



## RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE HIGHLIGHTS

*Since its founding in 2001, the Religious Institute has raised a faithful voice for sexual justice. We are proud to share some of the highlights of our first 15 years!*

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### CREATING A NATIONAL NETWORK OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS COMMITTED TO SEXUAL JUSTICE

The Religious Institute's network of religious leaders has grown from 850 to nearly 8,000, representing more than 50 faith traditions and serving in every state in the country.



### TRAINING CLERGY ON SEXUALITY ISSUES

Our commitment to ensuring that all clergy have the knowledge and skills to be sexually healthy religious professionals has resulted in more than 30 seminaries being designated as sexually healthy and responsible—more than three times the number in 2010. All United Church of Christ and all Unitarian Universalist seminaries have received the Religious Institute designation as sexually healthy and responsible seminaries. Four denominations and religious movements now require sexuality training for their clergy candidates; none did as recently as 2009.

Our staff has also provided courses for seminarians at Yale Divinity School, Meadville Lombard Theological School, Union Theological Seminary, the Pacific School of Religion, and online courses for more than 500 seminarians and clergy. Our core online course, *Sexuality Issues for Religious Professionals*, is now available for Christian, Jewish, and Unitarian Universalist clergy and seminarians. Online courses for religious educators and clergy misconduct prevention are also available.



### CREATING SEXUALLY HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

Each year, the Religious Institute staff provides technical assistance to hundreds of congregations on addressing a broad range of sexuality issues. During the past 15 years, we have created best practice criteria for sexually safer congregations, sexually healthy congregations and clergy, and sexually healthy denominations. We have published the nation's only guidebooks for diverse faith communities on sexually healthy congregations, sexuality education, bisexuality, and assisted reproductive technologies.



## ENGAGING CONGREGATIONS IN SEXUAL JUSTICE

Hundreds of congregations across the United States participated in the Religious Institute's Congo Sabbath (against violence against women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Rachel Sabbath (for safe pregnancies and childbirth around the world), Gilead Sabbath (for full inclusion, equality, and safety for LGBTQ people around the world), and a weekend dedicated to preventing LGBTQ youth suicides. Hundreds of congregations and faith organizations joined the Religious Institute's National Weekend of Prayer for the Freedom to Marry and National Weekend of Prayer for Reproductive Justice.



## CREATING NEW RESEARCH

Since we began, the Religious Institute has conducted and published groundbreaking studies on sexuality and religion. These include research on sexuality education in graduate theological education, advocacy and congregational practices of progressive religious professionals, the sexual health programs and practices of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and how congregations are addressing Internet technologies and social media. *A Time to Embrace: Why the Sexual and Reproductive Justice Movement Needs Religion* is our most recent study.



## DEEPENING THE DIALOGUE ABOUT SEXUAL JUSTICE

The Religious Institute created the *Open Letter to Religious Leaders* series to provide the theological foundation for diverse sexual justice issues. These *Open Letters*—on such subjects as marriage equality, family planning, and abortion—have been endorsed by thousands of clergy, sent to Congress and state legislatures, and used in public policy debates around the country.

National secular social justice organizations turn to the Religious Institute when they seek to engage the support of people of faith. We have created faith projects for such national organizations as Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Freedom to Marry, and the Center for Reproductive Rights, who regularly turn to us for support.

The Religious Institute regularly promotes a progressive religious voice in public policy debates. We have provided assistance to the White House and held Congressional briefings. We appear in the national media, organize social media campaigns, and help national, state, and local organizations engage progressive faith leaders.

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To find out more about the Religious Institute, follow us on Twitter @ReligiousInst, like us on Facebook, or join our networks of people of faith and religious leaders by signing up at [www.ReligiousInstitute.org](http://www.ReligiousInstitute.org).

## THANK YOU!

The work of the Religious Institute has always been based on Rev. Haffner's maxim, "We are smarter together than we are alone." During our first 15 years, the country's most respected progressive theologians and sexual justice activists have participated in Religious Institute colloquia to create our theological frameworks, guidebooks for clergy and congregations, and in-depth projects. We are grateful to each of them for volunteering their time and sharing their wisdom. The list below is a "Who's Who" of religion and sexual and reproductive health and justice advocates. We are grateful to each of them for volunteering their time and expertise.

- ❖ Rabbi Dr. Rebecca Alpert
- ❖ Imam Daayiee Abdullah\*
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- ❖ Rev. Dr. Karen-Marie Yust
- ❖ Ms. Katey Zeh

\* participated in more than one Religious Institute project

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