



Annual Report 2021-2022

# Pursuing Excellence in Religion Journalism

STORIES THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE GO UNTOLD

## LETTER FROM OUR PUBLISHER

These last few tumultuous years have shown us the role that faith and religious institutions play in mitigating – and, let’s be honest, magnifying – the overlapping political and health crises we’re living through. We’ve also seen the crucial role journalism plays in telling stories of joys and sorrows amid this upheaval. Lately, I’ve delved into Religion News Service’s history to learn more about Louis Minsky, who founded RNS during a similarly

tumultuous time. A century ago, antisemitism was ascendant, and the presidential campaign of Al Smith, the first Catholic to run for the office on a major-party ticket, heightened anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiment – all of which helped give rise to the modern Ku Klux Klan. Overseas, war was brewing.

Meanwhile, a group of activists and religious and political leaders organized to resist these forces and bring people of different faiths, races and ethnicities together. The group, called the National Council of Christians and Jews, recognized the best way to reach the public was through media. Minsky helped NCCJ achieve this goal by forming Religious News Service, independently operated but affiliated with NCCJ.

Throughout the 20th century, RNS covered domestic and global events, including World War II and its repercussions, and the civil rights, women’s rights and gay rights movements – all through the lens of religion and faith. In the 21st century, RNS has continued its mission, covering 9/11 and its aftermath, growing American religious diversity, political struggles arising out of religious nationalism and increasing secularism.

Every day, we help make sense of the world by reporting on the role of faith and religion – one of the most underresourced news specialties. This, even though 48% of U.S. adults say they pray daily and 45% say religion is “very important” in their lives, according to a 2020 Pew Research/NPORS study.

At nearly 90 years old, our nonprofit newsroom is the only one of its kind in the nation. It is also one of the very few news outlets covering religion at all. Today, in the entire United States, only a few dozen reporters, editors and producers cover religion for newspapers,

radio and TV on a regional or national level.

But we are still here. And we will be here for a long time because of you, our readers and donors. Thank you. We are honored to do this work.

---

“AT A TIME WHEN  
THE WORLD IS  
GRAPPLING WITH  
DEEP ANXIETY, WE  
KNOW JOURNALISM  
PLAYS AN IMPORTANT  
ROLE PROVIDING  
CLARITY, INSIGHT  
AND CONNECTION.”

---



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deborah S. Caldwell".

**Deborah Caldwell**  
CEO & Publisher, Religion News  
Foundation/Religion News Service

---

### 2021-2022 RELIGION NEWS FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR	VICE CHAIR AND TREASURER		SECRETARY
Muhammed Chaudhry	Ken Chitwood		Deborah Caldwell
Dawn Araujo-Hawkins	Won Kim	Tom Levinson	David Roberson
Betsy Shirley	John Terrill	John Turner	Steven Waldman



Press secretary Jen Psaki takes questions from reporters at the White House in July 2021. (Official White House Photo/Hannah Foslien)

# How Your Generosity Supports Our Work

WITH THE SUPPORT of donors like you, RNS continues to drive the conversation about how religion and beliefs shape us and our world.

As you will see in this annual report, your support this year not only helped RNS tell the stories of people and faith that might otherwise go untold, but it also helped us reach new heights with our coverage: None of these accomplishments would be possible without your generosity. Thank you for investing in our high-quality, independent journalism.

PAGE VIEWS

**+120%**

2.2 million average monthly page views (vs. 1 million in Q1 2020)

READERS

**+45%**

1.6 million average monthly readers (vs. 1.1 million in Q1 2020)

DOWNLOADS

**+100,000 +27%**

On our "Saved by the City" podcast, which also won the 2022 Wilbur Award, Best Podcast Series

ARTICLES

257 articles per month (vs. 203 per month in Q1 2020)

OUR WORK WAS CITED, QUOTED AND/OR REPUBLISHED IN A WIDE VARIETY OF PUBLICATIONS, INCLUDING:

*NEW YORK*

The New York Times

RollingStone

POLITICO

CNN

Forward

The Salt Lake Tribune

Smithsonian MAGAZINE

VOA

Roll Call

The Atlantic

NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER

ALJAZEERA

DAILY NEWS MEDIA GROUP

The Dallas Morning News

People

The Washington Post

Vox

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

USA TODAY

REPORTER.COM

yahoo! news

SLATE

AP

and many more...

# At the Forefront of Covering Christian Nationalism

**T**HE BREW OF CAUSES for the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol includes our country's continuing political polarization and economic dislocation, supercharged by conspiracy theories and nationalist rhetoric. But the violence of that day also arose from a long-standing phenomenon in American religious and political history: white Christian nationalism.

With breaking news stories and commentaries in the days surrounding the attack, Religion News Service exposed how the insurrection was stoked by Christian "prophets" whose suspicion of government was fostered by decades-long efforts to politicize evangelical Christianity using its own apocalyptic messages.

In the months since, RNS has continued to report on how the insurgents' faith radicalized them and how some faith leaders have championed Christian nationalism. As politicians have also embraced the label and as entire alternative social networks have emerged online, RNS documented the ways Christian nationalism became a shared language among unexpected allies.



*Trump supporters gather outside the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)*

We have also sought to understand how other faith communities, Christian or not, have pushed back with a vision of America as pluralistic, multicultural and egalitarian.

Through dozens of news stories, op-eds and multimedia efforts — including podcasts and virtual events — RNS has explored the implications of Christian nationalism for the political, social and religious institutions of American life.

## CHARTING FAITH IN POLITICS

### WANT A CHRISTIAN NATION

**58% vs. 7%**

White evangelical Protestants are eight times as likely to prefer the U.S. be a Christian nation than a religiously pluralistic nation.<sup>1</sup>

### A GROWING POLITICAL FORCE

**1/4**

Nearly one-quarter of Republican voters (24%) are what Pew calls "faith and flag" conservatives.<sup>2</sup>

### FEARFUL OF REPLACEMENT

**55%**

More than half of those who see the U.S. as singled out by the divine also believe immigrants are invading the U.S. to "replace our cultural and ethnic background."<sup>3</sup>

### ELECTION DENIERS

**86%**

Nearly 9 out of 10 "faith and flag" conservatives believe Donald Trump at least probably won the 2020 election.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup> Source: PRRI  
<sup>2,4</sup> Source: Pew

# LGBTQ+ and Christian Schism

PERHAPS NO ISSUE impacts how Americans view their faith communities more deeply than LGBTQ+ affirmation, a movement creating splits in mainline and evangelical Christian denominations, faith-based colleges and other institutions and houses of worship. RNS has covered this rapidly evolving story largely overlooked by other U.S. media.

Besides its immediate importance to many LGBTQ+ individuals of faith, the tensions between traditional and progressive believers on this topic will provide a backdrop to much of the larger culture war in the next decades, and determine the shape of American religion as a more broadly affirming younger generation comes into its own.

*“More and more young Americans, including students at Christian schools, identify as LGBTQ — a recent Gallup survey found that 1 in 5 Americans born between 1997 and 2003 say they are LGBTQ.”*

— **Bob Smietana**, “Fallout over LGBTQ spouses at Calvin University captures broader evangelical divide”  
March 22, 2022



Women wear traditional attire for the Hindu festival of Navratri in Ahmedabad, India. (AP Photo/Ajit Solanki)

## Expanded Hindu Coverage

IN INDIA, the Muslim minority is pushing back against Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government, which they say is threatening India’s long-standing commitment to religious inclusion. In the global Indian diaspora, Hindus are objecting to Modi’s attempt to define Hinduism as a monolithic faith, one that is essential to Indian identity. Taking place in the world’s largest democracy with implications around the world, the story of who speaks for Hinduism is an essential one for RNS.



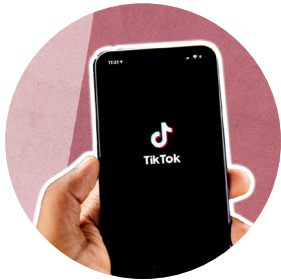
*“RNS gives American Hindus a voice in the public sphere where we can talk about the ways we live our religion: from personal and family experiences to law and politics to living transnational lives connected to India and other diasporic sites.”*

— **Khyati Joshi**, RNS columnist

# Digital Devotion

*Evolving online platforms offer endless forums for the faithful*

From TikTok to YouTube, from Christian furies to a Sikh dancer in the Yukon, social media has become the playground for any number of faith communities and expressions. As social media influencers and Reddit forums play an increasingly outsized role in the lives of younger generations, RNS recognizes the need to keep a watchful eye on ever-changing internet trends. And what's emerged is a milieu of syncretistic spirituality, watchdog activism and niche subcultures populated with characters and drama befitting any church gossip circle.



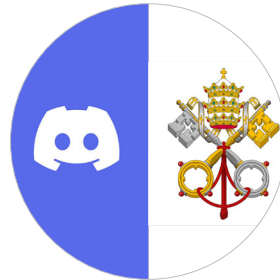
## **Lonely no more: Questioning Christians find belonging on TikTok**

*Deconstructing the faith of one's childhood can be a lonely undertaking. For many of these church exiles, TikTok has filled the gap.*



## **YouTube star Gurdeep Pandher draws on Sikh faith as he dances for joy**

*"The work I've been doing to make these videos, it's not just entertainment. It's more like a social service," said Pandher.*



## **A 'Catholic' diocese that values internet hierarchy over religious expertise**

*Venturing onto the Diocese of Discord server, a user is presented with discussion channels full of Pepe the Frog GIFs and Vatican flag emojis.*



## **Fundie Fridays, the snarky critic of conservative religious zeal, faces YouTube termination**

*Poking fun at fundamentalists, Jennifer Sutphin and James Bryant stand symmetrically antithetical to Christian content creators — and have thousands of followers.*

## OVERTURNING OF ROE V. WADE

**CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS'** long-awaited and hard-fought victory at the U.S. Supreme Court in the Dobbs case is the end of an era in American religious and political history — and the beginning of a new chapter in the battle over abortion in the United States. Overturning Roe v. Wade returned abortion policy to the states as its opponents argued, but voters in the states have been unpredictable, and already legal challenges to new state laws promise to force judges to be the arbiters once again.

RNS has covered these developments and provided both sides a forum for discussing new considerations for religious liberty and governments' and faith communities' responsibilities in the post-Roe world.



*Anti-abortion advocates celebrate outside the Supreme Court on June 24, 2022, in Washington. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)*

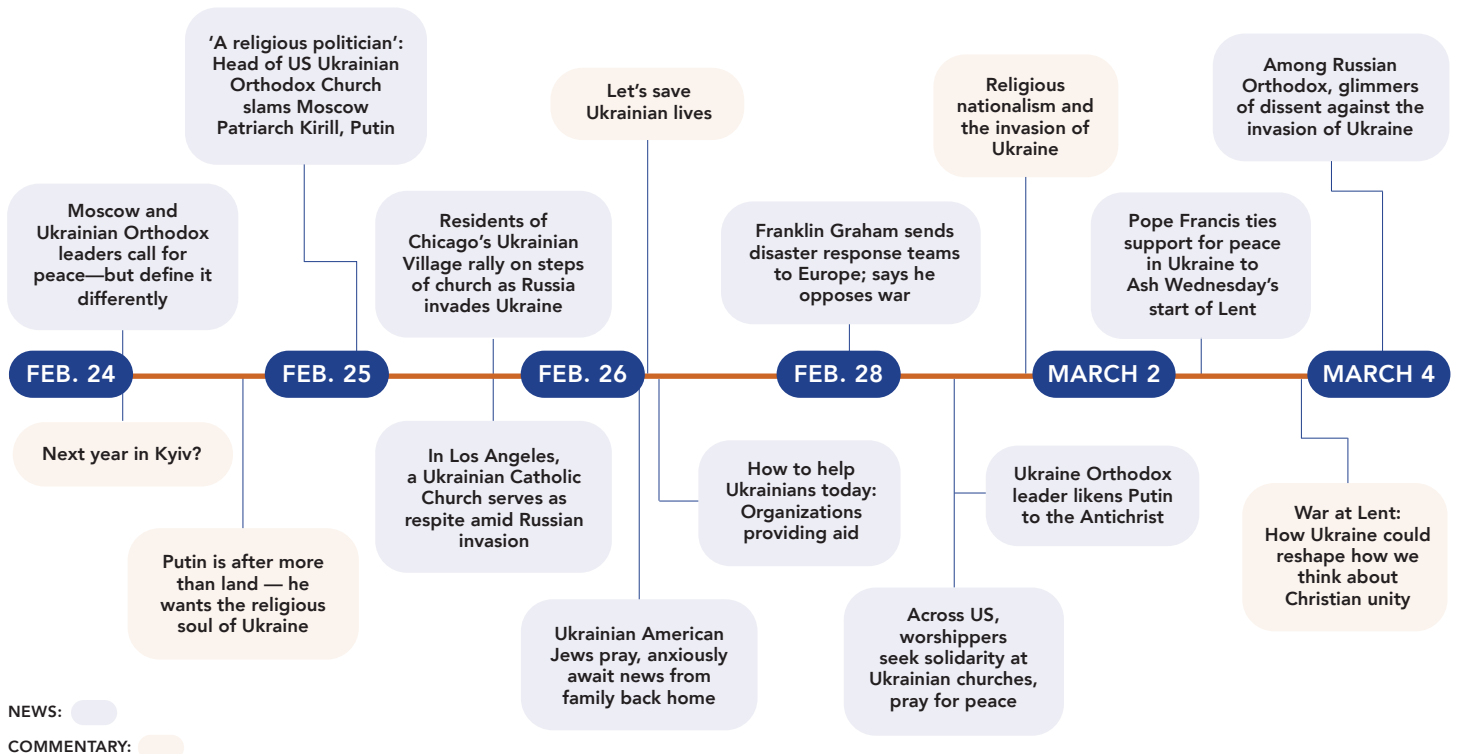
# The Complicated Orthodox Tensions Behind the Russia-Ukraine War

On Feb. 24, 2022, Russia began its attack on neighboring Ukraine. While ostensibly not a religious war, religion lay at the heart of the national mythologies animating each side. Tensions between the Russian Orthodox Church and the newly independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church quickly escalated as Patriarch Kirill in Moscow issued a call for unity under a Russian brotherhood. RNS mobilized to cover the war both domestically and abroad and in the week that followed the invasion, published more than a dozen news stories and commentaries, including the experiences of Ukrainian Americans, interviews with Orthodox clergy and analysis of evangelical ties to Russia.



*A Ukrainian soldier prays during Orthodox Easter in Kyiv, Ukraine, on April 24, 2022. (AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky)*

## RNS COVERAGE IN THE DAYS AFTER THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE



# Thank You to Our Donors

*RNS is primarily supported by our generous donors, who understand the importance of high-quality journalism. We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to these contributors who have made significant gifts to support our work this year.*

## Major Donors

*(July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)*

*David Bradley  
Deborah Caldwell and Ray Rettino  
Bill and Lisa Cieslewicz  
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities  
Anonymous  
Robert Ellwood  
Katherine Enright  
Facebook  
Amy Fritz  
Mr. and Mrs. Salil Gupte  
Guru Krupa Foundation  
Institute for Nonprofit News  
Elaine Justice  
Rachel King  
David Lamech  
Tom Levinson  
Lilly Endowment Inc.  
Robert Martin and Carol Thrane  
Anonymous  
The Miami Fund  
Dr. Mubashir Mumtaz  
Karen Paul, CFRE  
Anonymous  
David Reid  
Mr. Dave Roberson and Ms. Susan Roberson, in Recognition of Religion News Writers  
Anonymous  
Saddleback Church  
Grace Seitzer  
Solutions Journalism Network  
John Terrill  
John Turner  
Rev. Dr. Deborah White  
Anonymous*

## Leadership Donors

*(July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)*

*Abigail Abysalsh-Metzger  
Graeme Addicott  
Daniel Aleshire  
John Alsdorf  
James Alstott  
Philip Amerson  
Adlai Amor  
Anonymous  
Patricia Appelbaum  
Cynthia Astle  
Inelle Bagwell  
Vikas Bajaj  
Art Bamford  
S. Scott Bartchy  
Thomas Baynham  
Anonymous  
Peter Bileckyj  
Thomas Bird  
Whitney Bodman  
The Boeing Company  
Matching Gift Program  
Michele Boon  
Kenneth Boyack  
Manya Brachear  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Brian Brown  
Peggy Bryan  
Wayne Buckhout  
Bryan Burke  
Anne Carey  
Humberto Casanova  
M. Lenore Chernenko  
Philip Chinn  
Anonymous  
L. Mason Cobb  
James Coffin  
Renee and David Connelly  
Pat Conover  
Mary Costello  
Steve Crabtree*

*Jessica Crist  
Christopher C. Dahl  
Beth Daley  
Russell Davies  
Robert Davis  
Marilyn Dikkers  
William Dockery  
George Donigian  
Marta Dragos  
Fr. James Dutko  
Joseph Easley  
Jeffrey Engh  
Barbara Falconer-Newhall  
John Fay  
Clifton Foo  
Anonymous  
Miok Fowler  
Michael Franch  
Ali Francisco  
James Gardiner  
Alexander Garklavs  
Victoria Garlock  
Anonymous  
Mary Gladstone  
Charles Glanville  
Louise Goben  
Ari Goldman  
Laurie Goodstein  
Jack Gordon  
Anonymous  
Grant Grissom  
Marie Guerin  
Tony Guthrie  
Jacques Hadler, Jr.  
Mimi Haebig  
Dr. Michele Hagans  
Anonymous  
Gail Hambleton  
Sarita Hanley  
Sharon Harfman  
Michael Harrington  
Phil Haslanger  
Chris Hauser  
Heidi Heard  
Tamara Henry  
Anonymous*

*Anne Hodges-Copple  
Anita Houck  
Kelly Hughes  
Robert Hunt  
Elenora Ivory  
Vaughn James  
Patricia Jefferis  
Roger Jenks  
James Johnson  
John Johnson  
Anonymous  
Kent Johnson  
Rev. Roger Jones  
F. Belton Joyner  
John Kane  
Zahra Kassam  
Anonymous  
Susan Keller  
Kathleen Kelly  
Michael Dean Khan  
Faroque Khan  
John Kidd  
Won Kim  
Tom Kinzie  
Thomas Kleinert  
Joseph Kmoch  
James Knight  
Anonymous  
David Kornelis  
Christine Kossol  
Peter Kountz  
David Kovach  
Carmen LaBerge  
Larry Langdon  
James Lesch  
Jonathan Levine  
Deborah Lindsay  
P C Lo  
Anonymous  
Mike Lotrean  
The Rev. Debra Low-Skinner  
Arvin and Sue Luchs  
Mark Lukens  
Andrew Lumpe  
Susan Lyon  
Mark Mahler*



Rick Malivuk  
Vance Mann  
Christel Manning  
Joyce Manson  
Pamela Manson  
Dr. Ann Massie  
Tiare Mathison  
Jeanne Matthews  
Westina Matthews  
Francis Maurovich  
Beverly McCormick  
Ron McCreary  
Rev. Dr. Mary Louise  
McCullough  
Dr. Eric McDaniel  
Douglas McFarlan  
Lisa McGinley  
Daniel McGlynn  
Anonymous  
Gretchen McKee  
Robert McKeown  
Thomas Merfeld  
Anonymous  
David Miller  
Rita and James Mize  
Ed Morrison  
Arun Moses  
Min. Barbara Moss  
Peter Mueller  
Anonymous  
Michael Nash  
Kathleen Nilsen  
Ann O'Leary  
Gretchen Olson Kopp  
Lloyd Omdahl  
Daniel O'Neal  
Haydee Oropesa  
Jacqueline Osborne  
Anonymous  
Richard Ostling  
Anonymous  
Teresa Owens  
Anonymous  
Marcia Pally  
Donald Parker-Burgard  
Monique Parsons  
Ebrahim Patel  
Jerry Pattengale  
Randall Paul  
Brian Pennington  
Virginia Persson  
Julie Phillips  
Winford Phillips  
Nancy Piggott  
Barbara Pitkin  
Mindy Portnoy

Peter Powell  
Peter-Michael Preble  
Jennifer Preston  
Pulitzer Center  
Frank Purvis  
Anonymous  
Joyce Ramay  
Curtis Ramsey-Lucas  
Pamela Rawson  
Ann Redd  
Religion Communicators  
Council  
James Richardson  
Rev. Nancy Richmond  
Tom Riley  
Thomas Roberts  
Eric Rogers  
Lee Ross  
Anonymous  
Shane Ryland  
Daniel Sack  
Rabbi David Saperstein  
Christine Schindler  
Ron Schooler  
Deona Schut  
Keith Schwanz  
David Scott  
Ben Scott-Brandt  
Frank Seaman  
Deborah Self  
Georgia Senor  
Richard Shapiro  
Betsy Shirley  
Mark Silk  
Sharye Skinner  
Jeffrey Slade  
Corwin Smidt  
Robert Smietana  
Peter Smith  
Harold Smith  
Rev. Jean Smith  
Emily Soloff  
Gerald Solomon  
Robert Steenberge  
Peter and Margaret Steinfelds  
Robert Stevens  
Katherine Stewart  
Jeanette Stokes  
Ronald Stone  
Shirley Struchen  
Helen Stumbo  
Marjorie Sullivan  
Valyn Sutter  
Paul Swamidass  
Frank Sweetser  
Mark Tauber

Jackson Tay Bosley  
John Thomas  
Scott Thumma  
Anonymous  
Donald Tinder  
Mark Tooley  
Emilie Townes  
Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes  
Debra Trakel  
Leo Van Arragon  
Harlan Van Hees  
Ken Vandergriff  
Edwin Voorhees  
William Waff  
Steven Waldman  
Lee Walthall  
David Waters  
Lawrence Webb  
Carter West  
Paul Wojda  
Catherine Wolff  
James Wood  
Kenneth Woodward  
Norris Wootton  
Art Wortman

## **Sustaining Donors**

**(July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)**

We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to these donors who have made generous monthly or annual gift commitments.

Abigail Abysalh-Metzger  
Kevin Adams  
Farah Ahmad  
Aisha Ahmad  
Daniel Aleshire  
Jeffrey Allen  
Robert Allenson  
John Alsdorf  
James Alstott  
Donna Amick  
Adlai Amor  
Anonymous  
Cynthia Astle  
Inelle Bagwell  
Art Bamford  
Barbara Baraw  
S. Scott Bartchy  
Thomas Baynham  
Layne Beamer  
Paul Beatty  
Ruth Beresford  
Thomas Bird

Pamela Blome  
Michele Boon  
Kenneth Boyack  
Anonymous  
William Bray  
Anonymous  
Angela Brown  
Doris Burdick  
Bryan Burke  
Geoffrey Burrill  
Gail Cafferata  
Deborah Caldwell and Ray  
Rettino  
Madelyn Campbell  
Philippa Carter  
Mary Chapin  
Nisan Chavkin  
M. Lenore Chernenko  
Anonymous  
James Coffin  
Robert Collins  
Kathleen Coolick  
Aloisio Correia  
Anna Crotty  
Jennelle Cunning  
Christopher C. Dahl  
Beth Daley  
Frederick Daley  
Russell Davies  
Rebecca Davis  
Robert Davis  
Lori Dekker  
Sherrie DeWitt  
William Dockery  
Daniel Doornbos  
Marta Dragos  
Marian Edmonds-Allen  
John Elder  
Robert Ellwood  
Christina Eng  
Jeffrey Engh  
Shelby Erickson  
John and Norma Farthing  
John Fay  
Martin Finney  
Michael Flood  
Marie Fortune  
Ali Francisco  
James Franklin  
James Freeman  
Ann Friedman  
Amy Fritz  
Marcia Fry  
Mike Fuller  
Suzanne Gibson  
Anonymous

Lucille Gleddie  
Louise Goben  
Ari Goldman  
Barbara Gordon  
Christine Graham  
Anonymous  
Eileen Grubb  
Harold Erik Gunn  
Tony Guthrie  
Jacques Hadler, Jr.  
Anonymous  
Gail Hambleton  
Susan Harding  
Michael Harrington  
Natalie Hart  
Heidi Heard  
Maria Hearing  
Tamara Henry  
Rick Herrick  
Steven Heyman  
Frida Hintze  
David Howe  
Kelly Hughes  
Robert Hunt  
John Hutton  
Elenora Ivory  
Heidi Jaeger  
Vaughn James  
Alice Jena  
Lin Jenkins  
Roger Jenks  
James Johnson  
John Johnson  
Kent Johnson  
Kathleen Johnson  
David Johnston  
Greg Jones  
Rev. Roger Jones  
Elaine Justice  
John Kane  
Robert Kanner  
Susan Keller  
Erwin Kerr  
Michael Dean Khan  
Tom Kinzie  
Thomas Kleinert  
James Knight  
Anonymous  
Elizabeth Kopack  
Peter Kountz  
Anita and David Kovach  
Sonia Kovitz  
Rod Kuehn

Carmen LaBerge  
David Lamech  
Fran Leap  
Barbara Learmonth  
Patricia Lefevere  
Will Lentz  
Jan Lichtenwæalter  
Deborah Lindsay  
Thomas Loo  
Arvin and Sue Luchs  
Patricia Ludwig  
Mark Lukens  
Susan Lyon  
Deborah Magdalene  
Lisa Manske  
Joyce Manson  
Tiare Mathison  
Amy Maupin  
Beverly McCormick  
Ron McCreary  
Dr. Eric McDaniel  
Anonymous  
Cherol McMonigle  
Rosemary McNatt  
Anonymous  
David Miller  
Emily Miller  
Shannon Moore  
Richard Morris  
Arun Moses  
Nancy Mott and Linda  
Minton  
Peter Mueller  
Dr. Mubashir Mumtaz  
Jeffery Murphy  
Anonymous  
Nelson Murphy  
Isaiah Murtaugh  
Michael Nash  
Nick Oakley  
Michael Offjord  
Gretchen Olson Kopp  
Leon Oman  
Daniel O'Neal  
Haydee Oropesa  
Teresa Owens  
Anonymous  
Randall Pannell  
Donald Parker-Burgard  
Ebrahim Patel  
Noelle Pellowski  
Ygnacio Pena  
Piper Perry

Mary Anne Phemister  
Winford Phillips  
Julie Phillips  
Christina Pike  
Barbara Pitkin  
Mindy Portnoy  
Jon Powers  
Peter-Michael Preble  
Nelson Price  
Frank Purvis  
Anonymous  
Tim Rathes  
Pamela Rawson  
Ann Redd  
Bruce Reyes-Chow  
Philip Rhoads  
Rev. Nancy Richmond  
Nancy Rockwell  
Eric Rogers  
John Rosenberg  
Lee Ross  
Marjorie Royle  
Nancy Salovich  
Rabbi David Saperstein  
Christine Schindler  
Ron Schooler  
Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza  
Deona Schut  
Bill Scott  
Marcia Segal  
Grace Seitzer  
Deborah Self  
Arkaan Semere  
Georgia Senor  
Olivia Shelton  
Yonat Shimron  
Betsy Shirley  
Jeffrey Slade  
Jerry Sloan  
Robert Smietana  
Peter Smith  
Mary Anne Smith  
Naureen Sohail  
Robert Sorozan  
Doug Stearns  
Robert Steenberge  
John Stevens  
Mirabelle Stuedter  
Allison Stokes  
Ronald Stone  
Clayton Summers  
Frank Sweetser  
Sarita Tamayo-Moraga

Mark Tauber  
Jackson Tay Bosley  
BJP Thomas  
Anonymous  
David Tolich  
Mark Turman  
John Turner  
Leo Van Arragon  
Harlan Van Hees  
Ken Vandergriff  
Diane Vescovi  
Paul Voakes  
Dirk Von der Horst  
Lee Walthall  
David Waters  
Joni Way  
Elfriede Wedam  
Amy Weiss  
Carter West  
Timothy West  
Rev. Dr. Deborah White  
Jonathon Wiggins  
David Wilensky  
Paul Wojda  
James Wood  
Norris Wootton  
Morris Young

## **Community Partners**

(July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)

The Associated Press  
Association of Religion  
Data Archives  
Columbia University  
Graduate School  
of Journalism  
The Conversation  
Harvard University  
Institute for Nonprofit News  
Interfaith America  
Missouri School of  
Journalism - University  
of Missouri  
News Revenue Hub  
Presbyterian Historical Society  
Religion News Association  
University of Southern  
California Annenberg School  
for Communication  
and Journalism  
Yale University

# A Proof Text for Democracy

*If the past year has taught us anything, it's that religion doesn't tend to stay private or keep to the pews*



**Paul O'Donnell**  
Editor-in-Chief  
Religion News Service

*Dear Readers,*

Pre-COVID-19, I was in an elevator in a Midwestern hotel where I was attending a journalists' conference when one of my fellow passengers examined my ID badge and asked, "Religion News Service. What do you cover, churches?" My mind flashed through a dozen topics we at RNS cover week to week that would help him understand: Power and politics? Sexuality and gender? Culture wars? Immigration and assimilation?

When many of us think of religion, we're prone to think first of personal faith and the mostly silent and often empty places where we and our neighbors work it out.

But if the past years and months have taught us anything, it's that religion doesn't tend to stay private or keep to the pews:

The religious symbols brandished at the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, the alienation of Muslims by the governing Hindu nationalist party in India, lawsuits filed to keep churches open against the orders of state health commissioners during the pandemic, the fight to raise awareness about rising antisemitism, faith organizations demonstrating outside the

Supreme Court for and against legal abortion — these are not personal devotions but the proof tests of democracy, in which faith has always played a role.

This is what makes Religion News Service unlike any other enterprise in the media world: A secular, independent news and opinion outlet, we are dedicated to giving religion its due in world and national affairs, reminding leaders that they

*"We're dedicated to giving religion its due and reminding leaders that they ignore faith at their own peril."*

ignore faith at their own peril and giving voice to those whose faith-based approach to politics and social concerns is often unfairly and ignorantly dismissed.

In the coming year, we know that religion will continue to be essential to understanding the coming elections, debates over how to raise and educate children, even the health of our planet. With the help of all our supporters, we'll provide clear-eyed reporting on breaking news and bring you analysis of the larger themes — finding the truth and drawing the big picture, beyond the headlines and the elevator talk.



*RNS staff in March 2022 (RNS Photo/Kit Doyle)*

**BEST IN CLASS RELIGION CONTENT**  
**Congratulations to Our Latest  
 Award-Winning Journalists**



**ADELLE M. BANKS**

**LIFETIME  
 ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
*Washington Association  
 of Black Journalists*



**JACK JENKINS**

**1ST PLACE**  
*Large Newspapers &  
 Wire Services, Religion  
 News Association*



**BOB SMIETANA**

**3RD PLACE**  
*Large Newspapers &  
 Wire Services, Religion  
 News Association  
 and Online-Only News  
 Outlets, Religion News  
 Association*



**ROXANNE STONE,  
 KATELYN BEATY  
 & J. WOODWARD**

**WILBUR AWARD**  
*Best Podcast Series,  
 Religion Communicators  
 Council, for Saved  
 by the City podcast*

**MAJOR FUNDERS & PARTNERS**



**HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING RNS IN YOUR ESTATE PLAN?**

You can support the future of religion journalism by leaving Religion News Foundation (Federal Tax ID: 31-1650883) in your will or trust, or by naming RNF as a beneficiary of one of your financial or investment accounts.



**CONTACT US**

**EMAIL:** leadership@religionnews.com **SITE:** www.religionnews.com  
**ADDRESS:** Religion News Foundation, PO Box 1808, Columbia, MO 65205