

THIS WEEK IN CONSCIENCE & JUSTICE

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Friday, Dec. 27, 2024



Top News

- Religious Change in America
- Kwanzaa spirit comes to life at Harlem's mythic Apollo Theater
- The Church of England's Christmas looks anything but peaceful
- These faith and spirituality influencers kept us glued to our phones in 2024

Religious Change in America

America encompasses a rich diversity of faith traditions, and "religious churning" is very common. In 2023, PRRI surveyed more than 5,600 adults across the United States about their experiences with religion. This report examines how well major faith traditions retain their members, the reasons people disaffiliate, and the reasons people attend religious services. Additionally, this report considers how atheists and agnostics differ from those who say they are "nothing in particular." Finally, it analyzes the prevalence of charismatic elements as well as prophecy and prosperity theology in American churches and the role of charismatic Christianity in today's Republican Party. prri.org



Kwanzaa spirit comes to life at Harlem's mythic Apollo Theater



Dancers perform "Black West," a new segment of "Kwanzaa: A Regeneration Celebration" at the Apollo Theater in New York, Dec. 21, 2024. (Photo by Shahar Azran/The Apollo)

Harlem's Apollo Theater presented the 17th edition of its annual Kwanzaa spectacle, "A Regeneration Celebration," on Saturday (Dec. 21), a two-hour dance performance celebrating Black identity and bringing to life the spirit of the holiday based on Black American history and culture.

The Apollo's Kwanzaa celebration returned with an updated show from the award-winning Harlem troupe Forces of Nature Dance Theatre. The spectacle, the largest Kwanzaa celebration in New York, evokes the ideas and rituals of African spirituality to the beat of African drums.

"What we do on Kwanzaa is we give a chance to people to see who we are. Kwanzaa is the spirit of Africa born here in America," said Forces of Nature's co-founder, Olabamidele Hart-Husbands, who hosted the show.

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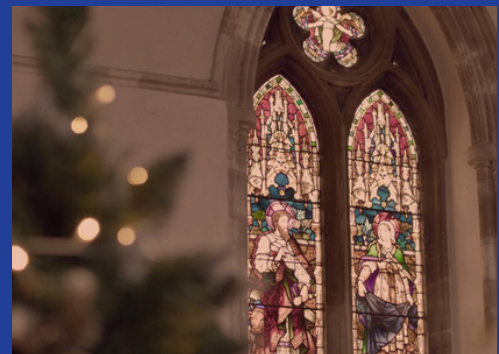
The Church of England's Christmas looks anything but peaceful

Christmas, a holiday promising peace, is turning out to be a tumultuous period for the Church of England as sexual abuse scandals threaten to derail the archbishop of York, the senior cleric charged with leading the church after [the Nov. 11 resignation](#) of Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Since then, George Carey, who held Welby's seat from 1991 to 2002, has also agreed to no longer officiate as a priest after being accused of failing to deal with a priest accused of abuse, in the same case that has also led to demands for the resignation of Stephen Cottrell, the archbishop of York.

The combined scandals have given momentum to those calling for the church to give up some of its influence in the worldwide Anglican Communion and for its bishops to no longer hold seats in the House of Lords as the so-called Lords Spiritual.

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Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby speaks at an interreligious meeting in Rome on Oct. 6, 2021. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia, File)

The Catholics in Trump's administration could take GOP in whole new direction

The president-elect has nominated at least a dozen Catholics to top positions.



(Photo by fauxels/Pexels/Creative Commons)

For tens of millions of Americans — and people around the world — social media is a daily part of life. They turn to Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X or other social media to share memes with their friends (Moo Deng, anyone?) or consume the top news story in 60 seconds or less. But an even newer phenomenon — using social media as a tool to dive more deeply into personal faith and spirituality — has emerged, appealing especially to those who may be stepping further away from religion IRL, but who are looking for community in the online world.

Here are RNS' top picks for the most influential influencers on the virtual stage this year.

The Rev. Karla Kamstra

If the patriarchy had a TikTok nemesis, it would probably be the Rev. Karla. With over 700,000 followers, Karla Kamstra's candid takes on deconstructing faith spaces, dissecting Bible verses or calling out toxic theology are inspiring her followers, mostly women, to find freedom and explore faith on their own terms.

Her book, "Deconstructing: Leaving Church, Finding Faith," tells her story of ditching evangelical dogma to embrace a more inclusive, affirming spirituality. Spoiler: It's a lifeline for anyone who's ever felt gaslit by Sunday sermons. "This is the time to transform," she told RNS. "The church must have this massive paradigm shift and invite many people to the table to say: 'Our humanity is changing. How can the church be part of it?'"

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25-28 SEPT.

CJC 2025 **ANNUAL CONVENTION**

OVERCOMING SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

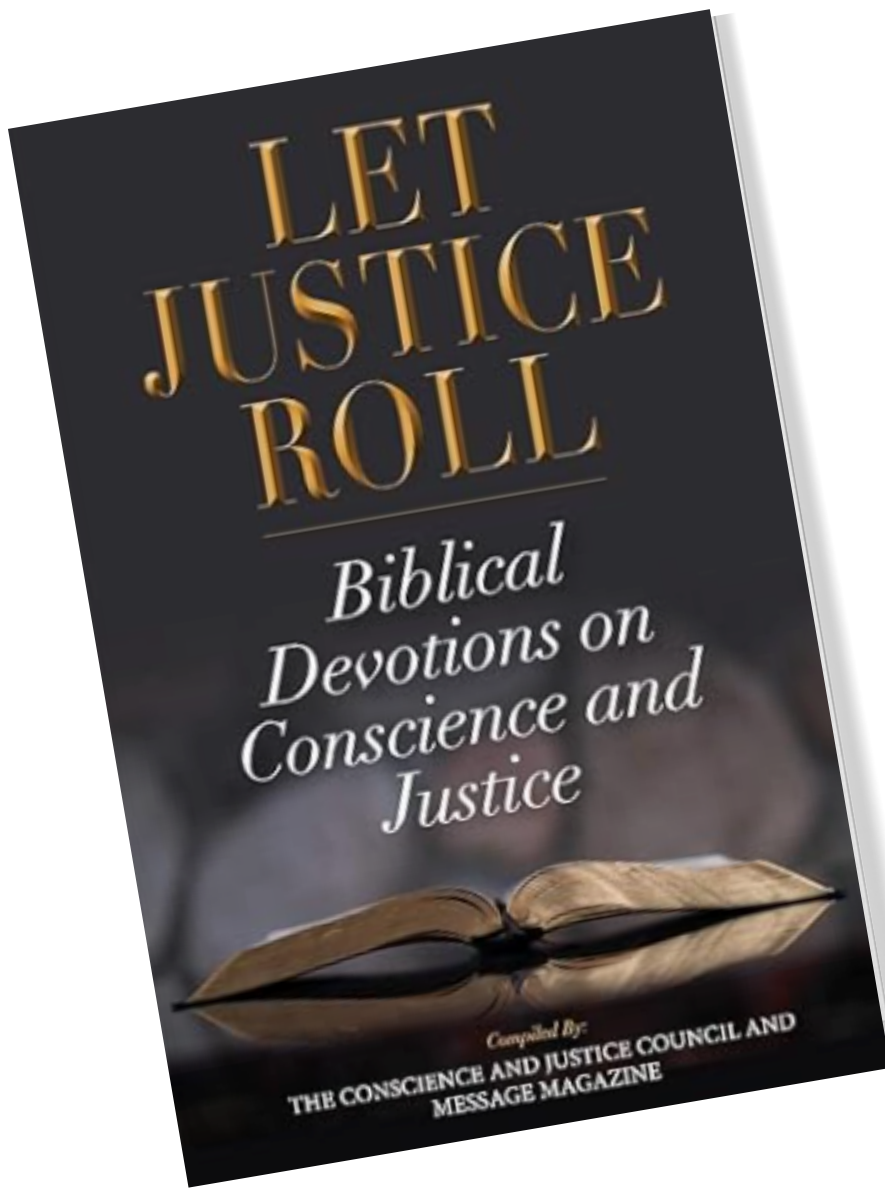
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Let Justice Roll: Biblical Devotions on Conscience and Justice

"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.

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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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