or views endorsed by the CJC.

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