

THIS WEEK IN CONSCIENCE & JUSTICE

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Friday, May 23, 2025



Top News

- Critics say Trump's religion agenda will benefit conservative Christians the most
- 30% of Americans Consult Astrology, Tarot Cards or Fortune Tellers
- The next stage of our democracy crisis: competitive authoritarianism
- 'We don't get to discriminate': How a Raleigh ministry decided to help resettle Afrikaners

Critics say Trump's religion agenda will benefit conservative Christians the most

White House Faith Office. A Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias. A Religious Liberty Commission.

President Donald Trump has won plaudits from his base of conservative Christian supporters for establishing multiple faith-related entities.

"We're bringing back religion in our country," Trump said at a recent Rose Garden event, on the National Day of Prayer, when he announced the creation of the Religious Liberty Commission. "We must always be one nation under God, a phrase that they would like to get rid of, the radical left."

But others, including some Christians, are alarmed by these acts – saying Trump isn't protecting religion in general but granting a privileged status to politically conservative expressions of Christianity that happen to include his supporters.

See more: apnews.com



Trump sits at desk as he and religious leaders listen to a musical performance before Trump signs and executive order during a National Day of Prayer in the Rose Garden of the White House. 5/1/2025 (AP Photo/ Evan Vucci_

30% of Americans Consult Astrology, Tarot Cards or Fortune Tellers

Most say they engage in these practices for fun, rather than for insights or guidance on life decisions

Over the past decade, media reports have described rising popular interest in New Age practices such as astrology, tarot card reading and fortune-telling. These practices are frequently associated with young people, and they have developed their own social media cultures on TikTok and other platforms, especially during the period of social distancing brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. So, how popular are these practices, and why do Americans engage in them?

A fall 2024 Pew Research Center survey finds that 30% of U.S. adults say they consult astrology (or a horoscope), tarot cards or a fortune teller at least once a year, but most do so just for fun, and few Americans say they make major decisions based on what they learn along the way.

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



A fortune teller arranges tarot cards on table. (Prathan Chorruangsak/Getty Images)

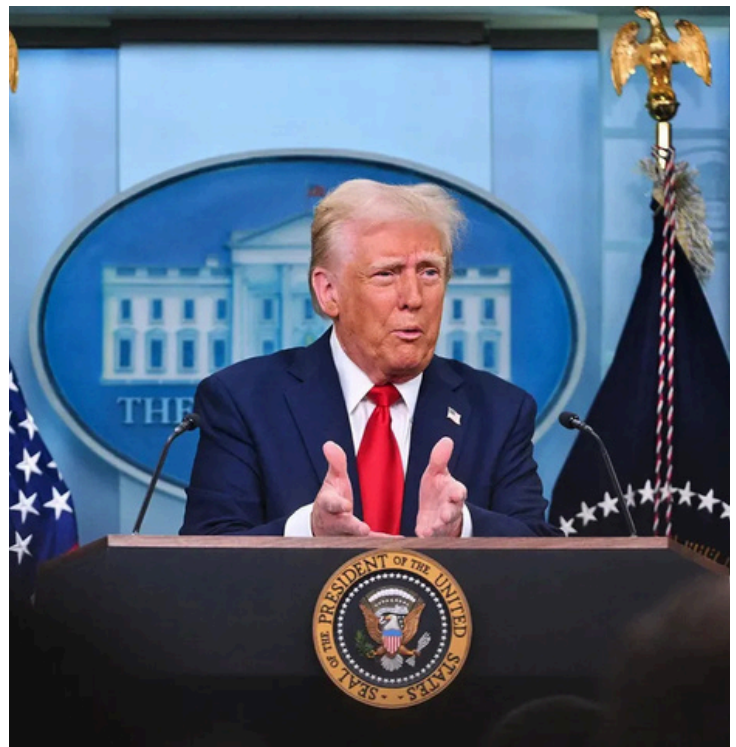
The next stage of our democracy crisis: competitive authoritarianism

The mainstream American news media have failed as an institution to properly confront the country's worsening democracy crisis in the Age of Trump. He is America's first elected autocrat. His appetite for unlimited power is growing. It will likely never be satisfied.

In one of the most recent examples, Trump recently told NBC News' Kristen Welker that he does not know if he is obligated to uphold and obey the United States Constitution. In response to a question about the constitutionally guaranteed right of due process and the migrants and others deported to the infamous foreign prison in El Salvador, Trump said, "I don't know. I have to respond by saying, again, I have brilliant lawyers that work for me, and they are going to obviously follow what the Supreme Court said. What you said is not what I heard the Supreme Court say. They have a different interpretation."

Trump's statement that he does not know if he is obligated to obey and uphold the Constitution should have dominated the news coverage for the foreseeable future. Moreover, Trump's repeated hostility and disregard towards America's democratic norms should be the master narrative frame that structures the news media's coverage of him and his administration. Instead, Trump's unprecedented statement — what should be treated as a national emergency — was lost in the churn of the 24/7 news media and the bottomless maw of the attention economy and distraction experience machine.

See more: [salon.com](https://www.salon.com)



US President Donald Trump speaks about the mid-air crash between American Airlines flight 5342 and a military helicopter in Washington, in the Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House on January 30, 2025 in Washington, DC. (ROBERTO SCHMIDT/AFP via Getty Images)

'We don't get to discriminate': How a Raleigh ministry decided to help resettle Afrikaners



Afrikaner refugees from South Africa arrive, Monday, May 12, at Dulles International Airport in Dulles, Va. Julia Demaree Nikhinson/AP



Welcome House Raleigh rents a storage unit to help furnish homes for new refugees. This one in North Raleigh, N.C., is crammed full of household items. (RNS photo/Yonat Shimron)

The 12×30-foot storage unit in a Raleigh, North Carolina, suburb is crammed full of chairs, tables, mattresses, lamps, pots and pans.

Most of its contents will soon be hauled off to two apartments that Welcome House Raleigh is furnishing for three newly arrived refugees. It's a job the ministry, which is a project of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, has handled countless times on behalf of newly arrived refugees from such places as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria and Venezuela.

But these two apartments are going to three Afrikaners — whose status as refugees is, according to many faith-based groups and others, highly controversial.

Last week, Marc Wyatt, director of Welcome House Raleigh, received a call from the North Carolina field office of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants asking if he could help furnish the apartments for the refugees, among the 59 Afrikaners who arrived in the U.S. last week from South Africa, he told RNS. It was a common request for the ministry that partners with refugee resettlement agencies to provide temporary housing and furniture for people in need.

And at the same time, the request was extremely challenging. After thinking about it, consulting with the Welcome House network director and asking for feedback from ministry volunteers, Wyatt said yes.

"Our position is that however morally and ethically charged it is, our mandate is to help welcome and love people," said Wyatt, a retired Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missionary who now works for CBF North Carolina. "Our holy book says God loves people. We don't get to discriminate."

See more: religionnews.com

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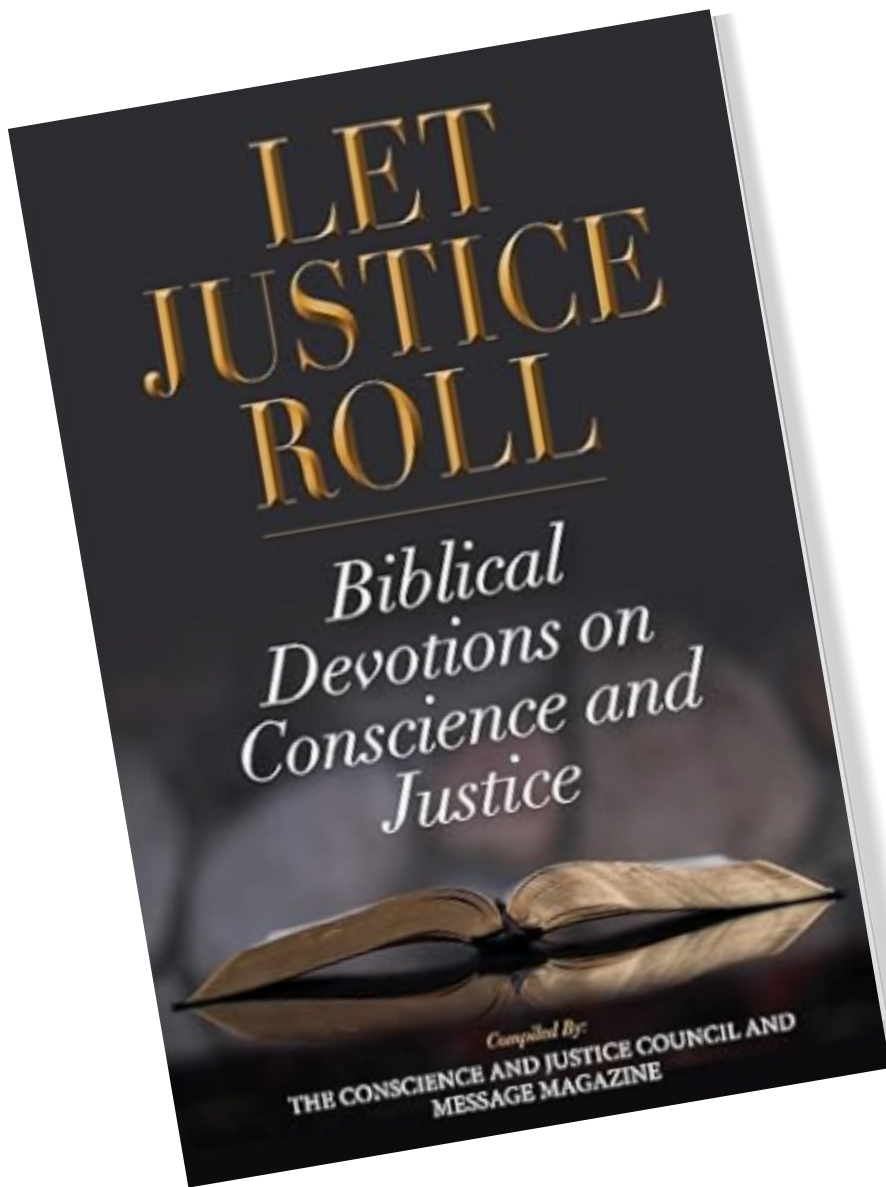
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KEY DATES

Apply By: August 1st, 2025

Submit By: August 31st, 2025

Expo: September 28th, 2025



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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