

THIS WEEK IN CONSCIENCE & JUSTICE

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Friday, July 4, 2025



Dissatisfaction with democracy remains widespread in many nations

Public dissatisfaction with democracy continues to outweigh satisfaction across 12 high-income countries that Pew Research Center has surveyed consistently since 2017.

Across that set of countries – Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States – a median of 64% of adults say they are dissatisfied with the way their democracy is working, while a median of 35% are satisfied.

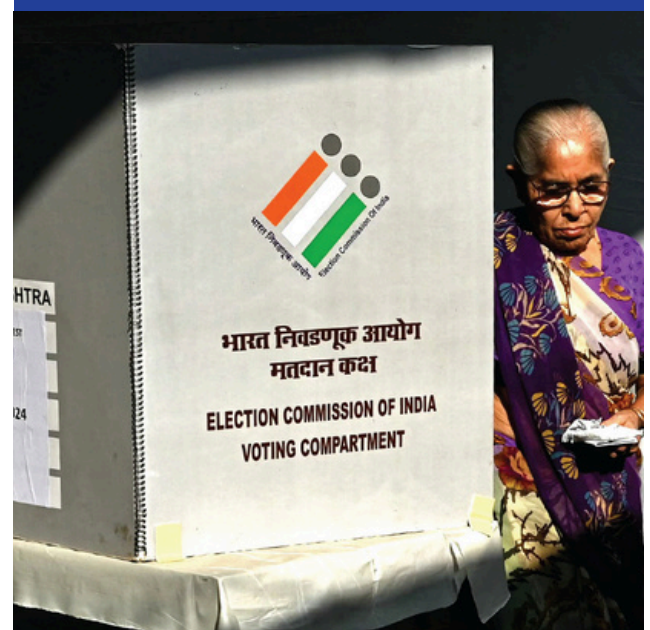
In the eight years we've been asking this question, people's overall satisfaction with the functioning of democracy has dropped. In 2017, a median of 49% of adults across these countries were satisfied with how their democracy was working, while an identical 49% were not. Satisfaction returned to this level during the COVID-19 pandemic but has declined further in the years since.

This doesn't necessarily mean people are turning away from democratic values. Our research has shown that people around the globe think representative democracy is a good system of government. At the same time, many are frustrated with political elites or feel their views are not truly represented in government.

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Top News

- Dissatisfaction with democracy remains widespread in many nations
- Globally, 1 in 10 adults under 55 have left their childhood religion
- The Dalai Lama says he plans to reincarnate, ensuring the institution will continue
- Three shootings at Utah Hare Krishna temple raise concerns about hate, safety



A voter leaves the polling booth after casting her ballot in state assembly elections in Mumbai, India, on Nov. 20, 2024. (Photo by Indranil Mukherjee/AFP via Getty Images)

The Dalai Lama says he plans to reincarnate, ensuring the institution will continue

As of 2020, people who identify with a religion make up about 76% of the world's population, according to [a new Pew Research Center study](#) on global religious change. This is down by about 1 percentage point from 2010. The decline is largely due to people shedding their religious identity after having been raised in a religion.

Globally, among adults under 55 who were raised in a religion, an estimated 10% have since switched, either to a different religion or to identifying with no religion.

To understand the global patterns of "switching" into and out of each religious category, we analyzed surveys from 117 countries and territories that cover 92% of the 2010 global population. Although religious switching may occur at any age, it is more common to experience as a young adult. Therefore, this analysis focuses on survey respondents ages 18 to 54 to look at more recent global switching patterns.

We discuss religious switching for Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and the religiously unaffiliated. We also analyzed results for Jews and members of other religions, but they are not shown separately in this post because of their small sample sizes.

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Girls celebrate the Holi festival with colorful powders in Kolkata, India, on March 14, 2025. Hindus have one of the highest retention rates around the world, with 1% have switched religions since childhood. (Dibyanshu Sarkar/AFP via Images)

The Dalai Lama says he plans to reincarnate, ensuring the institution will continue

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on Wednesday said the centuries-old Tibetan Buddhist institution will continue after his death, ending years of speculation that started when he indicated that he might be the last person to hold the role.

Speaking at prayer celebrations ahead of his 90th birthday on Sunday, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism said that the next Dalai Lama should be found and recognized as per past Buddhist traditions, while signalling that China should stay away from the process of identifying his successor.

The Dalai Lama's succession plan is politically consequential for most Tibetans who [oppose China's tight control of Tibet](#) and have struggled to keep their identity alive, in their homeland or in exile. It is also profound for Tibetan Buddhists who worship him as a living manifestation of Chenrezig, the Buddhist god of compassion.



Attendant monks help Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama wear a ceremonial hat as he presides over an event celebrating his 90th birthday, according to a Tibetan calendar, at the Tsuglakhang temple in Dharamshala, India, Monday, June 30, 2025. The Tibetan leader's birthday falls on July 6, according to the Gregorian calendar, which is used in most parts of the world. (AP Photo/Ashwini Bhatia)

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Three shootings at Utah Hare Krishna temple raise concerns about hate, safety



Bullet holes from recent incidents at the ISKCON Sri Sri Radha Krishna Temple near Spanish Fork, Utah. (Photos courtesy of Utah County Sheriff's Office)

In the heart of Mormon Utah, a Hare Krishna temple has stood as a beloved cultural landmark for more than three decades. Tens of thousands of locals flock to the ISKCON Sri Sri Radha Krishna Temple in Spanish Fork each spring for its annual Holi color festival, and children from diverse backgrounds enjoy field trips to the 15-acre property — which includes an AM radio station and an animal park with llamas, cows, peacocks and parrots — throughout the year.

“We’re trying to do good and enrich the community pretty much 24 hours a day,” said Caru Das Adhikari, the temple’s founder and head priest, who once distributed copies of the Bhagavad Gita, a Hindu scripture, in the 1970s on the campus of Brigham Young University, the flagship university of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

But over the past month, three attacks on the temple’s building have left Utah’s Hare Krishna devotees concerned about the presence of hatred amid their otherwise peaceful coexistence.

On June 18, Adhikari’s wife and temple co-founder, Vaibhavi Warden, heard a loud noise and observed smoke coming from the temple’s radio station roof. The next day, several bullet holes were discovered on various parts of the temple’s main structure, including on its hand-carved arches and through a second-story window that opens into the main worship hall.

More gunfire followed later that night, and again on June 20, based on security footage reviewed by temple staff. No one was injured in the attacks.

About 20 shell casings were recovered by Utah County police, who said in a statement that the shots were likely fired from over 100 yards away. Surveillance video from the three days captured a pickup truck approaching the temple grounds, stopping near its fence and someone opening fire from the vehicle before speeding away.

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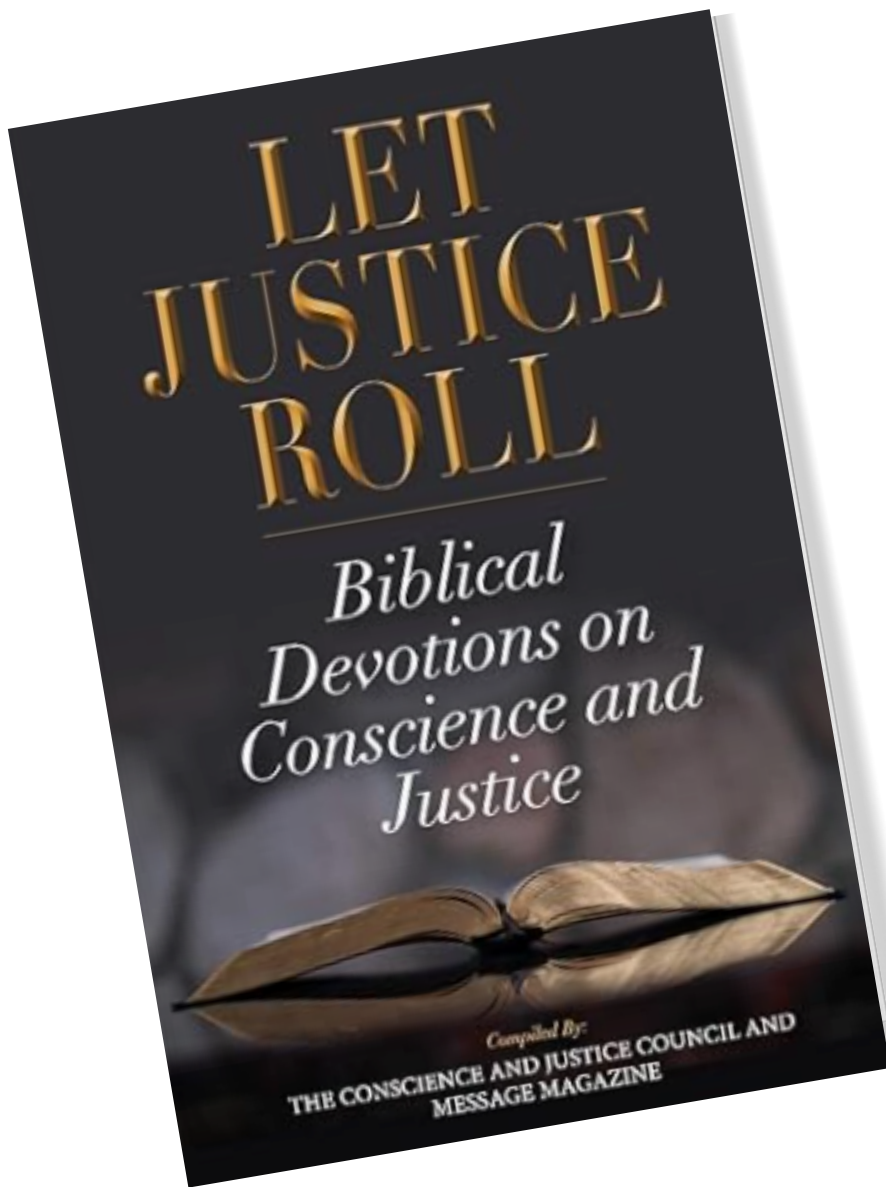
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OUR PURPOSE

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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