

# Trump's surprise election tops religion news stories of 2016

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—The election of Donald Trump, a man who suggested banning Muslim immigration to the United States and attracted overwhelming evangelical support, was the top religion story of the year, according to members of the Religion News Association.

But Trump came in as runner-up for the top religion newsmaker of the year, behind Gold Star parents and Muslims Khizr and Ghazala Khan, who described the death of their son, U.S. Army Capt. Humayun Khan, in Iraq to a spellbound Democratic National Convention audience in July.

RNA is an international organization of journalists who write about religion. It has polled its 500 members on the top 10 religion stories of the year for four decades.

While Trump was not the most religious candidate in what started out as a broad field, his election can be credited to his appeal to white evangelicals, who voted for him by a margin of 4 to 1.

Evangelical support of Trump—who has been married three times, owns multiple casinos and has spoken disrespectfully of women—was such a surprise it took its own category, coming in as the No. 9 story in the RNA poll.

**Also high on the list of RNA's most important religion news stories were:**

- Attacks on Muslims and other minorities following the election.
- Standing Rock Sioux's demonstration against a proposed pipeline

on tribal lands.

- Several stories involving Pope Francis, including his denouncement of Trump's proposed wall along the U.S.-Mexico border as "not Christian" and his welcome to divorced Catholics.

Francis topped the list of religion newsmakers the last three years. This year, he dipped to fourth place, behind the Khans, Trump and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

The full list of winning stories and newsmakers can be found [here](#).