

THIS WEEK IN CONSCIENCE & JUSTICE

WWW.CJCOUNCIL.ORG



Friday, July 18, 2025



Speaker Johnson says voters have been 'misled' that religion should be separate from government

WASHINGTON – After the Internal Revenue Service lifted its ban on churches and religious institutions endorsing political candidates, House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., argued the longstanding precedent stemmed from a misinterpretation of "separation of church and state."

In an op-ed post on the social media site X over the weekend, the top House Republican argued that Americans have been "misled" for years over how religion and politics should intersect. Johnson argued that those who insist on keeping church and state completely separate are "unaware" the phrase derives from personal communications between President Thomas Jefferson and the Danbury Baptist Association rather than being explicitly stated in the Constitution.

"Jefferson said he revered 'that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State,'" Johnson wrote. "Jefferson clearly did not mean that metaphorical 'wall' was to keep religion from influencing issues of civil government. To the contrary, it was meant to keep the federal government from impeding the religious practice of citizens."

Continue Reading: yahoo.com/news

Top News

- Speaker Johnson says voters have been 'misled' that religion should be separate from government
- The complicated truth behind Gen Z's 'religious resurgence'
- A surprise IRS move on political endorsements leaves faith leaders and legal experts divided
- In African politics, the rampant belief in witchcraft fortifies some and vexes others
- Nationwide 'Good Trouble' anti-Trump protests pay tribute to John Lewis



A local resident leaves a church after voting in an election in Cumming, Iowa. (Charlie Neibergall / AP)

The complicated truth behind Gen Z's 'religious resurgence'

Headlines abound suggesting that Gen Z, mostly led by Gen Z men, are bucking the conventional wisdom that young people are destined to leave organized religion and instead are leading what some call a "religious resurgence."

In some ways, faith communities may be ripe for growth among a chronically online generation that itself is recognizing the hollow limits of living more of their lives on-screen than off.

Less than half of young Americans, a recent Harvard Youth Poll found, feel a sense of belonging to a community, with young men being significantly more likely than young women to indicate "no strong sense of belonging anywhere."

Being an active part of a faith tradition is one way many Americans have historically developed that sense of belonging. Our work at the Public Religion Research Institute finds that 80 percent of Americans who attend church today regularly say one important reason they do so is to "experience religion as a community."

Continue Reading: thehill.com



A surprise IRS move on political endorsements leaves faith leaders and legal experts divided

A surprise move by the IRS that would allow pastors to back political candidates from the pulpit without losing their organization's tax-exempt status is drawing praise from conservatives and even some progressive religious groups but concern from other leaders of faith, along with tax and legal experts.

A 1954 provision in the tax code called the Johnson Amendment says churches and other nonprofits could lose their tax-exempt status if they participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. The rule was rarely enforced.

While the IRS did not go as far as calling for the repeal of the Johnson Amendment, it said in court documents Monday that communications in good faith by a church to its flock does not amount to "intervening" or affecting the outcome of a political campaign.

"Communications from a house of worship to its congregation in connection with religious services through its usual channels of communication on matters of faith do not run afoul of the Johnson Amendment as properly interpreted," the IRS said.



Continue Reading religionnews.com

In African politics, the rampant belief in witchcraft fortifies some and vexes others

Wilson Watira offered his hand when he met his political rival at a funeral, gesturing for a proper handshake. The man didn't want contact, instead folding a piece of paper that he aimed at Watira.

"He looked at me and picked that piece of paper of the program. He folded it and greeted me," Watira said. "He's just afraid of me simply because I am not afraid of him."

Watira, who seeks a seat in Uganda's Parliament, remembered the recent event as a vivid example of the rampant fear of witchcraft as politicians seeking office try to outmaneuver each other in this east African country.

In public, political contests often entail spectacles where rivals rent cars to mount raucous processions in the streets, offering cash and other inducements to voters. Behind the scenes, the struggle for victory can be intensely spiritual, with faith figuring in incidents ranging from ritual sacrifice to visits with traditional healers, according to Watira and others who spoke to The Associated Press.

Watira, a leader of a group uniting Uganda's Bamasaba people, said the incumbent legislator who refused to shake his hand may have worried that would somehow give Watira the upper hand or provoke misfortune. Watira said he wasn't surprised by the man's behavior.



Politicians in Uganda are turning to witch doctors to get a competitive advantage over their opponents. This spiritual political warfare is part of a wider struggle of faith in the majority Christian country. (AP video by Patrick Onen. Production by Jackson Njehia.)

Continue Reading: apnews.com

Nationwide 'Good Trouble' anti-Trump protests pay tribute to John Lewis



In Atlanta, demonstrators marched toward a memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. In New York City, they circled a federal building downtown. In Los Angeles, they held a candlelight vigil alongside portraits of people killed by police or swept up in recent immigration raids.

Across the country, protesters rallied on Thursday under a shared refrain inspired by former congressman and civil rights icon John Lewis: "Good trouble lives on."

Thousands of people took to the streets in what organizers cast as a national day of action — a sweeping protest of the Trump administration's cuts to safety net programs and efforts to roll back protections for immigrants and marginalized communities.

"We are here to honor the past, confront the present and demand a future where our voices are not just heard, but obeyed," Arianna Walker, an organizer involved in the Los Angeles protest, said in a statement. "This is about community, about showing up for one another, standing shoulder to shoulder, and refusing to let love, dignity, hope, or joy be silenced."

OUR TEAM



Edward Woods III
Chairman,
Conscience & Justice Council
PARL Director, Lake Region



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



Cryston Josiah
Secretary,
Conscience & Justice Council
PARL Director, Central States



Tony Anobile
Vice President
Church Ministries



Amireh Al-Haddad
PARL Director
Southern Union



Mark Brown
PARL Director,
Southeastern Conference



Jack Doggett
PARL Director,
Allegheny East



Dee Edwards
Pastor,
South England Conference



Everton Ennis
PARL Director,
South Atlantic



Paul Goodridge
PARL Director,
South Central



Olivia Hemmings
Chair, Henry & Sharon Fordham
Department of Religion,
Washington Adventist University



Orlan Johnson
PARL Director,
North American Division



Kerwin Jones
PARL Representative,
At-Large



Andrea Trusty-King
Regional PARL Representative,
Pacific Union



Bettina Kruse
Editor,
Liberty Magazine



Ifeoma Kwesi
Professor, School of Theology,
Oakwood University



Derek Lane
Regional PARL Representative,
North Pacific Union



Allen Martin
PARL Director,
Northeastern



Nicholas Miller
Professor of Church History,
Seventh-day Adventist
Theological Seminary



Jason C. North, Sr.
PARL Director,
Southwest Region



Zdravko Plantak
Professor of Religion and Ethical Studies,
Loma Linda University



Melissa Reid
Executive Director,
North American
Religious Liberty Association



Andre Michael Wang
PARL Director
North Pacific Union



25-28 SEPTEMBER



CJC2025 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Overcoming Oppression

Biblically Dismantling Abuses of Power

SPEAKERS



JOHN C.
YANG



ANDREA
KING



DAVID
PERSON



SHARRON
HENLEY



BISHOP
BURTON



RENEE
SCRUGGS



MICHAEL W.
CAMPBELL



DILYS
BROOKS



PRESTON
FOSTER



LISA CLARK
DILLER



MYRON
EDMONDS



AMIREH
AL-HADDAD



OBERY
HENDRICKS



NICOLE
JORWIC



RYAN
BURGE



RAQUEL
MARTIN



ROMAN
PALOMARES



ERICA
KEITH



DOROTHY
HUSTON

*A complimentary t-shirt and access to the
2025 CJC Convention Archives for those who
register by Thursday, July 31.*



800 Monroe Street SW
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

SCAN QR
CODE TO
REGISTER



FACEBOOK



YOUTUBE



INSTAGRAM

@CJCCOUNCIL

www.cjccouncil.org

REGISTER HERE



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

**DON'T
MISS
OUT!**

SHOULD CHURCHES ENDORSE POLITICAL CANDIDATES?



NICHOLAS MILLER
PROFESSOR OF LAW AND
RELIGION AT WASHINGTON
ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY



TIM GOLDEN
VISITING PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
WHITMAN COLLEGE



JEANICE WARDEN WASHINGTON
CHIEF CONSULTANT
CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY



JENNIFER GRAY WOODS
GENERAL COUNSEL AND PARL DIRECTOR
FOR LAKE UNION CONFERENCE

PANELISTS

HOSTS:



PASTOR CRYSTON J. PAUL
DIRECTOR
CENTRAL STATES CON
CJC SECRETAR



EDWARD WOOD
PARL DIRECTOR
LAKE REGION CONF
CJC CHAIRMAN

FRIDAY, JULY 25
8:00 PM EDT / 7:00 PM CDT



LIVE STREAM

@CONSCIENCEANDJUSTICECOUNCIL



Conscience
& Justice COUNCIL



WATCH NOW

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES EXPO

CALLING ALL PASTORS
WITH A HEART FOR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT!

✕ **SEPTEMBER 28, 2025** ✕
HUNTSVILLE, AL

Present your innovative ministry
initiatives and **WIN a \$10,000**
mentoring scholarship!

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- Pastors active in community outreach
- Ministries with innovative local programs

THE FORMAT

- 7-minute presentation
- Q&A with judges

JUDGING CRITERIA

- Mission alignment
- Impact
- Innovation
- Sustainability

Apply Here



NOTE:

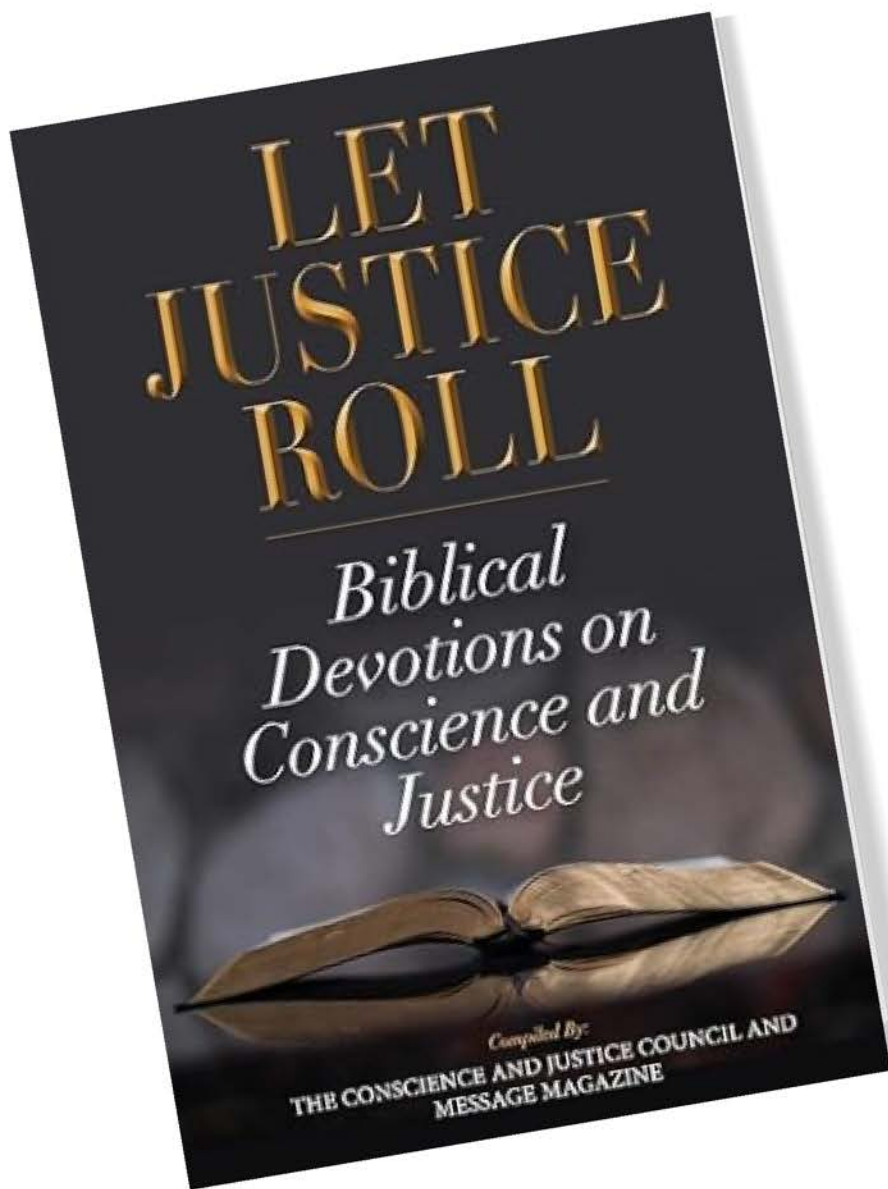
**Must be registered for the
Conscience & Justice Council
Convention**

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.

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.

LIKE » FOLLOW » SHARE

