

THIS WEEK IN CONSCIENCE & JUSTICE

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Friday, Dec. 20, 2024



Top News

- **Millennials, Gen Xers lead jump in "religiously unaffiliated"**
- **Inside the Classrooms at the Center of the Church-State Battle**
- **The Shooting at a Christian School in Madison Wisconsin**
- **The Catholics in Trump's administration could take GOP in whole new direction**
- **Government Restrictions on Religion Stayed at Peak Levels Globally in 2022**

Millennials, Gen Xers lead jump in "religiously unaffiliated"

Older Millennials, younger Gen Xers and those living in the American West are driving the surge of Americans who identify as "religiously unaffiliated," according to the latest census of religious diversity in the U.S.

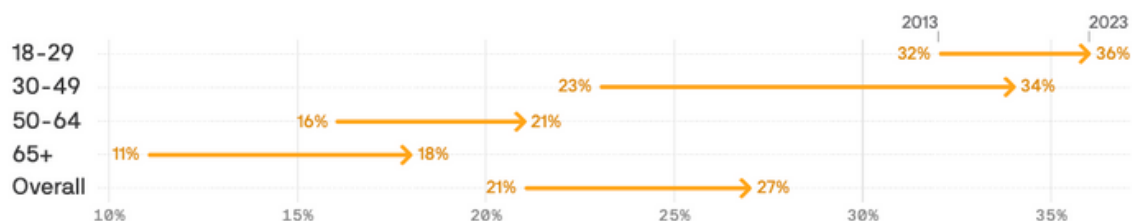
Why it matters: The new data show that the number of white Christian Americans continues to shrink while the ranks of the unaffiliated swell in a historic shift in attitudes toward religion.

By the numbers: Every age group has seen declines in religious affiliation during the past decade, but the largest jumps are among Americans ages 30 to 49 — older millennials and younger Gen Xers, the data from the nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute show.

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

Share who say they are religiously unaffiliated, by age group

Surveys taken in 2013 and 2023, most recently including 10,144 U.S. adults identifying as unaffiliated



Data: PRRI; Chart: Axios Visuals

Louisiana wants to put the Ten Commandments in classrooms — and that's just the beginning



How many of you know that I'm suing the state of Louisiana?" teacher Chris Dier asks his AP U.S. history class. Twenty-two hands shoot up in the air – all but one student have heard the news about Dier's lawsuit. Most had seen the Times-Picayune article two weeks earlier circulated on social media, with the headline "Louisiana's 2020 Teacher of the Year Sues State to Stop Ten Commandments Law" above a photo of Dier and his thick clear glasses, tattoos peeking out of his navy polo shirt. A student asks Dier to explain the law.

"The law says that every teacher, all public-school teachers, have to post the Ten Commandments in the front of their classroom, in a certain size font, and that they're legally obligated to do this. I represent teachers to say 'That is unconstitutional.'"

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

After shooting at Christian school in Madison, Wisconsin, here's what we know so far

Two people — a teacher and a 14-year-old student — were killed and several others were wounded in a shooting at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison, Wisconsin, on Monday that also left the suspected shooter dead, officials said.

At least six people were hurt in the shooting, authorities said, with injuries ranging from minor to life-threatening.

Officers responded to the school at around 11 a.m. following a 911 call from a second grade teacher reporting the shooting. (Police initially said the 911 call came from a second grader, but then corrected that Tuesday to say it was a teacher who called.) The shooting was confined to a classroom where study hall with students from several different grades was being held, police said.

The shooter was identified by police as 15-year-old Natalie Rupnow. Rupnow was a student at the school and went by Samantha, Madison Chief of Police Shon F. Barnes said Monday night.

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



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.



Joe Biden will leave the White House in January as only the second Catholic to occupy it. But a number of Catholics are expected to soon fill the ranks of Donald Trump's administration.

Trump, who was raised as a Presbyterian but now considers himself non-denominational, has nominated at least a dozen Catholics to top positions in his administration, including his own vice president JD Vance, a Catholic convert, and Robert F. Kennedy Jr., his pick for Health and Human Services Secretary. Their faith could play a direct role in shaping public policy, from pro-union policies and new tariffs to expanding the child tax credit and more tightly regulating the food and drug industries — and also help carve a new path forward for the Republican Party.

In interviews, several conservative practicing Catholic leaders said they see a close alignment between many of Trump's second-term policy priorities and a conservative read of Catholic social teaching, which goes far beyond abortion. It's also focused on promoting marriage and having children, giving parents wide discretion on everything from school content to health care and empowering non-governmental institutions like churches and nonprofit organizations for social support.

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

Government Restrictions on Religion Stayed at Peak Levels Globally in 2022

Since 2007, Pew Research Center has analyzed religious restrictions in nearly 200 countries and territories around the world with two measures that are related but that also are very different: the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) and the Social Hostilities Index (SHI).

The GRI measures restrictions by governments that can target people for their religious beliefs, as well as incidents in which governments use religious justifications to harass, intimidate or restrict people. The SHI, on the other hand, looks at religion-related hostilities by nongovernmental actors (i.e., private individuals and social groups).

In 2022, the global median scores on both indexes stayed the same as they were in 2021, at 3.0 out of 10.0 on the Government Restrictions Index (its peak level) and at 1.6 out of 10.0 on the Social Hostilities Index.

This is the Center's 15th annual study of restrictions on religion. Before examining the 2022 findings in detail, we begin by examining the general relationship, in all countries, between levels of government restrictions and levels of social hostilities over the last five years of the study (2018 through 2022).

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

How the index scores are classified

	GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS INDEX	SOCIAL HOSTILITIES INDEX
Very High	6.6 to 10.0	7.2 to 10.0
High	4.5 to 6.5	3.6 to 7.1
Moderate	2.4 to 4.4	1.5 to 3.5
Low	0.0 to 2.3	0.0 to 1.4

Note: The analysis categorizes the levels of government restrictions and social hostilities in each country by percentiles. As the benchmark, it uses the results from the baseline year of the study (the year ending in mid-2007). Scores in the top 5% on each index in mid-2007 were categorized as "very high." The next highest 15% of scores were categorized as "high," and the following 20% were categorized as "moderate." The bottom 60% of scores were categorized as "low."

"Government Restrictions on Religion Stayed at Peak Levels Globally in 2022"

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Conscience & Justice Council
PARL Director, Lake Region



Jerome Hurst
Vice Chairman,
Conscience & Justice Council
PARL Director, Allegheny West



Cryston Josiah
Secretary,
Conscience & Justice Council
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Theological Seminary



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25-28 SEPT.

CJC 2025 **ANNUAL CONVENTION**

OVERCOMING SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

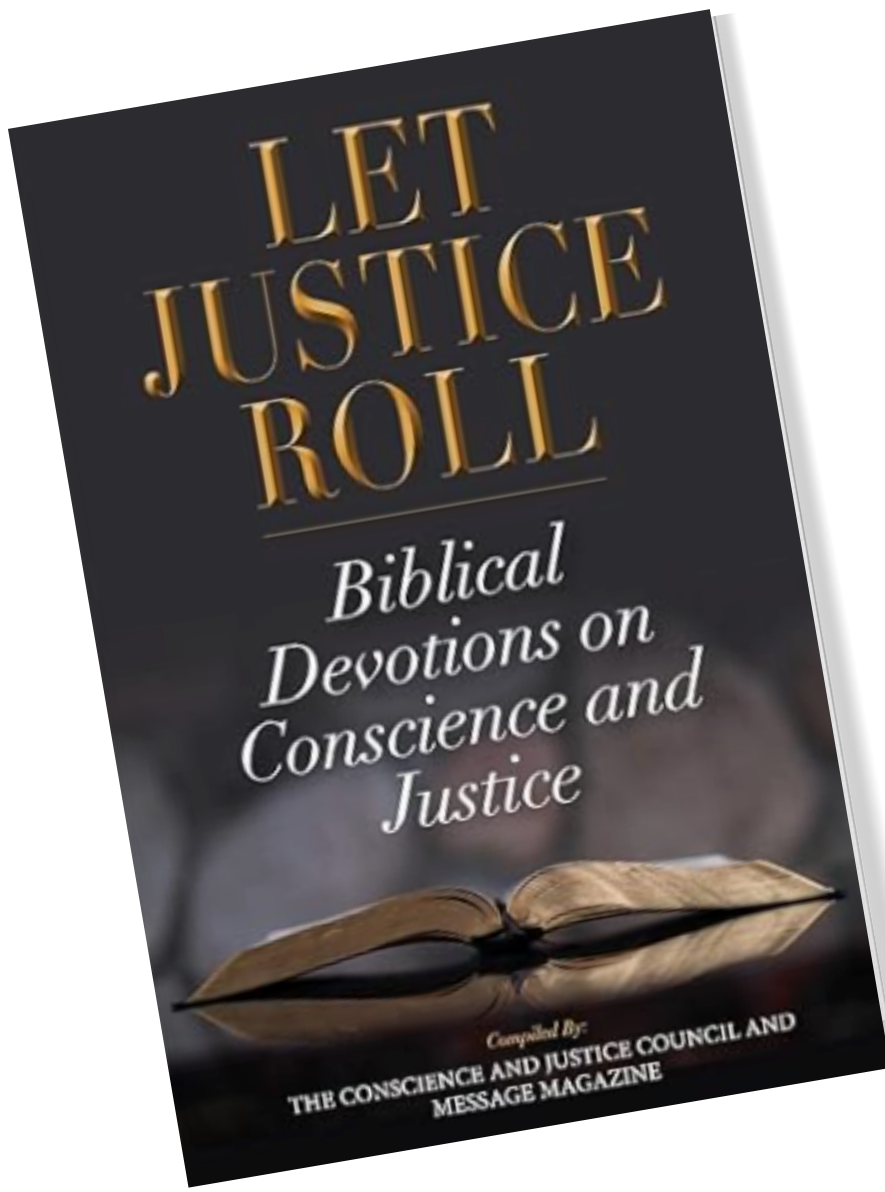
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Let Justice Roll: Biblical Devotions on Conscience and Justice

"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.

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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