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**NEW STUDY VALUES FAITH IN AMERICA OVER ONE TRILLION DOLLARS**

*--First-ever Research Study Highlighting the Impact of Religion on the U.S. Economy and Society--*

Washington, D.C. — In a panel today, Dr. Brian Grim of Georgetown University and Melissa Grim of the Newseum Institute unveiled their groundbreaking new study: “The Socio-economic Contribution of Religion to American Society: An Empirical Analysis.” The first-of-its-kind study analyzed the economic impact of 344,000 religious congregations around the country, in addition to quantifying the economic impact of religious institutions and religion-related businesses. Through this study, Dr. Grim found the total economic contribution of religion in America to be nearly $1.2 trillion, equal to the world’s 15th largest economy.

Dr. Grim presented his research at a panel event at the National Press Club. The panel included Dr. William Galston, Senior Fellow in the Brookings Institution’s Governance Studies Program, and Dr. Ram Cnaan, Professor and Program Director of the Program for Religion and Social Policy Research at the University of Pennsylvania.

“For the first time, we have been able to quantify what religious institutions, faith-based charities, and even businesses inspired by faith contribute to our country,” said Dr. Grim. He continued: “In an age where there’s a growing belief that religion is not a positive for American society, adding up the numbers is a tangible reminder of the impact of religion. Every single day individuals and organizations of faith quietly serve their communities as part of religious congregations, faith-based charities, and businesses inspired by religion.

Despite prolonged economic hardship in many communities, the amount of money spent annually by religious congregations on social programs has tripled in the past 15 years. Some examples of the social issues addressed by these congregations and religiously-oriented charity groups include:

* Alcohol and drug abuse recovery—130,000 programs
* Veteran and veterans’ families support—94,000 programs
* Prevention or support for people with HIV/AIDS—26,000 programs
* Support or skills training for unemployed adults—121,000 programs

Operating alongside these charity groups and religious institutions sit faith-based and inspired businesses, which employ people in every field and industry. This fills the

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marketplace with goods and services used by people of all faiths, plus those with no faith at

all. At the same time, religious schools educate millions of students from pre-K to the post-graduate level.

The study is sponsored by Faith Counts, a multi-faith campaign aimed at promoting the value of faith. Kerry Troup, spokeswoman for Faith Counts, states, “From our work with diverse faith communities across the U.S., we know that despite differences among individual religions, there are many more things that bring us together. This study shows that faith is still a cornerstone of our economy and society, and we’re actively working together to celebrate and promote its value.”

For more information, including the full study and a video summary of the research, ***please visit www.FaithCounts.com/Report.***

**About Faith Counts**

Faith Counts is a nonprofit, nondenominational organization comprised of many religious communities who represent nearly 80 million Americans.  The mission of Faith Counts is simple:  to promote the value of faith.  The centerpiece of Faith Counts is a social media campaign that tells powerful stories about how faith counts—how it inspires, empowers, motivates, and comforts billions of people.

* Facebook:   Facebook.com/MyFaithCounts
* Website:  FaithCounts.com
* Twitter:  @MyFaithCounts

Faith Counts Partners include a diverse faith community including: Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Hillel International, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the 1st Amendment Partnership, and Franciscan University of Steubenville and the Orthodox Union.  All faith groups are welcome.

Data from: “The Socio-economic Contribution of Religion to American Society: An Empirical Analysis,” a 2016 study by Brian J. Grim (Georgetown University) and Melissa E. Grim (Newseum Institute), published in the peer-reviewed journal, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, Volume 12, Article 3.

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