

NEWS RELEASE



Maryland Public Television

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For immediate release

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**MPT presents documentary series *Christianity at a Crossroads*,
a look at the changing face of Christianity in America**

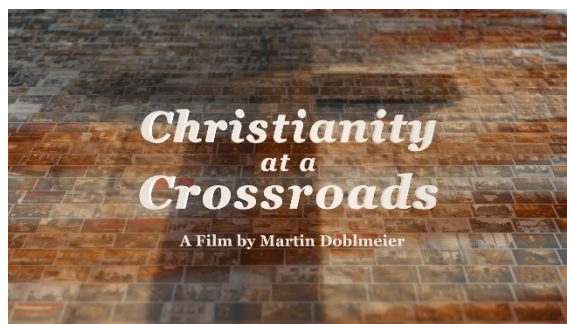
***Four-part series includes segment about Church of the Nativity, Roman Catholic parish
in Timonium, Maryland***

***Latest of more than 30 documentaries Alexandria, Virginia filmmaker has produced
and directed focused on religion, faith and spirituality.***

OWINGS MILLS, MD – [Maryland Public Television](http://MarylandPublicTelevision.org) is serving as public TV's presenting station for award-winning filmmaker Martin Doblmeier's new four-part documentary series, *Christianity at a Crossroads*. A preview is available at <https://bit.ly/4hBDOnK>.

Episodes one and two of *Christianity at a Crossroads* will air on MPT and the [MPT livestream](#) on October 17 at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m., respectively. Episodes three and four will similarly air at the same times on Sunday, October 18. Encore broadcasts will air on MPT2 starting on Sunday, October 18. The film will also be available on the [free PBS app](#).

Doblmeier's *Christianity at a Crossroads* explores the current state of Christianity in America during a period of immense change. Although it's been the nation's majority religion since its founding, growth has mostly flatlined, leading to declining church attendance and thousands of church closures. As the film shows, however, there are encouraging signs of life.



“Our hope was to put a human face to all the data around the decline of Christianity in American life today,” says the Alexandria, Virginia filmmaker. “Whether you are religious or not, this is an incredibly complex and timely story that has rippling effects for so many millions of Americans. But we also wanted to show how there are congregations across this country filled with vitality, imagination, and growth if you know where to look.”

Filmed on location across the country, *Christianity at a Crossroads* visits thriving megachurches, dwindling congregations, historic church buildings, and virtual reality services. Pastors and congregants from a variety of denominations and political leanings share heartfelt stories, with

insightful commentary from scholars, theologians, demographic experts, and religion journalists. Among the issues addressed in the documentary are:

- **Thriving churches:** The film visits booming evangelical megachurches, and a Catholic parish, Church of the Nativity in Timonium, Maryland, which has doubled attendance since borrowing from the megachurch playbook of energetic services, contemporary music, and plenty of small groups and programs.
- **Church closures:** As many as 100,000 churches are expected to close or be repurposed in the coming years. Doblmeier illustrates the emotional pain of such closures through the story of Belding United Methodist Church in Belding, Michigan, which closed recently after 120 years. Down to a dozen members, the church had no choice but to close, a wrenching decision for members whose families belonged for generations.
- **Immigrant Churches:** Some of the most vibrant churches in America are found in immigrant communities, as the film shows with profiles of Korean Presbyterian Church in northern Virginia; a Hispanic Catholic parish, Sacred Heart Church in Richmond, Virginia; and The Gathering, a Latino-led multi-ethnic Pentecostal church in Orlando, Florida.
- **Culture Wars:** American Christianity is marked by ideological rifts over sexuality, abortion, racism, women's issues, and social justice. Christian political positions range from far-right to "hard center," to progressive. The film introduces gay pastors, women pastors, and pastors who make a case for Christian Nationalism. It features interviews with conservatives such as Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Dallas; Albert Mohler of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and progressives such as Rev. Jacqueline Lewis of New York City's Middle Collegiate Church; Rev. Howard-John Wesley, of Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia; and Adam Hamilton, of Resurrection Church in Kansas City, Missouri.
- **Christian Nationalism:** "The deep convulsions in American Christianity were on full display" at the insurrection on January 6, 2021, Doblmeier says in the film. "These events were "deeply disturbing to many millions of American Christians." Russell Moore of evangelical magazine *Christianity Today* says he was "angered at every level, outraged as a Christian" seeing fellow Christians building gallows at the Capitol. "The fundamental question is not does the Church live up to its ideals and principles, but does the Church have ideas and principles?"
- **Nones and those who leave:** "Nones," those who claim no particular religious affiliation, are the fastest-growing group in America's religious demographics. Viewers hear from people who left church because of traumatic experiences; and from members of a secular humanist gathering.

The changes seem to be coming fast and furiously. "It's unfathomable for me to describe how much religion has changed in America in the last 30-40 years," says Ryan Burge, religion statistician at the Danforth Center and author of *The Vanishing Church*. He is one of several religion researchers and pollsters who lend their expertise to the film, including The Pew Research Center, Gallup, and Public Religion Research Institute.

With a wide range of voices and stories and informative expert commentary, *Christianity at a Crossroads* brings to life the complex and emotional story of Christian faith in America today.

Join MPT and Journey Films on Tuesday, October 13, at 7 p.m. for an interactive preview of the upcoming documentary. This free, virtual event features exclusive film clips alongside a live conversation with the filmmaker and individuals featured in the program. The panel will consist of:

- Deryl Davis - documentary film producer (moderator)
- Martin Doblmeier - filmmaker, *Christianity at a Crossroads*
- Melissa Deckman - CEO, Public Religion Research Institute, Washington, D.C.
- Tom Corcoran - associate to the pastor, Church of the Nativity, Timonium, Maryland
- Owen Lee - senior pastor, Christ Central Presbyterian Church, Centreville, Virginia

To register to attend, use this link: <https://bit.ly/479xQKY>.

Christianity at a Crossroads is a presentation of Maryland Public Television. The series is being presented nationwide by American Public Television. Major funding was provided by Lilly Endowment. Additional funding provided by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and the Catholic Communication Campaign.

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About Journey Films

Journey Films was founded in 1983 by award-winning filmmaker Martin Doblmeier as a television and film production company specializing in religion, faith and spirituality. Journey Films has produced more than 30 documentary films that have aired on PBS, ABC, NBC, the BBC and on broadcast outlets around the world. These include *Bonhoeffer*; *Backs Against the Wall*; *The Howard Thurman Story*; *Revolution of the Heart: The Dorothy Day Story*; *Spiritual Audacity: The Abraham Joshua Heschel Story*; and *Sabbath*. These films have been translated into more than a dozen languages. In all, Journey Films has won three regional Emmy Awards, 10 Gabriel Awards for the nation's best film on a topic of religion, three Gold Awards at the US International Film and Television Festival, the Sun Valley Film Festival, and many others. More information is available at journeyfilms.com.

About Martin Doblmeier

Martin Doblmeier holds degrees in religious studies, broadcast journalism and three honorary degrees in fine arts and humane letters. Since 1983 he has produced and directed more than 30 films focused on religion, faith and spirituality. He combines a lifelong interest in religion with a passion for storytelling. Over the years he has traveled on location to more than 40 countries to profile religious leaders, spiritual communities, heads of state and Nobel Laureates. His films explore how belief can lead individuals to extraordinary acts, how spirituality creates and sustains communities, and how faith is lived in extraordinary ways. In 2025 he was inducted into the Silver Circle of the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining and educational content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices via its [online video player](#) and the [free PBS app](#). A state agency operating under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission, MPT also produces local, regional, and national programming and frequently earns regional Emmy® awards for its work. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through its [Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education](#) and [Thinkport.org](#). MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources covering a wide range of topics. More information is available at mpt.org.