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For Immediate Release
October 22, 2008

RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY/UN FOUNDATION SURVEY EXPLORES RELIGION AND AMERICA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

*— Americans See U.S. as Force for Good in the World, But Say
Sometimes the U.S. Causes More Harm than Good —*

Washington, D.C. — Despite a divided view of America's impact on the world, the vast majority of Americans believe the United States has a moral obligation to be engaged on the international stage, according to a new survey by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research Inc. for ***RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY*** and the United Nations Foundation.

The September 2008 survey found that nearly a quarter of Americans (24%) say the U.S. should be very actively engaged in world affairs and 70 percent believe America should be at least moderately involved. Most believe the nation should be actively involved in world affairs because of an explicit responsibility or moral obligation to take a leadership role in the world. At the same time, nearly eight-in-ten (79%) of Americans agree that sometimes U.S. involvement in world affairs causes more harm than good. Overall, Americans are equally split about whether the U.S. has a positive or negative impact on the world.

Sixty-eight percent of people who attend religious services at least once a week say America has a moral obligation to be involved in world affairs, compared to 54 percent of people who attend less frequently. Fifty-five percent of people who attend religious services every week say America's influence in the world has been positive, compared with 44 percent of people who attend less frequently,

Americans view their country as a nation set apart from others. Most Americans believe God has uniquely blessed America (61% agree), and a similar number (59%) believe the US should set the example as a Christian nation to the rest of the world.

The findings are based on a national survey of 1,400 adults, including an oversample of 400 young evangelicals ages 18-29. The survey was conducted September 14-21, 2008, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percent.

The survey results and report are available on the ***RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY*** Web site at www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics and will be the basis for a two-part broadcast series on America's role in the world and on the views of young evangelicals beginning October 24 (check local PBS listings).



PBS

A Production of
Thirteen/WNET
New York for PBS.

Funding provided by Lilly Endowment Inc. with additional support from Mutual of America Life Insurance Company,
The Henry Luce Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting

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RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY is a production of Thirteen/WNET New York. Major funding is provided by Lilly Endowment Inc. Additional funding is provided by Mutual of America, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and individual supporters. Executive editor and host is Bob Abernethy; executive editor is Arnold Labaton; Thirteen/WNET executive in charge is Stephen Segaller. The United Nations Foundation is an advocate for the UN and a platform for connecting people, ideas, and capital to help the United Nations solve global problems.

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