

The [Religion Newswriters Association](#), the world's oldest and largest professional association for journalists who write about religion, released the results of its annual Top Ten survey. More than 100 members participated in the online poll and identified the following topics as the top religion stories of 2012:

1. U.S. Catholic bishops lead opposition to the Obamacare requirement that insurance coverage for contraception be provided for employees. The government backs down a bit, but not enough to satisfy the opposition.
2. A [Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life](#) survey shows that "nones" is the fastest-growing religious group in the United States, rising to 19.6 percent of the population.
3. The circulation of an anti-Islam film trailer, "Innocence of Muslims," causes unrest in several countries, leading to claims that it inspired the fatal attack on a U.S. consulate in Libya. President Obama, at the United Nations, calls for the toleration of blasphemy and states that respect is a two-way street.
4. Mitt Romney's Mormon faith turns out to be a virtual nonissue for white evangelical voters, who supported him more strongly than they did John McCain in the U.S. presidential race.
5. Monsignor William Lynn of Philadelphia becomes the first senior Catholic official in the United States to be found guilty of covering up priestly child abuse; later Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City, Missouri, becomes the first bishop to be found guilty of the crime.
6. The Vatican criticizes the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, an umbrella group of U.S. nuns, alleging they haven't supported church teaching on abortion, sexuality, or women's ordination.
7. Voters approve same-sex marriage in Maine, Maryland, and Washington, bringing the total approving states to nine as well as the District of Columbia. Also, Minnesota defeats a ban on

same-sex marriage after North Carolina approves one.

8. The Episcopal Church overwhelmingly adopts a trial ritual for blessing same-sex couples. Earlier, the United Methodists fail to vote on approving gay clergy, and the Presbyterians (USA) vote to study, rather than sanction, same-sex marriage ceremonies.

9. Six people are killed and three wounded during worship in a Sikh temple in suburban Milwaukee. The shooter, an Army veteran killed by police, is described as a neo-Nazi.

10. The Southern Baptist Convention elects without opposition its first black president, the Reverend Fred Luter of New Orleans.

Editor's Note: Information for this article was provided by the Religion Newswriters Association (<http://www.rna.org/>).