

= Losing My Religion =

" Losing My Religion " is a song by the American alternative rock band R.E.M. The song was released as the first single from the group 's 1991 album Out of Time . Built on a mandolin riff , " Losing My Religion " was an unlikely hit for the group , garnering heavy airplay on radio as well as on MTV due to its critically acclaimed music video . The song became R.E.M. ' s highest @-@ charting hit in the United States , reaching No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 and expanding the group 's popularity beyond its original fanbase . It was nominated for several Grammy Awards , and won two for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal and Best Short Form Music Video .

= = Background = =

R.E.M. guitarist Peter Buck wrote the main riff and chorus to the song on a mandolin while watching television one day . Buck had just bought the instrument and was attempting to learn how to play it , recording the music as he practiced . Buck said that " when I listened back to it the next day , there was a bunch of stuff that was really just me learning how to play mandolin , and then there 's what became ' Losing My Religion ' , and then a whole bunch more of me learning to play the mandolin . "

Recording of the song started in September 1990 at Bearsville Studio A in Woodstock , New York . The song was arranged in the studio with mandolin , electric bass , and drums . Bassist Mike Mills came up with a bassline inspired by the work of Fleetwood Mac bassist John McVie ; by his own admission he could not come up with one for the song that was not derivative . Buck said the arrangement of the song " had a hollow feel to it . There 's absolutely no midrange on it , just low end and high end , because Mike usually stayed pretty low on the bass . " The band decided to have touring guitarist Peter Holsapple play acoustic guitar on the recording . Buck reflected , " It was really cool : Peter and I would be in our little booth , sweating away , and Bill and Mike would be out there in the other room going at it . It just had a really magical feel . " Singer Michael Stipe 's vocal was recorded in a single take . Orchestral strings , arranged by Mark Bingham , were added to the song by members of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra at Soundscape Studios in Atlanta , Georgia in October 1990 .

= = Composition and lyrics = =

" Losing My Religion " is based on Peter Buck 's mandolin @-@ playing . Buck said , " The verses are the kinds of things R.E.M. uses a lot , going from one minor to another , kind [of] like those ' Driver 8 ' chords . You can 't really say anything bad about E minor , A minor , D , and G ? I mean , they 're just good chords . " Buck noted that " Losing My Religion " was " probably the most typical R.E.M.-sounding song on the record . We are trying to get away from those kind of songs , but like I said before , those are some good chords . " Orchestral strings play through parts of the song . The song is in natural minor .

In the song , Michael Stipe sings the lines " That 's me in the corner / That 's me in the spotlight / Losing my religion " . The phrase " losing my religion " is an expression from the southern region of the United States that means losing one 's temper or civility , or " being at the end of one 's rope . " Stipe told The New York Times the song was about romantic expression . He told Q that " Losing My Religion " is about " someone who pines for someone else . It 's unrequited love , what have you . " Stipe compared the song 's theme to " Every Breath You Take " by The Police , saying , " It 's just a classic obsession pop song . I 've always felt the best kinds of songs are the ones where anybody can listen to it , put themselves in it and say , ' Yeah , that 's me . ' "

= = Release and reception = =

" Losing My Religion " was released on February 19 , 1991 in the United States as the lead single from R.E.M. ' s forthcoming album Out of Time . The band 's record label , Warner Bros. , was wary

about the group 's choice of the song as the album 's first single . Steven Baker , who was vice president of product management at Warner Bros. at the time , said there were " long , drawn @-@ out discussions " about releasing such an " unconventional track " as the single until the label agreed . While R.E.M. declined to tour to promote Out of Time , the band visited radio stations , gave numerous press interviews , and made appearances on MTV to promote the record . Meanwhile , Warner Bros. worked to establish the single at campus , modern rock , and album @-@ oriented rock radio stations before promoting it to American Top 40 stations , where it became a success . " The record crosses the boundaries of being just an alternative record " , one Top 40 radio station program director said ; he admitted that " Losing My Religion " was " a hard record to program ; you can 't play L.L. Cool J behind it . But it 's a real pop record ? you can dance to it . "

" Losing My Religion " became R.E.M. ' s biggest hit in the U.S. , peaking at No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 . The single stayed on the chart for 21 weeks . It charted at number 19 on the UK Singles Chart , and peaked at No. 16 and No. 11 in Canada and Australia , respectively . Mills said years later , " Without ' Losing My Religion ' , Out of Time would have sold two or three million [copies] , instead of the ten [million copies] or so it did . But the phenomenon that is a worldwide hit is an odd thing to behold . Basically that record was a hit in almost every civilised country in the world . " The success of " Losing My Religion " and Out of Time broadened R.E.M. ' s audience beyond its original college radio @-@ based fanbase . When asked at the time if he was worried that the song 's success might alienate older fans , Buck told Rolling Stone , " The people that changed their minds because of ' Losing My Religion ' can just kiss my ass . "

The song received a number of critical plaudits . The single placed second in the Village Voice Pazz & Jop annual critics ' poll , behind Nirvana 's " Smells Like Teen Spirit " . R.E.M. was nominated for seven awards at the 1992 Grammy Awards . " Losing My Religion " alone earned several nominations , including Record of the Year and Song of the Year . The song won two awards , for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals and Best Short Form Music Video . In 2004 , Rolling Stone listed the song at No. 169 on its list of the " 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " . In 2007 , the song was listed as No. 9 on VH1 's 100 Greatest Songs of the 90s . In 2009 , Blender ranked it at No. 79 on its list of " The 500 Greatest Songs Since You Were Born " . The song is also included on The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 's list of 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll .

= = Music video = =

The music video for " Losing My Religion " was directed by Tarsem Singh . As opposed to previous R.E.M. videos , Michael Stipe agreed to lip sync the lyrics . The video originated as a combination of ideas envisioned by Stipe and Singh . Stipe wanted the promo to be a straightforward performance video , akin to Sinéad O 'Connor 's " Nothing Compares 2 U " . Singh wanted to create a video in the style of a certain type of Indian filmmaking , where everything would be " melodramatic and very dreamlike " , according to Stipe .

The video begins with a brief sequence inside a dark room where water drips from an open window . Buck , Berry , and Mills run across the room while Stipe remains seated . A pitcher of milk drops from the windowsill and shatters , and the song begins . Director Singh drew inspiration from the Italian painter Caravaggio and the Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky . The video is laden with religious imagery such as Saint Sebastian and Hindu deities , portrayed in a series of tableaux .

The music video was nominated in nine categories at the 1991 MTV Video Music Awards . The video won six awards , including Video of the Year , Best Group Video , Breakthrough Video , Best Art Direction , Best Direction , and Best Editing . " Losing My Religion " also ranked second in the music video category of the 1991 Pazz & Jop poll .

= = MTV Unplugged Session = =

R.E.M. recorded an MTV Unplugged session of " Losing My Religion " with members of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra to celebrate the 10th anniversary of MTV . The 1991 recording was made in the auditorium of the Madison @-@ Morgan Cultural Center in Madison , Georgia , about 20 miles

south of Athens . Subsequently the song won the award for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals .

= = Cover versions = =

" Weird Al " Yankovic covered the song in his polka medley " Polka Your Eyes Out " from his 1991 album Off the Deep End .

Zambian singer Rozalla released as a cover of the song on her 1995 album Look No Further . It was issued as a US @-@ only single that same year .

Post @-@ hardcore band Scary Kids Scaring Kids covered this song in 2006 for the album Punk Goes 90 's .

Finn Hudson (Cory Monteith) covered the song in the 2010 Glee episode " Grilled Cheesus " .

Lacuna Coil covered the song in their 2012 album , Dark Adrenaline .

Graveworm published a cover of the song in their 2003 album Engraved in Black .

Trivium released a cover of the song on the Japanese special edition of their 2013 album Vengeance Falls .

Jacqui Naylor released a cover of the song on her 2008 album You Don 't Know Jacqui .

House music producer Hardwell sampled the song in his 2013 single " Three Triangles (Losing My Religion) " .

ApologetiX released a parody , " Proving My Religion " , as a single in September 2014 . The new lyrics are of a Christian trying to live out and share his faith despite adversity .

Gregorian covered this song on their 1999 album Masters of Chant , it was also re @-@ released on the video album The Masterpieces .

Tori Amos covered the song on the soundtrack to the 1995 film Higher Learning .

Runner @-@ up Dia Frampton covered the song on the first season of NBC 's The Voice .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by Bill Berry , Peter Buck , Mike Mills , and Michael Stipe , except where noted
7 "

" Losing My Religion " ? 4 : 29

" Rotary Eleven " ? 2 : 32

12 " and Compact Disc

" Losing My Religion " ? 4 : 29

" Rotary Eleven " ? 2 : 32

" After Hours " (Lou Reed) (Live) 1 ? 2 : 08

UK " Collector 's Edition " CD one

" Losing My Religion " ? 4 : 29

" Stand " (Live) 1 ? 3 : 21

" Turn You Inside @-@ Out " (Live) 1 ? 4 : 23

" World Leader Pretend " (Live) 1 ? 4 : 24

UK " Collector 's Edition " CD two

" Losing My Religion " ? 4 : 29

" Fretless " ? 4 : 51

" Losing My Religion " (Live acoustic version / Rockline) ? 4 : 38

" Rotary Eleven " ? 2 : 32

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =