

THIS WEEK IN CONSCIENCE & JUSTICE

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Friday, February 28, 2025



Boycotts accompany prayer as faith leaders prepare for a Lent of protest

Addressing the congregation at his New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Stonecrest, Georgia, on Sunday (Feb. 23), the Rev. Jamal Bryant was trying to recruit the thousands listening in the Atlanta-area church and online to join him in his plan for Lent, the Christian season of abstinence and spiritual preparation that begins March 5.

For their Lenten fast, he said, they should refrain from shopping at Target.

"Whatever it is that you was getting from Target, you can get from a Black business – amen?" Bryant said from the pulpit. "Whether it's paper towels or soap or dishwasher detergent, whatever, a bonnet, whatever you need, you can get it."

Four weeks before, the big-box retailer had announced that it would pull back from its diversity, equity and inclusion programs, including one dedicated to diversifying the suppliers it uses to stock its shelves. The announcement came days after President Donald Trump signed an executive order titled "Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing."

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Top News

- Boycotts accompany prayer as faith leaders prepare for a Lent of protest
- Decline of Christianity in the U.S. Has Slowed, May Have Levelled Off
- Faith groups claim legal victories on refugees, ICE raids at houses of worship
- Understanding the Drivers of Americans' Views on Immigration Policy



The Rev. Jamal Bryant, left, is organizing a boycott of retailer Target for the Lenten season. (Image courtesy of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church)

Decline of Christianity in the U.S. Has Slowed, May Have Levelled Off



After many years of steady decline, the share of Americans who identify as Christians shows signs of leveling off – at least temporarily – at slightly above six-in-ten, according to a massive new Pew Research Center survey of 36,908 U.S. adults.

The Religious Landscape Study (RLS) is the largest single survey the Center conducts, aiming to provide authoritative figures on the size of U.S. religious groups because the U.S. census does not collect that information.

We have conducted three of these landscape surveys over the past 17 years, with more than 35,000 randomly sampled respondents each time. That's enough to paint a statistical portrait of religion not only nationally, but also in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as in 34 large metro areas.

This introductory essay walks through the big-picture trends: evidence both of a long-term decline in American religion and of relative stability in the last few years, since 2020 or so.

pewresearch.org.org

Faith groups claim legal victories on refugees, ICE raids at houses of worship

Religious groups challenging President Donald Trump won a pair of legal victories this week, blocking the administration's efforts to dismantle the refugee program and reinstating sensitive-location protections from immigration enforcement in some houses of worship.

On Tuesday (Feb. 25), a federal judge in Washington state sided with the plaintiffs – which included Church World Service, HIAS and Lutheran Community Services Northwest, as well as individual refugees and family members – blocking the president's Jan. 20 executive order to suspend the refugee program.

In his ruling from the bench, U.S. District Judge Jamal Whitehead said the president's actions amounted to a "nullification of congressional will," arguing the president does not have "limitless" authority over refugee admissions.

Mark Hetfield, president of HIAS, a Jewish refugee resettlement agency, said that unlike when Trump suspended new refugee admissions during his first term, his latest actions began to dismantle the program by abruptly cutting off funding for critical infrastructure.

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Mark Hetfield, president of HIAS (formerly Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), speaks during a House Judiciary subcommittee hearing, May 23, 2023, on Capitol Hill in Washington. (AP Photo/Mariam Zuhair)



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers adjust the handcuffs on a detained person, Jan. 27, 2025, in Silver Spring, Md. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon) Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers adjust the handcuffs on a detained person, Jan. 27, 2025, in Silver Spring, Md. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

Understanding the Drivers of Americans' Views on Immigration Policy



Border wall between the U.S. and Mexico.

President-elect Donald Trump has outlined an aggressive immigration agenda aimed at [intensifying border security and enforcing existing laws](#). Key components of this plan include deporting undocumented immigrants, cutting federal funding to jurisdictions that limit cooperation with immigration authorities, terminating birthright citizenship, and reinstating travel bans on certain countries. While these measures are designed to address concerns among Americans who prioritize stricter immigration control, many Americans remain opposed to such measures. This Spotlight Analysis examines Americans' views on three specific immigration policies tracked by PPRI over time: (1) providing a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, (2) granting legal resident status to immigrants brought illegally to the U.S. as children, and (3) building a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico. In addition, through a multivariate analysis, this Spotlight explores how a variety of factors, including political affiliation, religion, and media consumption, shape attitudes toward restrictive immigration policies today.

Immigration Policies

Pathway to Citizenship

PPRI's [2024 American Values Survey](#) shows that nearly six in ten Americans (56%) say that immigrants living in the United States illegally should be given a way to become citizens, provided they meet certain requirements. Roughly one in ten say they would prefer undocumented immigrants to be eligible for permanent residency status but not citizenship (11%), and three in ten say all immigrants living in the country illegally

should be identified and deported (31%). Though the majority of Americans continue to support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, support has declined from 63% in 2013, when the question was first asked.

Democrats (77%) have grown more supportive of a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants over the past decade, with support increasing from 71% in 2013. In contrast, Republicans (36%) have become notably less supportive than they were in 2013 (53%). Today, 7% of Republicans say they would prefer undocumented immigrants to be eligible for permanent residency status but not citizenship, and the majority say all immigrants living in the U.S. illegally should be deported (57%), a substantial increase from 32% in 2013.

The majority of religious groups support providing a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, with the highest support among Black Protestants (67%), other non-Christians (66%), religiously unaffiliated Americans (64%), and Hispanic Catholics (64%). A majority of Hispanic Protestants (57%), Jewish Americans (55%), and white mainline/non-evangelical Protestants (53%) also express support, while white Catholics are more divided, with 48% in favor. Latter-day Saints (41%) and white evangelical Protestants (40%) stand out as the only religious groups in which a majority opposes a pathway to citizenship, and their support has declined significantly since 2013, from 63% and 56%, respectively.^[1] Other religious groups that have also experienced substantial declines in support since 2013 include white Catholics (from 62%) and white/non-evangelical Protestants (from 61%).

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25-28 SEPT.

CJC2025

ANNUAL CONVENTION

OVERCOMING SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

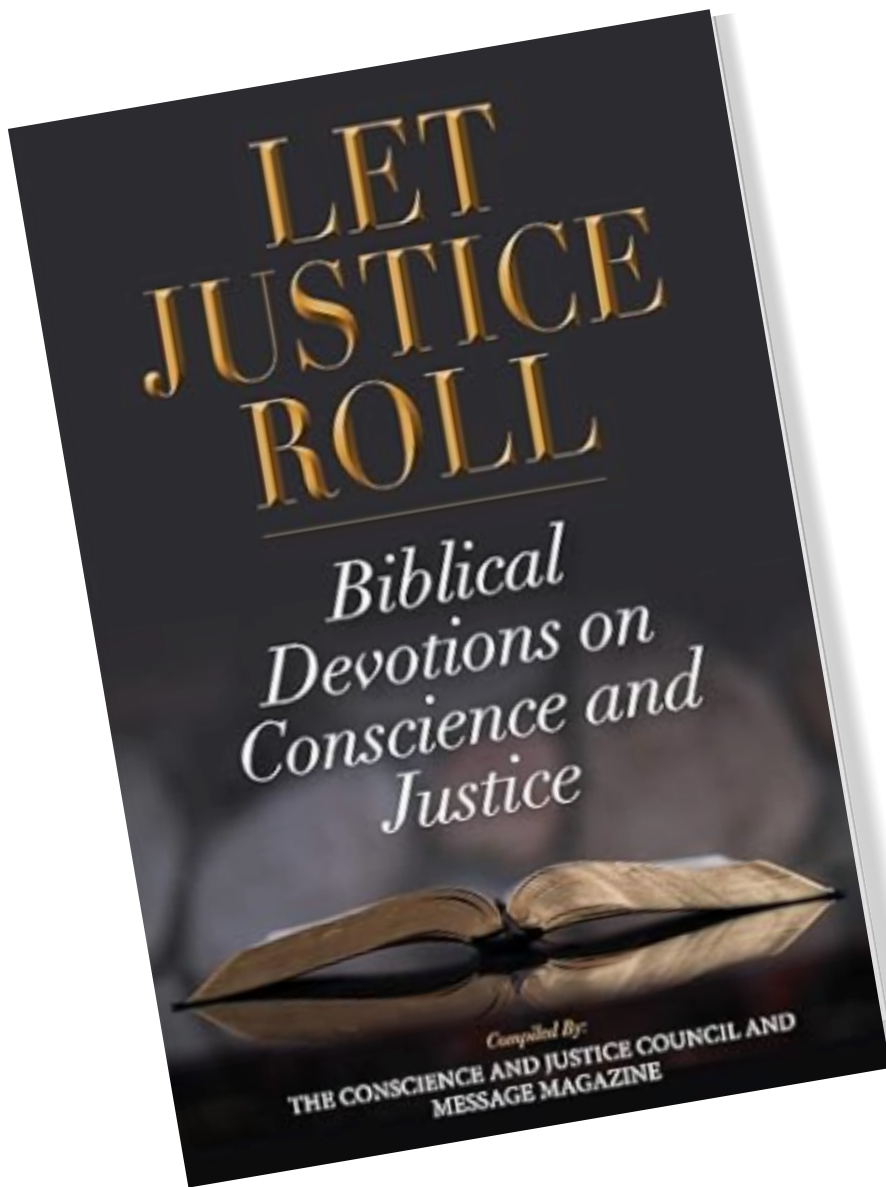
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Let Justice Roll: Biblical Devotions on Conscience and Justice

"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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TUNE IN FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY!



THE RELEVANCY AND PRINCIPLES OF THE

BLACK CHURCH



FRIDAY, FEB. 7

PROJECT 2025:
Can you hear me now?

GUESTS:
Keith Burton
Carmela Monk Crawford
Tim Golden
Olive Hemmings



FRIDAY, FEB. 14

DEI:
Money Talks

GUESTS:
Joseph McCoy
Norman Miles
Sharon Stone
Cynthia Chea Penn



FRIDAY, FEB. 21

TALKING or WALKING:
The State of the Black Church

GUESTS:
Jason O'Rourke
Carlton Byrd
Linda Ammons
Joan Justiss Tynes



FRIDAY, FEB. 28

AGITATE and EDUCATE

GUESTS:
Keith Burton
Tim Golden
David Person
Darriel Hoy

HOSTS:



PASTOR CRYSTON JOSIAH
PARL DIRECTOR,
CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE
CJC SECRETARY



EDWARD WOODS III
PARL DIRECTOR,
LAKE REGION CONFERENCE
CJC CHAIRMAN

The month of February

8:00 PM EST / 7:00 PM CST



LIVE STREAM

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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PANELISTS

Friday, February 28th

8:00 PM EST / 7:00 PM CST



LIVE STREAM

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WATCH VIDEO



07/08