

The [Religion Newswriters Association](#) polled its members — more than three hundred journalists — to identify the top ten religion news stories of 2011. The following results, ranked first to tenth, were recently released:

1. The death of Osama bin Laden spurs discussions among people of faith on issues of forgiveness, peace, justice, and retribution.
2. Lively congressional hearings are held on the civil rights of American Muslims. In the House of Representatives hearings focus on alleged radicalism, and in the Senate hearings focus on crimes reported against Muslims.
3. Catholic Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City, Missouri, is charged with failure to report the suspected abuse of a child, becoming the first active bishop in the country to face criminal prosecution in such a case.
4. The Catholic Church introduces a new translation of the Roman Missal throughout the English-speaking world, making the first significant change to a liturgy since 1973.
5. Presbyterian Church (USA) allows a local option on the ordination of partnered gay people. Church defections over the issue continue among mainline Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians.
6. Pope John Paul II is beatified — the last step before sainthood — in a May ceremony attended by more than one million people in Rome.
7. California evangelist Harold Camping attracts attention with his predictions that the world would end in May and again in October 2011.
8. A book by Michigan megachurch pastor Rob Bell, *Love Wins*, presenting a much less harsh picture of hell than is traditional, stirs discussion in evangelical circles. Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention rebut it.
9. The Personhood Initiative, designed to outlaw abortion by declaring a fetus a person, fails on Election Day in Mississippi, but advocates plan to try in other states. Meanwhile, reports show the number of restrictions adopted throughout the country against abortion during the year are far more than in any previous year.
10. Bible translations make news: celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the King James Version; criticism, notably by Southern Baptists, about gender usage in the newest New International Version; and completion of the Common English Bible.

Editor's Note: Information for this article was provided by the Religion Newswriters Association. For the complete article, please [see here](#) (Last accessed May 8, 2012).