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# Field Makers: Innovating the Next Twenty Years

International Center for Law and Religion Studies

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**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

# DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is by now a cliché to say that this has been a year like no other. But as difficult as this year has been—with its intersecting crises (the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy, racial justice, political divisiveness)—it has also given us the opportunity to pause and reconsider what we do, how we do it, and why we do it. I think it is fair to say that the answers to each of those questions will never be the same again.

But the most important things have not changed, including our commitment to furthering freedom of religion and belief for all people in all places and promoting the value of human dignity for everyone everywhere. We have marveled at the sweeping restrictions on many of our most cherished freedoms, and we have been reminded that with freedom comes responsibility, including the duty to be mindful of others' well-being. While we cherish our freedoms—and while we know that a virus does not discriminate—we are deeply mindful that the pandemic impacts each of us differently. “We live in an era that needs a little less ‘I’ and a little more ‘we,’” said Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks at his last public appearance—a virtual speech at BYU about his last book, *Morality*—before his death from cancer this past fall.

We at the International Center for Law and Religion Studies understand the importance of listening to and learning from each other at this challenging time. Our most important events have moved online, and as a result, their reach and impact have multiplied, often by a factor of 20 or 200. The series of webinars on the coronavirus pandemic that we organized with important European partners ran weekly from late March through July, reaching thousands with nuanced and informative discussions on different regions of the world and different institutional responses to the pandemic. Our Religious Freedom Annual Review in June, held completely online, reached not our usual audience of 500, but over 100,000. And our annual symposium in October, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Center, included an invitation to everyone who has attended the symposium over the last quarter century and was viewed

by many more people than have attended the symposium in the previous 26 years. Several of our teaching programs, including those in China and Myanmar, have been held online, with a reach and impact that towers over previous iterations of these efforts.

The quality of insight and scholarship generated at these events was also at an all-time high. In these pages, you will find reports, accounts, and reprints of some of these messages, including a remarkable address by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, given at the Religious Freedom Annual Review, and an address by Elder Ulisses Soares, another member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, given at the DFW Annual Religious Freedom Summit.

One thing we have learned this year is that the challenges posed by this global pandemic will have a lasting impact on all of us. Our hope is that we will do better and be better as a result of what we have learned from these unusual and even unprecedented experiences of 2020. We will indeed move forward with 2020 vision—although it will be different than any of us anticipated 12 months ago.

We ask you to join us in praying as if everything depends upon the Lord and then getting to work as if everything depends upon us. And when we have done all we can do, let us, as the psalmist tells us, “be still” and know that He is God (Psalm 46:10).

With heartfelt thanks to everyone who works in partnership with us from around the world.

Gratefully, as always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett G. Scharffs". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Brett G. Scharffs, Director

## OUR MISSION

It is the Mission of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University to help secure the blessings of freedom of religion and belief for all people by

EXPANDING, DEEPENING, AND DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE REGARDING THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF LAW AND RELIGION

FACILITATING THE GROWTH OF NETWORKS OF SCHOLARS, EXPERTS, AND POLICY MAKERS INVOLVED IN THE FIELD OF RELIGION AND LAW

CONTRIBUTING TO LAW REFORM PROCESSES AND BROADER IMPLEMENTATION OF PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WORLDWIDE

## CONTENTS

COVID-19 and the Future of the Center	2
A Continued Focus on Human Dignity in 2020	6
Religious Freedom Annual Review	14
Symposium	22
Regional Conferences	26
Students	38
International Advisory Council	42
Academic Advisory Board, Fellows, and Staff	46



# COVID-19 and the Future of the Center

By W. Cole Durham, Jr., Founding Director of the Center



THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has been a tragedy of staggering proportions, particularly for those who have lost lives, family members, close friends, and, in general, co-citizens. It has impacted all of our lives—some far more than others. At the BYU Law School, it has interrupted normal in-person teaching as well as much of the one-on-one mentoring that we do with students. At the International Center for Law and Religion Studies, it has caused disruptions in all of those ways and more.

For us, the BYU motto “The world is our campus” has a literal ring. With each passing year, we have had a growing number of opportunities to co-organize conferences around the world, to work on law-reform projects in country after country, and to build networks of scholars and other experts working on law and religion in general and freedom of religion or belief in particular. Our work has extended to every continent except Antarctica. However, in 2020 the overwhelming majority of the Center’s conferences were moved online. And while I personally have spent more than half my time outside the

United States in past years, in 2020 I did not leave Provo—or my home for that matter—to any material extent after March 5, when I returned from my last trip to India.

## The Impact of COVID-19

As problematic as the COVID-19 experience has been, however, it has also awakened us to new possibilities, and it is safe to say the work of the Center will never be the same. Let me give some examples.

## Religious Freedom Annual Review

Each year the Center organizes the Religious Freedom Annual Review, which focuses on freedom of religion issues in the United States. In 2019 we felt we had been phenomenally successful, attracting approximately 500 attendees. In 2020 we

were forced to go online, and we had over 100,000 views of the three sessions—combining both those who viewed the event live and those who viewed the recording in the week thereafter. Additionally, whereas we used to have participants mainly from Utah, with a sprinkling from Arizona, Idaho, and Nevada, in 2020 we had participants from 49 countries.



## Annual Law and Religion Symposium

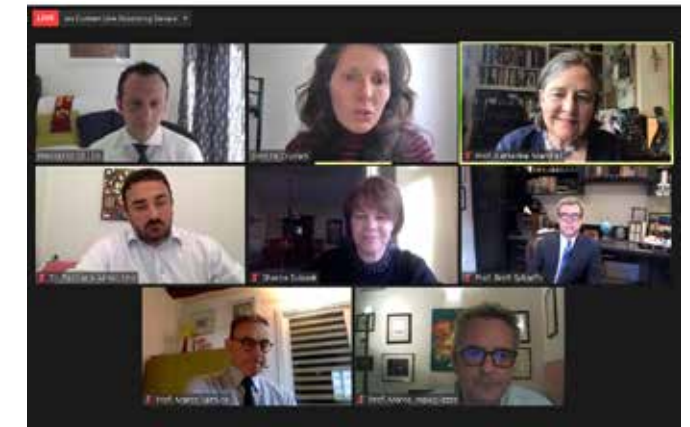
The Center’s landmark event each year for over a quarter of a century has been our annual Law and Religion Symposium. This event has grown over the years, but for the last several years our target audience has been about 90 delegates. In 2019 we had 92 delegates; counting other guests, total attendance was 241. In contrast, in 2020 we could invite not only a new round of delegates but everyone we have invited over the past 25 years. While not everyone who came in the past elected to join in, we had 4,353 views of symposium sessions from 58 countries. A major objective of the symposium has been to build a network of opinion leaders on law and religion and freedom of religion issues, but there have been limitations on how we could best stay in touch with people. The online experience has given us new answers and new possibilities.

## G20 Interfaith Summit

Another major initiative of the Center has been to serve as one of the key co-organizers of the G20 Interfaith Forum (see [g20interfaith.org](http://g20interfaith.org)). The G20 Summit itself is the annual meeting of the leaders of the world’s top 19 economies plus the European Union. The aim of the G20 Interfaith Forum is to provide a global platform for religious voices around the world and make significant and substantive policy recommendations that will enrich the policy agenda of the G20 Summit leaders. We began this initiative in 2014, when the G20 Summit was in Australia, and we had only about 150 participants. The next year, in Turkey, we had about 300. In 2019, in Japan, we had

500 in the major attendee group and another 2,000 from a particular Japanese religious group.

This year the meeting was scheduled to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. It was planned as a truly historic event that would bring more religious leaders from more denominations than had ever before been assembled in Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, as so much else this year, the meeting had to go online. But the online reach was extraordinary: more than 2,000 participants directly engaged in the 18 sessions of the forum spread over five days, and 147 speakers represented 47 countries. Overall, there were participants from 90 countries and 10 major religious traditions (most with numerous sub-denominations). Some sessions were viewed by nearly 200,000 people. Of those attending, 22 percent were religious leaders, 17 percent came from faith-based organizations, 17 percent came from academia, 17 percent came from intergovernmental organizations, 6 percent came from NGOs, and 21 percent came from other expert and policy-maker backgrounds. In addition, news stories covering the event were placed with over 363 media institutions, with a potential reach of 425,104,815 people. The Associated Press alone placed stories with 52 media institutions, with a potential reach of 61.5 million. Social media impact was also impressive.



## Headlines

One of our more successful efforts to maintain connections with those who shape religious freedom policy around the globe has been our Headlines initiative, which consolidates links to global headlines on matters relating to law and religion. (To sign up, go to [religlaw.org/subscribe](http://religlaw.org/subscribe).) When I was still director of the Center, we had about 4,000 subscribers, including a Who’s Who-type list of global opinion leaders on law and religion matters. At the end of 2020 we had 9,414 subscribers, and between August and October 2020, we averaged 2,200 daily views of Headlines. Part of this growth is a reflection of the fact that the world has become more accustomed to online interaction.



### Utilizing Technology to Move Forward

Our work at the Center has been permanently transformed. Even when we can organize physical conferences again, we plan, in most cases, to turn them into hybrid events so that we can have the impact of both the physical and the online sessions. For several years we have organized annual meetings in the major regions of the world—Latin America, Africa, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific. The travel costs of organizing such events have meant that we have typically organized one major conference each year in each region. There will continue to be value in such high-level physical events, but digitization means that the regional networks can be transformed into year-round organizations with extensive opportunities for interaction and relationship building. In several of the regions, we are already witnessing the move to building year-round networks.

The current director of the Center, Brett G. Scharffs, is working actively to take advantage of these new opportunities. For example, at the beginning of October 2020, he spearheaded an initiative organized by several major law and religion centers in the United States—at Emory, Notre Dame, St. John's, and Villanova—to bring 25 noted scholars together to give a six-month assessment of law, religion, and the coronavirus in the United States, resulting in a series of informative blog posts. This is just one example of the new forms that influential scholarship is taking.

The emerging online world not only provides opportunities for outreach, collaboration, and impact but also opens opportunities for working with students. In the past there have been limits on the extent to which students could be involved in our work because of the level of substantive expertise required. But in the new online world, students often bring technical expertise that is vital and can be married with the “older” substantive expertise in very productive ways. This means that the opportunities of reciprocal professor-student mentoring are significantly enhanced.

The opportunities opened up by the online world were emerging even before the coronavirus took hold. However, the virus has forced us to use these technologies and to become familiar with them. But there will be costs: as Professor Scharffs recently reminded me, effective digitization involves far more than putting a microphone and camera in front of conference speakers. Fully taking advantage of these opportunities requires adding technical personnel to everything else we are already doing. At this hinge point in history, we are being given tools that will profoundly extend our reach. Taking advantage of these tools will create challenges and will demand new levels of professionalism. Even more, digitization will require us to rise to new standards of stewardship—new levels of learning how to serve with not only our hearts but also our minds. And there can be no turning back.

## CENTER ANNIVERSARY



## AND TRIBUTES

January 1, 2020, marked the 20th anniversary of the founding of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies. The COVID-19 pandemic may have canceled some of our plans for celebration, but we are still grateful to the many who support and work with us. We promise to continue to adapt and build on the foundation laid over the past 20 years as we look ahead to the next 20 and beyond.

Over the course of the year, the Center, and its founding director, W. Cole Durham, Jr., have been honored with many congratulations and tributes from friends and colleagues. Here are a few of them:



*The Center has provided, and continues to provide, an extraordinary service throughout the years, not only because of its own academic production but also because of the network of relationships that it has created, allowing many people to interact together. In that sense, I think the ICLRS is the true center of this extensive network. I am enormously grateful for the possibility that the Center (and Cole Durham personally, with his extraordinary generosity) has given me to be part of that network and to be able to work together with truly remarkable people in the defense of religious freedom.*

—Juan Navarro Floria, Argentina



*Since 2002, when I stepped for the first time in Utah and got to know Brigham Young University's International Center for Law and Religion Studies, and up to now, I have acknowledged that the mission of this Center is very special. It has become more than just a common research center of a university but also a great international forum on religion and international laws.*

—Do Quang Hung, Vietnam



*ICLRS is an invaluable ally in the cause of religious freedom for all. The Center's expertise is unrivaled. Cole, Brett, Elizabeth, and others have done much to see that everyone everywhere has soul freedom to pursue truth as their conscience leads. ICLRS has helped bend the long arc of the universe toward justice.*

—Knox Thames, United States



*Over the years, the Center has done a colossal work to develop freedom of religion in the world. The high professionalism of the Center's specialists, a broad outlook, and the possibility of an open dialogue for representatives of different religions, countries, and continents have made it possible to achieve significant results. I wish that your efforts to harmonize inter-religious relations and protect human dignity will make our world even more interesting and better.*

—Stanislav Kulov, Russia



*Professor Durham is a pioneering light in how universities can promote a better understanding of the role of religion and the importance of religious freedom in any society. His tireless efforts have been instrumental in the growth and development of ICLRS, and his scholarship and advocacy remain important in understanding the complex relationships of law, religion, and society.*

—Eugene Tan, Singapore



*The Center has become an unavoidable worldwide reference in law and religion studies, as well as a living testimony of respect towards everyone's beliefs as well as an active promoter of such. The Center has enlightened the academy, the decision makers, and the believers of all faiths and all cultures worldwide.*

—Carmen Asiaín, Uruguay

### WEB EXTRA

Scan to watch videos honoring W. Cole Durham, Jr. and the 20th Anniversary of the Center.





## A Continued Focus on Human Dignity in 2020

The drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) were representatives of a variety of legal and cultural backgrounds from all over the world. At the time they were working on the document, the horrors of World War II were fresh in the world’s memory. The drafters found the notion of human dignity—the worth of each human being—to be the core of their three years of discussions and drafting. Human dignity became the organizing heart of the declaration and motivated the declaration to successful completion in 1948.

The declaration’s preamble begins by stating that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” Article 1 begins by proclaiming that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

Seventy years later, in 2018, the Punta del Este Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere—reaffirming the UDHR—was premised upon the notion that “dignity is an essential part of what it means to be human. Respect for human dignity for everyone everywhere helps us define and understand the meaning and scope of all human rights.”

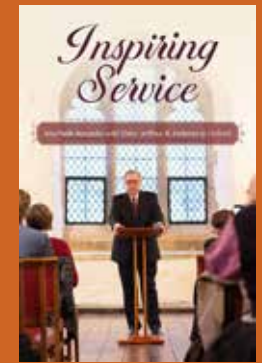
The Center’s focus on human dignity meets the aims of both the UDHR and the Punta del Este Declaration in attending to dignity-based principles that will anchor the protection of dignity for everyone everywhere.

WEB EXTRA

Scan to learn more.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JALYNN PRINCE



We would like to bring attention to the publication of *Inspiring Service: Interfaith Remarks with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland at Oxford* in 2019. While this was not a Center publication, the events commemorated in the book were cosponsored and co-organized by the Center, with particular contributions from associate director Paul Kerry and senior fellow David Kirkham. Kerry’s contribution was acknowledged by Rev. Dr. Andrew Teal in the acknowledgments: “It is acknowledged with profound admiration and respect and sincere thanks for his love, service, and capability, without which neither the ‘Inspiring Service’ events nor this book would have come to fruition.”

The publisher’s description says: *In Oxford, Britain’s most ancient seat of learning, a series of events commemorated the visit of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles [of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] just before Christmas. Elder Holland spoke at the university and in Pembroke Chapel at a “Nine Lessons and Carols” celebration. Eminent speakers from the Catholic, Anglican, and nonconformist traditions joined him to commit enthusiastically to common service and exploration, and an agenda has been set for further dialogue, action, and deeper friendships. Featured speakers in this volume include the Reverend Dr. Andrew Teal, Lord David Alton, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, former Archbishop Rowan Williams, and the Reverend Professor Frances Young. At the conclusion of his visit, Elder Holland delivered a moving address titled “Christmas Comfort.” This book celebrates the marvelous start of deeper commitment, dialogue, and friendship.*

The original volume was published in the United States by the BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book. A United Kingdom edition has since been published by Sacristy Press.

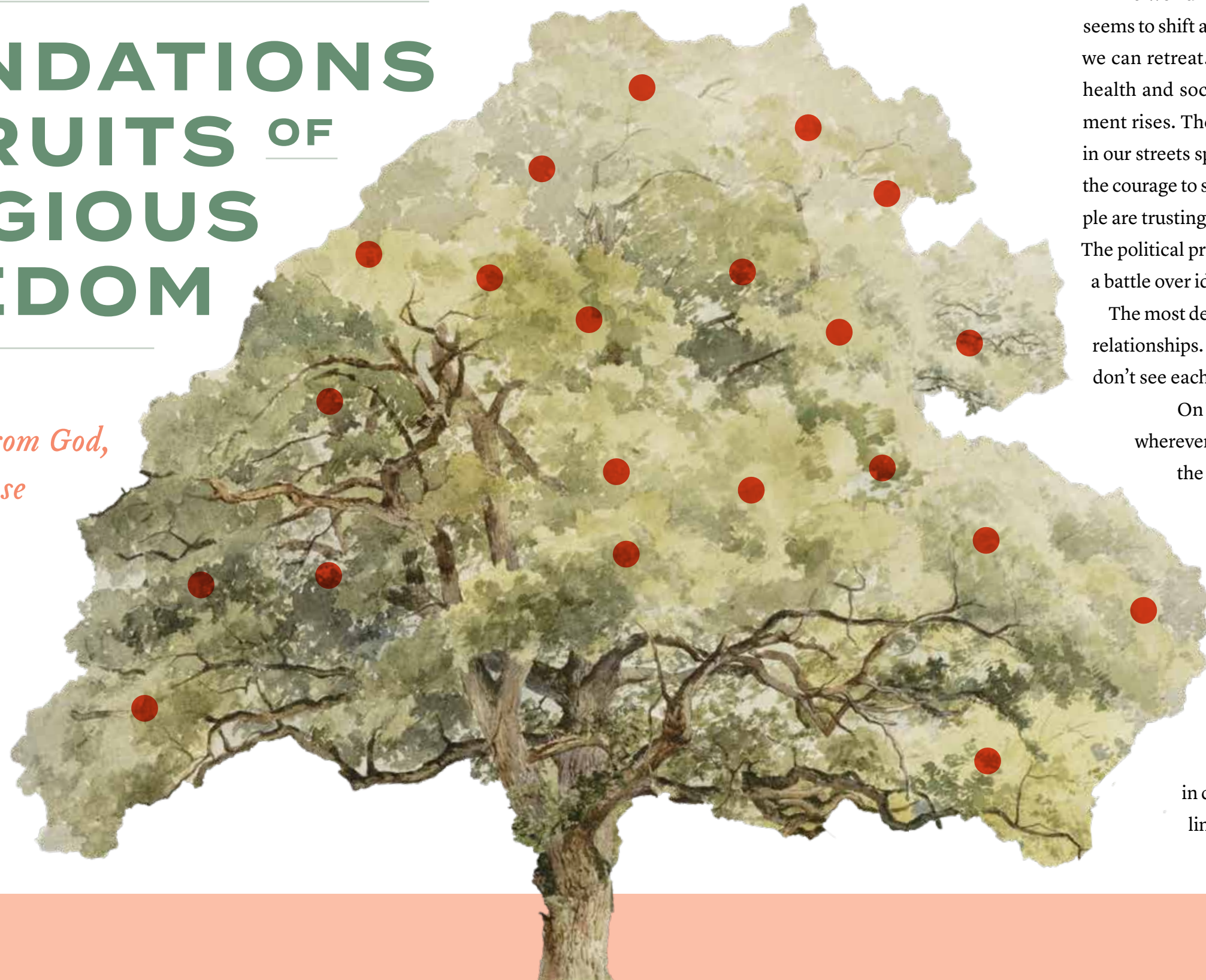


**By Elder Ulisses Soares**

Member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

# FOUNDATIONS AND FRUITS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

*Our rights come from God,  
but the care of those  
rights is up to us.*



*This address was delivered by video on October 28, 2020, to the Dallas–Fort Worth Alliance for Religious Freedom.*

**I FEEL HONORED** to address this unique group of people today. I commend you for the work you do in behalf of human rights in our society.

The world is a fragile place. The ground beneath our feet seems to shift and shake, and we have few solid places to where we can retreat. A global pandemic continues to threaten our health and social cohesion. Economies falter and unemployment rises. The racial harmony we seek breaks down. Unrest in our streets spreads fear and uncertainty. People do not have the courage to speak their minds for fear of being canceled. People are trusting less and less in their leaders and fellow citizens. The political process has moved away from civility, resembling a battle over identity instead of a pursuit of principle and truth.

The most deep and true things about us are our faith and our relationships. But in the midst of this anxiety, it seems that we don't see each other.

On the surface, we seem to be losing our way. But wherever you go, carefully stop and look. Glimpse beyond the fear and isolation that have become part of our lives. What do you see? The dignity of human action is all around us. Suffering is a common experience of humankind. In times of crisis, ordinary people become extraordinary. Physicians care for the sick, congregations stock food banks, volunteers feed the poor, humanitarians alleviate the destruction of natural disasters, and neighbors take care of neighbors in distress. Moral heroes always appear on the front lines of tragedy.

## Our Universal Human Dignity

Dignity is the principle upon which human rights stand. Societies flourish when both law and culture recognize, respect, and protect the value of each person. The many religious and cultural differences across the globe only enhance that dignity.

Dignity is a universal birthright. Everyone possesses dignity simply by being human, regardless of religion, race, gender, or nationality. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that dignity is the “foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we have the right to life, liberty, security, equal protection of the law, and the freedom of thought, speech, and religion. These rights put all of us on a similar moral footing and endow our lives with meaning.

Human dignity is a common denominator between religious traditions around the world. But not everyone enjoys these rights. Various Christian communities have been driven from their homes in the Middle East. Rohingya Muslims continue to be persecuted in Myanmar. Attacks against Jews have risen worldwide. Prisoners of conscience from the Baha’i faith languish in prison. The Yazidis experience unprecedented brutality at the hands of terrorists in Iraq. And in a million unseen ways, human beings deny each other basic dignity in public and private life.

## Reciprocity and Respect

A common regard for humanity enables a common support of rights. Rights stem from dignity, and dignity results from rights. Both feed off each other in a legal and cultural symbiosis. Law enacts a standard of behavior, but only culture can encourage it. We need to see a reflection of ourselves in each other—our dreams, hopes, hurts, fears, and despairs. Otherwise, we all become strangers and foreigners. Our differences are often used as barriers to divide us, when they are actually an opportunity

to enrich our lives. Dignity is a moral obligation we feel toward people, not merely a legal requirement we comply with.

We discover our dignity in relating with others.

Everyone wants to be known, seen, and recognized. We want our efforts to make a difference and our struggles to be acknowledged. The demand for respect is as ancient as society itself. Human dignity is not some airy concept, understood only by philosophers and theologians. It is a practical mode of interaction between people. International relations begins with human relations. Peace begins with respect for the uniqueness of each person.

## A Declaration of Human Dignity

Fortunately, people are doing something to spread the word. A group of legal scholars, practitioners, and activists from around the world came together to reassert the primacy of human dignity and reinvigorate human rights discourse. In 2018 the Punta del Este Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere celebrated this concept as “the core of the panoply of human rights.”<sup>2</sup> The document has been discussed in academies across continents and calls for leaders and politicians to promote a more even implementation of human rights. Human dignity for all reminds us that human rights are universal, complementary, indivisible, nonnegotiable, and interrelated.<sup>3</sup>

Protecting what we most value requires articulating and repeating true ideas.

Conflict and tension are inevitable in a world as complex as ours. But a reverence for human dignity is a necessary starting point. It “presupposes respect for pluralism and difference.”<sup>4</sup> The Punta del Este Declaration urges a reciprocity, whereby “rights include accompanying obligations and responsibilities, not just of states but also of all human beings.”<sup>5</sup> Only upon this foundation can mutual trust exist.

Consider my home country, Brazil. While undergoing a dynamic shift over the years from Roman Catholicism to Pente-

*Human rights  
... speak for  
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That is our task.*

costal, Protestant, and other religions, the population has managed to avoid broad sectarian conflict. Researcher Brian Grim said, “Given the level of religious switching in Brazil, it is particularly notable that . . . there have been no reported incidents of hostility over conversions or proselytism.”<sup>6</sup> Though far from perfect, tension has been managed through dialogue between the various religious communities.

## A Constant Amid Flux

The concept of human dignity may vary from culture to culture, but it acts as a constant amid a volatile and changing world. Human rights smooth out the imbalances of privilege, wealth, and opportunity. And those rights must be universally applied. Otherwise, justice becomes reduced to who is in power at the moment.

Dignity is about knowing who we are as human beings. The search for ultimate meaning, whether as an individual or in community, is a sacred prerogative. No one can impose that path on us; we must define it for ourselves. In all times and in all places, every person matters.

## The Value of Human Rights

Historically, international human rights are a fairly new thing. It wasn’t until 1948, in the aftermath of World War II, that leaders from different nations, cultures, reli-

gions, and political systems came together to establish standards of human rights that apply to everyone everywhere. Such rights have always been inscribed in our deepest hopes and aspirations for life, including the right to life, liberty, security, and equal protection of the law and the freedom of thought, speech, and religion.

But we often take human rights for granted, as if they have always been around and always will be around. These rights speak for themselves but cannot defend themselves. That is our task. We believe our rights come from God, but the care of those rights is up to us. This divine origin is important, because if rights become simply what the majority of people want, then they are nothing more than a power play or mere opinion. But time, wisdom, and practice show that they are grounded much more deeply.

As Alexander Hamilton, one of the founders of this nation, wrote:

*The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for, among old parchments, or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the divinity itself; and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.*<sup>7</sup>

## The Positive Influence of Religion

Religious freedom is important because religion itself is important. . . . Prayers and meditations dignify our most solemn public ceremonies. Political leaders [often] invoke God’s blessing in times of crisis. Religious rituals mark life’s pivotal moments of birth, [coming of age,] marriage, . . . death, [and many moments in between]. Our understanding of human rights stems from religious ideals.<sup>8</sup>

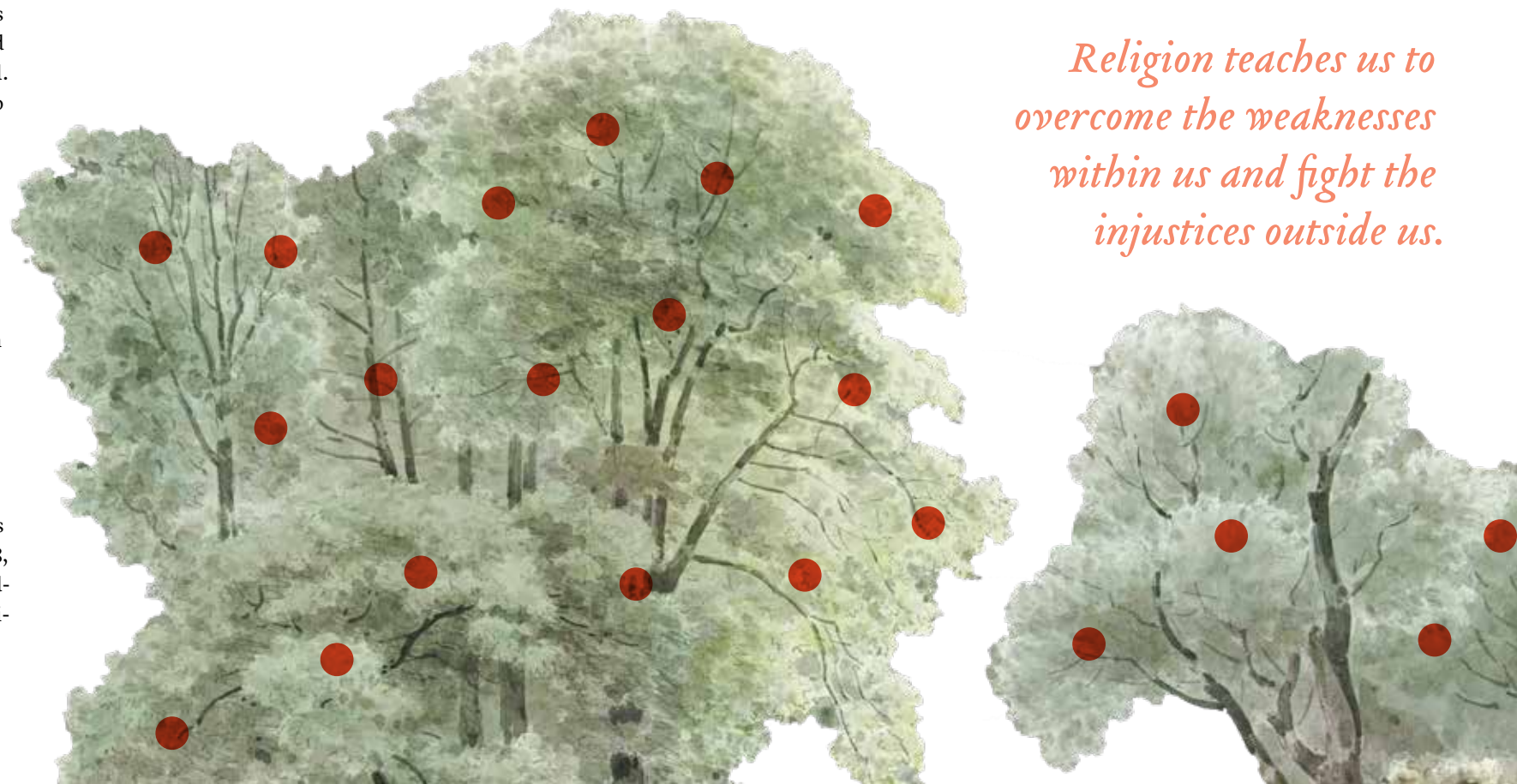
Observing the course of history shows that human beings are religious by nature. Religion offers a framework by which people find meaning, belonging, and identity—whether they are Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or any other. As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has written, religion gives us “a feeling of participating in something vast and consequential.”<sup>9</sup>

And this religious participation flows into the public sphere. The acclaimed sociological study titled American Grace found that religious observance is linked to higher civic involvement. Religious observance also connects to trust and correlates with the neighborly virtues of charitable giving, volunteerism, and altruism.<sup>10</sup> This research also shows that religious people are “more generous neighbors and more conscientious citizens than their secular counterparts.”<sup>11</sup> This altruistic attitude expresses itself in seemingly small actions.

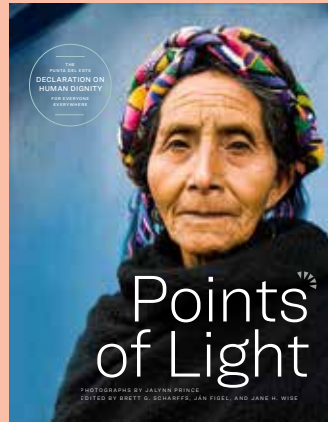
Churches and congregations of all kinds bring communities together. They provide a setting for people to serve those they would not normally serve and talk with those they would not normally talk with. This is one of the reasons why Rabbi Sacks called religion “the most powerful community builder the world has known.”<sup>12</sup>

Striving to live a spiritual life broadens our perspectives and ennobles our everyday struggles. All the great religions serve as bulwarks against the forces of despair, chaos, and feelings of insignificance. The world’s sacred literature inspires us to feel deeper and look higher,

*Religion teaches us to overcome the weaknesses within us and fight the injustices outside us.*



# COMING SOON



## A CELEBRATION OF PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN DIGNITY

This new pictorial essay book features photographs by acclaimed photographer JaLynn Prince honoring people of different cultures, essays synthesizing the 2018 Punta del Este Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere, and quotes from many of the declaration's signatories—academics, government officials, and professionals who have worked tirelessly for the international cause of human rights and human dignity. The phrase “a thousand points of light” has been used to describe stars in the sky, reflections on a river, and the importance of volunteers. These perspectives on human dignity are points of light that illuminate our understanding of an important idea and bring light to a world shadowed in darkness.

*We discover our dignity in relating with others. Only upon this foundation of human dignity can mutual trust exist.*

to lead lives of goodness and simplicity. Religion teaches us to overcome the weaknesses within us and fight the injustices outside us. Along these lines, Rabbi David J. Wolpe said that religion “can go into a world in which there is a great deal of pain and suffering and loss and bring meaning and purpose and peace.”<sup>13</sup>

Of course, religious people are not perfect. We see this in acts of extremism in recent years. We also see it in instances in which religious institutions have had to learn from their mistakes. But despite the imperfections of religious individuals and institutions, the religious experience provides a road map for making sense of life. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a fellow leader in my church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said:

*Religion has no monopoly on moral action, but centuries of religious belief, including institutional church- or synagogue- or mosque-going, have clearly been preeminent in shaping our notions of right and wrong.*<sup>14</sup>

We cannot simply create new values and morals from our own ideas or reason. They have to be given to us by God, who embeds them in our nature.

*Whether inherited from religious teachings or grounded in practical experience . . . , all societies have some moral basis. . . .*

*Trace the pedigree of our moral understandings and you will find religion at the roots. Secular historians Will and Ariel Durant wrote, “There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion.”*<sup>15</sup>

For all of its accomplishments, insights, and wonders, the secular approach cannot provide the hope and moral vision that religion can. We can all, acting on the traditions that have shaped us, show society a better way—a more hopeful way—out of our current situation.

For many of these reasons, religious freedom is given special protection in the law. It is often referred to as the “first freedom.” It is characterized this way because it enables and protects other human freedoms, like freedom of speech.

### The Glue of Civil Discourse

No one can really preach about civility because every one of us has room to improve. We can only hope to persuade both ourselves and others.

The words we use can either unify or separate us. Envious, insecure, vindictive, self-assured language does more lasting damage to conversation and social trust than almost anything else. But polite, confident, straightforward, empathetic

language can win the respect of our interlocutors. People remember words and how they are spoken.

Nevertheless, speaking civilly is not the same thing as speaking without conviction. It is absolutely vital that we encourage a society that allows everyone to express their beliefs as long as they are honest, legal, and don't do material harm. This right exists even if the things we say come across as lacking or incorrect. Some have called this the right to be wrong.<sup>16</sup> Civil discourse means a grown-up, earnest, rigorous exchange of ideas, not a diluted, vague, insincere avoidance of disagreement.

The problem we face today is that we have gone past the point of being uncivil. We have reached the point of being full of contempt. In so many cases, we find ourselves not merely disagreeing with each other but despising each other. Arthur Brooks, a social scientist, said:

*America is developing a “culture of contempt”—a habit of seeing people who disagree with us not as merely incorrect or misguided but as worthless.*

*This is causing incredible harm to our country. One in six Americans has stopped talking to close friends and family members over politics since the 2016 election.*<sup>17</sup>

The solution Brooks proposes is not civility alone but love.

How do we find this love within ourselves? It is not through isolation or attempts to purify ourselves from the error of others. Actually, we find (love) through spending more time listening to people who are different from us. Let us not feel so threatened by a difference of opinion. Let us instead respect the sincerely held beliefs of our neighbors, and by doing so, you may find your own beliefs strengthened. Something as simple as speech and words can have a decisive effect on the health of civilization. We need to learn to both not give offense and not take offense. It is significant that countries with more religious freedom have more peace and countries with less religious freedom have less peace.<sup>18</sup>

### Cooperation and Connection in Times of Crisis

A crisis always exposes our lack of connection in society. But it also reveals our yearning for togetherness. Whether it is a global pandemic, a natural disaster, a personal tragedy, or economic collapse, the fabric of society is tested. We never feel so lonely or helpless as when we lose our possessions or our health. But conversely, we never feel so loved or connected to the world as when we help those in trouble or receive help in time of great need.

Religious organizations provide the networks and social ties that make this possible. One example that illustrates this mutual reliance happened a few years ago. When a local mosque in Bellevue, Washington, was destroyed by arson, a neighboring

congregation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offered its chapel to their Muslim friends as a place to gather and pray. It was provided as long as they needed it, free of charge. Shams Pirbhai, an Islamic Center board member, said, “It was a surprise, and it was very heartwarming. That means a lot to me and to our whole congregation.”<sup>19</sup>

When asked why they offered the building, a local Latter-day Saint representative said, “It's really very simple. It's just neighbors helping neighbors. Jesus said, ‘Love your neighbor.’ They're right next door. How can it be more obvious than that?”<sup>20</sup>

A lot of small actions like this add up to build social trust, strengthen friendships in society, and ensure that we defend each other's religious freedom.

Thank you very much.

#### NOTES

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15. “The Quest for a Common Moral Framework,” Commentary, Newsroom of the Church of Jesus Christ, November 16, 2016, newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org; quoting Will and Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), chapter 7, page 51.
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# Religion and Religious Freedom in the COVID-19 Era

## Finding Community and Hope

17-19 June

COVID-19's implications for religion and religious freedom were the topic of the Seventh Religious Freedom Annual Review. "The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on religion, like all other areas of life," said associate director and conference organizer Elizabeth Clark. "I think the topics should speak to some of the concerns that everyone feels: How do we make sense of this? What kind of an impact is COVID-19 going to have on our ability to worship as groups and live out our religious faith? What are appropriate limits for religious freedom when there's an international health crisis?"

Having moved to an all-digital format due to COVID-19 concerns, the annual review was free to the public for the first time. Three sessions were offered over three days.

The opening session featured Dr. Alaa Murabit, a UN high-level commissioner on health employment and eco-

nomie growth and one of 17 global sustainable development goal advocates, and Elder David A. Bednar, an apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Dr. Murabit stressed the importance of engaging faith to ensure equality: "How can we create systems and structures that can actually engage a broader community to better understand faith . . . ? How can we actually amplify faith communities to be able to speak up about what they fundamentally believe in different parts of the world?" She went on to say, "I think that is the test that we're in right now. How will we show up for one another? How will we show up for the rights of one another?"

Elder Bednar offered reflections on the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. He stressed the importance of balancing the demands of religious freedom with those of the just interests

of society. He stressed that while we must be good citizens in a time of crisis, we should not allow the right to worship to be trivialized. "This time of restriction and confinement has confirmed for me that no freedom is more important than religious freedom. Protecting a person's physical health from the coronavirus is, of course, important, but so is a person's spiritual health."

Day two was a discussion between US senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) and US senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-Arizona) about the prospects and challenges of cooperation and bipartisanship in the time of the COVID-19 crisis. They both stressed that faith can be a unifying power, especially as the nation grapples with systemic racism. "One of the things religious communities can do to be very helpful is share the message of the inherent dignity and worth of individuals in the Black community who have historically been marginalized," said Sinema. Both stressed the need to listen and learn from one another. "Whether you're following Buddhism or Hinduism, whether you are Christian or Jewish or Muslim or humanist or Zoroastrian, in each of these philosophies and religious traditions you will find things in them that talk to you about how you interact with others, especially the vulnerable," Lee said. "Any set of beliefs . . . that brings people together, needs to be protected."

The final session speaker was Michael Leavitt, founder of Leavitt Partners, former governor of Utah, and former secre-

tary of Health and Human Services, who addressed some of the conflicts between public health interests and religious interests and the possibilities of their reconciliation. He spoke of the toll of the virus as well as efforts to balance what we can do safely and what we cannot. "Up to this point, our medical countermeasures have been group behaviors to a large degree governed by government action," Leavitt said. "We are moving rapidly into a period where these group behaviors are going to be less possible to sustain. A combination of economic limits and human impatience will begin to limit them. We are now beginning to rely less on group behaviors and more on individual behaviors." He stressed that religious organizations can be more effective than governments in urging members to be safe. "Whether in a pandemic or in any other situation, the use of secular laws to change human behavior will always have side effects," Leavitt said. "Governments change behavior by edict. Communities of faith, however, attempt to change behavior by changing hearts."

WEB EXTRA

Scan to watch recordings of the Annual Review.



### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ANNUAL REVIEW

2019 RFAR Attendance

**500**

with most attendees from the United States

2020 Online Attendance

**2,911**

live views

**77,319**

YouTube views during the week following the event

The event was broadcast in

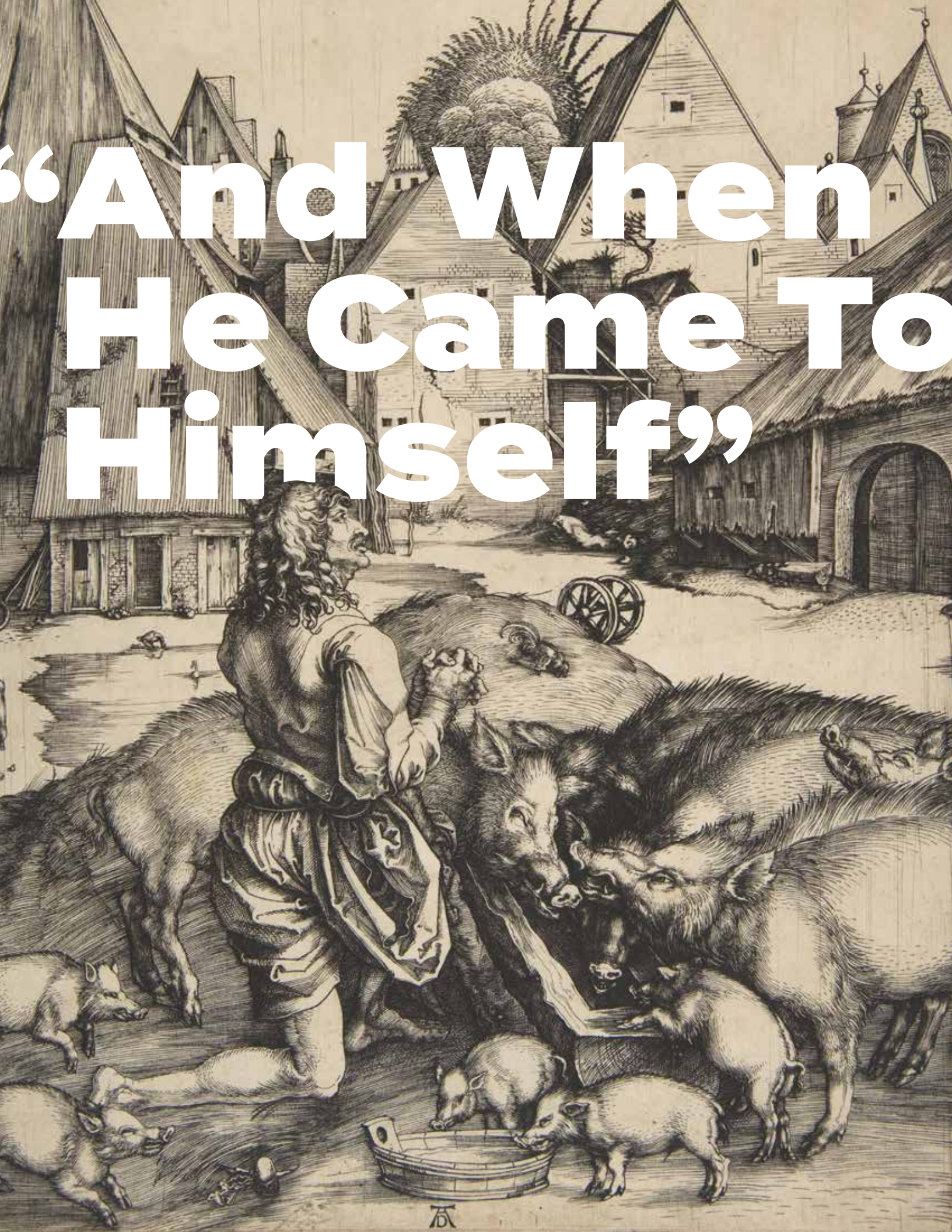
**ENGLISH and SPANISH**

for the first time.

People tuned in from

**49** countries.

# “And When He Came To Himself”



**By  
Elder David  
A. Bednar**  
Member of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles, The Church of  
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

*This keynote address was given at the Religious Freedom Annual Review hosted by the International Center for Law and Religion Studies on June 17, 2020.*

I am grateful to participate with you in the Religious Freedom Annual Review at the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University. This is a most opportune time to consider together the importance of religious freedom, and I appreciate the invitation to share a few of my thoughts with you.

### **The Prodigal Son**

In the 15th chapter of Luke in the New Testament,<sup>1</sup> we learn about a young man who obtained his inheritance from his father and then traveled to “a far country.” This young man “wasted his substance with riotous living.”<sup>2</sup> When he had squandered all of his resources, “a mighty famine [arose] in that land; and he began to be in want.”<sup>3</sup>

*And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.*

*And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.*

*And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*

*I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,*

*And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*

*And he arose, and came to his father.<sup>4</sup>*

This story has a marvelously happy ending. The return of this son to his home led to a loving reconcili-

ation with his father and a restoration of his station in his family.

### **A Wake-Up Call**

The parable of the prodigal son describes the experience of a young man who became lost and subsequently found his way back home. Please note two key aspects of this young man’s experience.

First, “he began to be in want” when a mighty famine arose in the land. As this natural calamity unleashed its negative effects, I presume his inheritance was gone. I also imagine that many of the friends who enjoyed his companionship while he had plenty of money had long since told him goodbye. He may have been homeless. But ultimately, it was the famine and his resultant hunger that constituted a strong “wake-up call.” He was shaken awake from the customary patterns of his lifestyle by an increasing realization of his inability to fulfill his most basic needs.

Second, the young man’s wake-up call led him to “[come] to himself.” This poignant phrase suggests to me a process of examining aspects of his life that previously had been unexamined, resulting in a personal realization of his present circumstances and what he had become. He also was willing to strive for a timely and needed course correction: “I will arise and go to my father.”

Our world has seemingly been filled recently with strong wake-up calls. From natural disasters to a deadly pandemic sweeping the globe to a most pernicious social plague of racism, we are daily reminded that we need to awaken to the perilous times that surround us, come to ourselves, and arise and turn to our Divine Father, who desires to instruct and edify us through our trials.



### COVID-19 Constraints Can Be Blessings

Just as the famine for the prodigal son was a pivotal turning point in his life, so can COVID-19 help us to realize what we have not fully realized before.

Several years ago I spent a Sunday afternoon in the home of my apostolic associate Elder Robert D. Hales as he was recovering from a serious illness. We discussed our families, our quorum responsibilities, and our important life experiences.

At one point I asked Elder Hales, “You have been a successful husband, father, athlete, pilot, business executive, and Church leader. What lessons have you learned as you have grown older and been constrained by decreased physical capacity?”

Elder Hales paused for a moment and responded, “When you cannot do what you have always done, then you only do what matters most.”

I was struck by the simplicity and comprehensiveness of his answer. My beloved friend shared with me a lesson of a lifetime—a lesson learned through the crucible of physical suffering and spiritual searching.

For Elder Hales, the limitations that were the natural consequence of advancing age had become, in fact, remarkable sources of spiritual learning and insight. The very factors that may have appeared to limit his effectiveness became some of his greatest strengths. Physical restrictions expanded his vision. Limited stamina clarified his priorities. Inability to do many things directed his focus to a few things of greatest importance.

Thus, constraints and limitations can be remarkable blessings if we have eyes to see and ears to hear. And this same truth applies to all of us today as we wrestle with the effects of a pandemic.

### COVID-19 Wake-Up Calls

The following examples highlight some of the things we may now see and hear more distinctly because of the demands and constraints imposed upon us by COVID-19.

- COVID-19 has alerted us to many of the limitations in the supply chain processes that bring food from the fields, farms, and processing plants to our local grocery stores and kitchen tables.
- COVID-19 has alerted us to our dependence upon foreign nations for many of our essential medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, and a wide variety of other strategically important products.
- COVID-19 has alerted us to many of the constraints of just-in-time inventory and delivery systems for manufacturing plants and retail businesses.
- COVID-19 has alerted us to many of the deficiencies in our national and local health-care systems.
- COVID-19 has alerted us to the importance of defending the borders between personal liberty, constitutional rights, and governmental authority.
- COVID-19 has alerted us to many attacks on the freedoms of religion, speech, and assembly.

And the list goes on. The buzzer on the COVID-19 alarm clock just continues to ring and ring and ring.

### COVID-19 and Religious Freedom

The Religious Freedom Annual Review is a time to reflect on religious freedom and its place in the law, the nation, and our personal lives. Doing so in the midst of COVID-19 sharpens our focus. This present crisis may well be a moment when we too come to ourselves and realize, perhaps as never before, just how precious and fragile religious freedom is.

#### Religious Freedom and the Right to Gather with the Faithful

One key realization is that for most faith communities, gathering for worship, ritual, and fellowship is essential; it is not merely an enjoyable social activity.

For example, gathering is an especially powerful element in the doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A central mission of the Church is to gather together the scattered family of Abraham—and indeed all who are willing—to the ordinances and covenants of the Savior’s gospel. Through that gathering, we believe God will establish a people who are of one heart and one mind, who dwell together in righteousness and peace, and who love and care for each other so completely that no poor, spiritually or physically, are found among them.<sup>5</sup>

In ancient and modern scripture, the Lord calls such a people and such a place “Zion.” Zion is where “the pure in heart”<sup>6</sup> dwell. And it is where God Himself can dwell in the midst of His people.<sup>7</sup> We believe that such a gathering is essential before the Messiah returns again.<sup>8</sup>

This vision of gathering has been a driving motivation for the Latter-day Saints since the Church’s earliest days and inspired our members to assemble first in Ohio and then in Missouri and Illinois. At each stage, government and mobs combined to persecute and scatter our members until they eventually found a place of gathering outside the United States—in what later became the state of Utah.

This vision has inspired our building of holy temples, where through sacred ordinances and covenants we eternally gather our families to God.

And this vision continues to inspire Latter-day Saints to gather together in their local congregations to worship God and His Son, Jesus Christ, partake of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, and strengthen, serve, and fellowship each other.<sup>9</sup>

Being in each other’s presence is a unique and irreplaceable experience. In Christianity, the God of the Old Testament came to His people in the flesh. Jesus Christ touched people, embraced them, healed them, and ministered to them. And we believe we are called to do as He did.<sup>10</sup> He taught, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”<sup>11</sup>

Of course, Latter-day Saints are hardly alone in this need to gather as a religious community. Our Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical friends gather for mass, baptisms, confirmations, sermons, and myriad other religious purposes.

Our Jewish friends gather for worship in their synagogues.

Our Muslim friends gather in their mosques.

Our friends in the Buddhist, Sikh, and other faith traditions likewise have sacred places to gather and worship together.

Gathering, in short, is at the core of faith and religion. Indeed, if the faithful are not gathering, sooner or later they will begin to scatter.

And because gathering lies at the very heart of religion, the right to gather lies at the very heart of religious freedom.

### COVID-19 and Unprecedented Restrictions on Religious Exercise

I believe it is vital for us to recognize that the sweeping governmental restrictions that were placed on religious gatherings at the outset of the COVID-19 crisis truly were extraordinary. In what seemed like an instant, most Western governments and many others simply banned communal worship. These restrictions eliminated public celebrations of Easter, Passover, Ramadan, and other holy days around the world.

No other event in our lifetime—and perhaps no other event since the founding of this nation—has caused quite this kind of widespread disruption of religious gatherings and worship.

The COVID-19 restrictions affected The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in a unique way. The Church’s April 2020 general conference—a celebration of the bicentennial of the First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith—had to be broadcast to a global audience from a small auditorium with only a handful of people attending instead of from our large Conference Center with a congregation of more than 20,000 people.

Clearly, governments have an affirmative duty to protect public health and safety.<sup>12</sup> And I believe public officials have most often sought to do the right things to protect the public from the virus. Drawing proper lines to protect both public health and religious exercise in a pandemic is very challenging.

But we cannot deny and we should not forget the speed and intensity with which government power was used to shut down fundamental aspects of religious exercise. These decisions and regulations were unprecedented. For nearly two months, Americans and many others throughout the free world learned firsthand what it means for government to directly prohibit the free exercise of religion.

### Reflections on the Nature of Government and the Importance and Fragility of Religious Freedom

Like the prodigal son who “came to himself” in the midst of crisis, our own time of being “in want” invites us to carefully reflect on fundamental principles that perhaps we have long taken for granted. Here are a few of my own reflections.

## 1 FIRST REFLECTION: GOVERNMENT POWER CAN NEVER BE UNLIMITED.

In our political system, the government derives its “just powers from the consent of the governed,” to quote the Declaration of Independence. But the “just powers” of government cannot be unlimited because they exist most fundamentally to secure the God-given rights of life and liberty so that each of us can exercise our moral agency—the ability “to act for [our]selves and not to be acted upon”<sup>13</sup>—and be accountable before God for our choices and actions.

**Just as the famine for the prodigal son was a pivotal turning point in his life, so can COVID-19 help us to realize what we have not fully realized before.**

Constitutions, representative government, checks and balances, and the rule of law help constrain the tendency of government to exercise unlimited power. Of course, liberty has limits. Government has a just role in fostering a moral environment in which people can live good and honorable lives. But whatever else government officials may be called upon to do, we, the people, must never allow them to forget that their offices and powers exist to secure our fundamental freedoms and the conditions for exercising those freedoms.

Thus, despite the obvious need for a proper response to COVID-19, we must not become accustomed to sweeping assertions of governmental power. Invoking emergency powers, government executives summarily imposed numerous orders and directives that in many ways are analogous to martial law. These executive orders are unlike laws enacted through the ordinary give-and-take of the democratic process.

No doubt an emergency on the scale of COVID-19 justifies strong measures to protect the public, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that many of these measures are extraordinary assertions of governmental power that can dramatically constrain our basic freedoms. The power of government must have limits.

**Do we hear the buzzer on the alarm clock? This is a wake-up call for all of us.**

## 2 SECOND REFLECTION: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IS PARAMOUNT AMONG OUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

This time of restriction and confinement has confirmed for me that no freedom is more important than religious freedom. The freedom of religion properly has been called our first freedom. It is first not only because of its placement as the first right in the First Amendment but also because of the paramount importance of respecting the moral agency of each person. Living even for a brief few weeks under the restrictions imposed on religious activity by COVID-19 is a stark reminder that nothing is more precious to people of faith than the freedom to worship “Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience”<sup>14</sup> and to openly and freely live according to our convictions.

Religious liberty is one of the “just and holy principles”<sup>15</sup> underlying the Constitution of the United States. That liberty draws from and in turn reinforces the other rights protected by the First Amendment—the right to speak freely, to make use of a free press, to peaceably gather with others, and to petition the government to redress grievances.

Freedom of religion stands as a bulwark against unlimited government power.

It safeguards the right to think for oneself, to believe what one feels to be true, and to exercise moral agency accordingly. It secures the space necessary to live with faith, integrity, and devotion. It nurtures strong families. It protects communities of faith and the rich and sacred relationships they make possible.

Nothing government does is more important than fostering the conditions wherein religion can flourish.

## 3 THIRD REFLECTION: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IS FRAGILE.

As we have just experienced, religious freedom can quickly be swept aside in the name of protecting other societal interests. Despite COVID-19 risks, North American jurisdictions declared as “essential” numerous services related to alcohol, animals, marijuana, and other concerns. But often religious organizations and their services were simply deemed “non-essential,” even when their activities could be conducted safely. In the name of protecting physical health and security or advancing other social values, government often acted without regard to the importance of protecting spiritual health and security. It often seemed to forget that securing religious freedom is as vital as physical health.

## 4 FOURTH REFLECTION: IN A TIME OF CRISIS, SENSITIVE TOOLS ARE NECESSARY TO BALANCE THE DEMANDS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY WITH THE JUST INTERESTS OF SOCIETY.

I am *not* for a moment saying that religious freedom can be unlimited in the middle of a pandemic. Nor am I saying that all gov-

ernment officials have disregarded religious rights. Far from it.

What I *am* saying is that we can no more disregard the valid claims of religious freedom in a time of crisis than we can disregard the valid claims of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, or freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures. Nor should we prioritize secular interests above religious ones. A health crisis should not become an excuse for a religious freedom crisis.

I believe we must always remember a key principle: specifically, religion should not be treated less favorably than analogous secular activities.

For example, the orders of one state barred Catholic priests from anointing a parishioner with holy oil in the performance of last rites—even if the person was not sick with COVID-19, even if the priest and parishioner were protected with masks and gloves, and even if the oil was applied with a swab. In the same state, my church could not perform baptisms, even under the safest of conditions.

Protecting a person’s physical health from the coronavirus is, of course, important, but so is a person’s spiritual health. That same state allowed lawyers to meet with people to administer to their legal needs, allowed doctors to meet with people to administer to their health needs, and allowed caregivers to administer food to satisfy nutritional needs. But it did not allow a clergyperson to administer to a person’s *religious* needs, even when the risk of all these activities was essentially the same.

This example and many more like it illustrate a profound devaluing of religion. We can and must do better.

I also believe we must always remember a second essential principle: namely, policy makers, even in a crisis, should limit the exercise of religion only when it truly is necessary to preserve public health and safety.

When the needs of society are great, officials should still ask whether there is some way of addressing those needs other than by burdening or banning the exercise of religion. With good will and a little creativity, ways can almost always be found to

**He had forgotten who he was. There, among the swine, he remembered. And then everything changed.**

fulfill both society’s needs and the imperative to protect religious freedom.

After all, the COVID-19 virus is not attracted uniquely to religious people. As most of us now recognize, a variety of methods can be used to mitigate the risk of the virus that do not require outright prohibitions on religious worship or gatherings.

### The Opportunity before Us

The COVID-19 crisis has presented us with a unique opportunity to reaffirm and shore up religious freedom. We have witnessed the government’s swift, well-intentioned, but often dangerous breaching of the boundaries that protect the free exercise of religion. Do we hear the buzzer on the alarm clock? This is a wake-up call for all of us. Those fundamental boundaries and protections must be healed, renewed, and fortified.

While believers and their religious organizations must be good citizens in a time of crisis, never again can we allow government officials to treat the exercise of religion as simply “nonessential.” Never again must the fundamental right to worship God be trivialized below the ability to buy gasoline.

### Conclusion

In the midst of crisis, the prodigal son in the biblical parable “came to himself” and began the long journey back to his home. No doubt in that moment he realized the error of his ways. But more fundamentally, I think he also realized that he had forgotten who he was. There, among the swine, he remembered. And then everything changed.

In our understandable desire to combat COVID-19, we, too, as a society may have forgotten something about who we are and what is most precious. Perhaps we have not fully remembered that faith and the right to exercise it are central to our identity as believers and to all that we deem good and right and worthy of protection. Now is the time for us to heed the wake-up call, to remember, and to act. That we may do so is my hope and my earnest prayer.

As I now come to the end of my message, I joyfully exercise what for me, personally, is one of the greatest religious liberties. I express these thoughts in the name of Him whom I serve, whom I love, and whom I represent, even Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. See Luke 15:11–32.
2. Luke 15:13.
3. Luke 15:14; emphasis added.
4. Luke 15:15–20; emphasis added.
5. See Moses 7:18; Mosiah 18:21–22.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 97:21.
7. See Moses 7:69; Matthew 5:8.
8. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior’s Second Coming,” *Ensign*, April 2020.
9. See Moroni 6:5–6.
10. See 3 Nephi 27:27.
11. Matthew 18:20.
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 134:1.
13. 2 Nephi 2:26.
14. Articles of Faith 1:11.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 101:77.





# Religious Freedom

## Rights and Responsibilities

4-6 OCTOBER

How do you move an event that typically gathers nearly 100 delegates from as many as 50 countries together online and retain the same value? The Center had found success offering the Religious Freedom Annual Review online, but the Symposium had new challenges. How do you bring together speakers from all over the world into one event? When do you schedule that event considering all the time zones? What is the right length for an online event? Symposia sessions were interpreted into as many as 14 languages in the past—how do you offer that online? And how do you make that event available to as many people as possible?

Those were all challenges that were addressed in the 27th Annual International Law and Religion Symposium. A combination of prerecorded speakers and live breakout sessions were offered. Speakers were gathered together via Zoom with sessions livestreamed via the Center website and YouTube. Plenaries were offered in six languages with breakout sessions offered in two based on the area of focus. There were glitches, as there are bound to be with the first iteration of the symposium online, but an online symposium offered opportunities to invite all past delegates (more than 1,400 people from 125 countries) to take part. Typically, 200 to 300 people attend a

symposium, including delegates, but this year, there were 4,353 views from over 58 countries.

The one piece that could not be completely replicated was the value of networking in person. To address this, local sessions were offered in various regions to give friends of the Center an opportunity to connect with one another to discuss the themes addressed at the symposium as well as local issues.

“One of the great benefits of the symposium is the chance for world religious, political, academic, and civil leaders to spend several days together building relationships that can bear fruit into the future,” said associate director and symposium chair Elizabeth Clark. “We trust that when conditions are safe to gather, we will return to having the focus be on an in-person gathering with its opportunities for informal networking and sharing of ideas. We’ve also been very pleased at the broad engagement that we were able to have with the online symposium in 2020 and hope to continue to broadcast key symposium sessions online as well.”

The theme of this year’s symposium focused on the rights and responsibilities associated with religious freedom in a COVID-19 world. President Henry B. Eyring, second counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints, delivered a welcome in the opening plenary. Keynote messages were given by Bani Dugal, principal representative of the Baha’i International Community at the United Nations; Azza Karam, secretary general of Religions for Peace; and Heiner Bielefeldt, former UN special rapporteur for freedom of religion or belief.

Day two focused on protecting religious rights in a way to benefit all. Renáta Uitz, chair (director) of the Comparative Constitutional Law Program, Department of Legal Studies, Central European University, addressed promotion of religious freedom amidst crises and across divides. She paid tribute in her presentation to founding director Cole Durham and his methods of teaching and promoting religious freedom. Sophie Van Bijsterveld, professor of religion, law, and society, Radboud University in Nijmegen and member of the Center’s Academic Advisory Board, talked about limitations to freedom of religion or belief, while Faizan Mustafa, vice-chancellor, NALSAR University of Law, addressed the rights and responsibilities of both majority and minority religions with a particular look at his home country of India. The plenary was followed by breakout sessions looking at religious freedom issues in Africa and Central Asia.

On the final day, associate director and symposium program chair Elizabeth Clark moderated a panel entitled “Reli-

gious Organizations and the Common Good.” The panel featured four women affiliated with religious humanitarian organizations: Viva Bartkus, associate professor of management, founder and director, Business on the Frontlines program, Mendoza College of Business, University of Notre Dame; Sharon Eubank, first counselor, Relief Society General Presidency and president of Latter-day Saint Charities, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Suzanne Akhras Sahloul, founder and executive director of the Syrian Community Network, founder of the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) Midwest Foundation; and Krish O’Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Professor Scharffs wrapped the session with a presentation entitled “A Thousand Points of Light: Human Perspectives on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere,” which looked at the Center’s continued focus on human dignity. This was followed by breakout sessions on European perspectives on freedom of religion or belief and religious freedom in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to the theme, the Center celebrated the 20th anniversary of its founding and also paid tribute to founding director Cole Durham with presentations and video tributes.

### WEB EXTRA

Scan to watch recordings of all sessions in languages offered.



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM SYMPOSIUM



*“Freedom of religion and conscience and the right to public worship are essential elements of our faith. We have a deep commitment to the brotherhood and sisterhood of all and feel an obligation as followers of Jesus Christ to serve and bless those in all countries, regardless of their religious affiliation or lack thereof. . . . We pray that the peoples of the world will be united in solving the health and economic challenges wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic and, in so doing, ‘mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort’ (Mosiah 18:9).”*

—Henry B. Eyring, second counselor, First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



*“Dignity is not a meritocratic concept. It’s not something we give or grant in exchange for particular acts or performances. No, it’s strictly egalitarian, and it’s fully inclusive. . . . Everyone should be fully included in that web of responsibility that can only exist among human beings.”*

—Heiner Bielefeldt, professor of human rights and human rights policy, University of Erlangen; former UN special rapporteur for freedom of religion or belief



*“I think that’s where part of overcoming the challenge [of bridging differences] is—both understanding that there’s more that unites us than divides us, but also . . . not trying to minimize the divides or differences.”*

—Krish O’Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service



*“Personal belief is such a motivating foundation for huge amounts of productive energy that are being given by people of faith. . . . But for organizations that are founded on this kind of religious passion, if they want to work in the humanitarian realm with any kind of credibility or longevity, they have to be willing to take upon themselves specific principles that protect their expression of freedom and religious belief, but also protect the freedom of religion and belief for the people that they’re serving.”*

—Sharon Eubank, president of Latter-day Saint Charities



*“Freedom of religion and belief as a human right is a way of articulating human dignity in a concrete, legally relevant form.”*

—Sophie van Bijsterveld, professor of religion, law, and society, Radboud University



*“As humanitarians you really have to push back on this and say that everyone deserves an opportunity. Everyone deserves to be seen as a whole person. Everyone deserves to be helped. . . . You have to make sure that those principles always go hand in hand with the intention of serving others.”*

—Suzanne Akhras Sahloul, founder and executive director of Syrian Community Network



*“With commitment, even adversaries can imagine the common ground and then work to create it to serve those who are more vulnerable than ourselves. . . . Common ground does not exist until we imagine it, and then we need to work ridiculously hard to create it.”*

—Viva Bartkus, associate professor of management, Notre Dame University; member of the board of directors, Catholic Relief Services



*“This is the time to be able to speak up for your brother and your sister in the other part of the world whose right to thought, whose right to conscience, whose right to belief is being actively taken away. This is the time to speak up.”*

—Azza Karam, secretary general of Religions for Peace, lead facilitator for the United Nations’ Strategic Learning Exchanges on Religion, Development, and Diplomacy



*“We need to realize that giving religious freedom to minorities and also to the majority is not going to harm the nation; rather, it is going to help everyone and benefit everyone.”*

—Faizan Mustafa, vice-chancellor of NALSAR University of Law



*“The role of religious leaders as partners in word and deed in creation of a culture of respect for human dignity and freedom of conscience, religion, or belief cannot be overstated.”*

—Bani Dugal, principal representative of the Baha’i International Community at the United Nations; cochair of the Multifaith Advisory Council to the Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development, New York



*“Cole’s work calls attention to the fact that human forces make the law work. . . . We have to see these forces as the forces that drive us as human beings—all of us. It requires not only reflection and self-reflection but also humility. The starting point of any dialogue seeking principled compromise is humility.”*

—Renáta Uitz, chair (director) of the Comparative Constitutional Law Program, Department of Legal Studies, Central European University

## AREA SESSIONS

Since the symposium was offered online this year, the Center extended opportunities to area legal counsel offices and communications teams of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to offer local sessions in their areas. The Center approved speakers and programs, and Center and Law School media staff provided various forms of technical assistance, coordination, and promotion with the areas. The local area staff took responsibility for inviting speakers, promoting their events, and broadcasting them. Six local sessions were held in the following areas:

ASIA NORTH/PHILIPPINES  
12-13 OCTOBER 2020

EUROPE  
6 OCTOBER 2020

CARIBBEAN  
6 OCTOBER 2020

PACIFIC  
NOVEMBER 2020

CENTRAL AMERICA  
14 OCTOBER 2020

SOUTH AMERICA NORTHWEST  
5 OCTOBER 2020

### WEB EXTRA

Scan to learn more about regional events where available.





## Asia REGIONAL CONFERENCE



# Teaching and Certificate Training

SEPTEMBER 2020

In keeping with our mission statement to expand, deepen, and disseminate knowledge and expertise regarding the interrelationship of law and religion, as well as facilitate the growth of networks of scholars, experts, and policy makers involved in the field of religion and law, the Center continued its teaching and certificate training courses in 2020. Adapting to travel bans and other pandemic concerns, the Center, in partnership with the Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) in Washington, DC, and Liu Peng from the Pu Shi Institute in Beijing, China, produced a series of 12 lectures, each addressing important topics on religion and the rule of law.

Directors and associate directors of the Center Brett Scharffs, Cole Durham, Gary Doxey, and David Moore provided eight of the 12 lectures. At the invitation of the Center, Robert Cochran from Pepperdine University and the University of Virginia, Frank Ravitch from Michigan State University, and Renáta Uitz from Central European University also recorded lectures. Our cosponsors arranged for and provided language translation in Chinese and scheduled a Q&A session with the students in China.

Online teaching programs were also held in Indonesia and Myanmar.

### LECTURE TOPICS

1. Introduction to the Rule of Law (Brett Scharffs, Brigham Young University)
2. Introduction to Human Dignity and International Human Rights (Renáta Uitz, Central European University)
3. Introduction to Freedom of Religion and Belief from a Human Rights Perspective (Renáta Uitz, Central European University)
4. Introduction to Comparative Church-State Relations (Brett Scharffs, Brigham Young University)
5. Freedom of Religious Belief and Expression (Gary Doxey, Brigham Young University)
6. Registration—the Right to Legal Personality (Cole Durham, Brigham Young University)
7. Religious Freedom and Nondiscrimination (Cole Durham, Brigham Young University)
8. Financial Relationships Between Religion and the State (Cole Durham, Brigham Young University)
9. US Establishment Clause Jurisprudence (David Moore, Brigham Young University)
10. US Free Exercise Jurisprudence—Separation of Church and State (Cole Durham, Brigham Young University)
11. Religion and Politics in the United States (Frank Ravitch, Michigan State University)
12. Christianity and the US Constitution (Robert Cochran, Pepperdine University and University of Virginia)

### INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC TRAINING MATERIALS

In October 2019, associate directors Gary Doxey and David Moore met with the Guatemalan attorney general for human rights, who had recently attended the symposium. He requested training for his office on religious freedom. In response, David Moore organized an International Human Rights Clinic that was cotaught by a professor of instructional design during winter semester. Students in the class drew from Brett Scharffs and Cole Durham's *Law and Religion* casebook to create training chapters on religious freedom topics. Over the summer, student fellows of the Center continued the effort, resulting in chapters and corresponding PowerPoint presentations to teach topics such as the value of religious freedom, comparative approaches to religion-state relations, and religious freedom as an international human right. The project will ultimately lead to a menu of chapters, PowerPoint presentations, and video recordings that can be used to conduct trainings around the world on freedom of religion.

### CAMBRIDGE INTERFAITH DIALOGUE INITIATIVE

Associate director Paul Kerry arranged for the Center and Religious Education to cooperate and fund 15 BYU undergraduate students to enroll in an online course on Representations of Jewish-Christian Relations in Literature taught by the Woolf Institute, Cambridge (UK), from 6 July to 6 September 2020. The Woolf Institute is a leader in sponsoring education that seeks to improve relations between religions. Professor Kerry had been a visiting fellow with the Woolf Institute when he was a research associate at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, from 2009 to 2011. In May 2020, the Woolf Institute interviewed Elder Jeffrey R. Holland to learn from him how The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continued to strengthen the faith of and be a source of support for its members during the global pandemic.

#### WEB EXTRA

Scan to watch interview with Elder Holland.





## Africa

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

### LAW AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA

# Facilitating Freedom of Religion and Belief for a United and Strong Africa

Durban, South Africa | 19–22 JANUARY 2020

In cooperation with the South African Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious, and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission); the African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ACLARS); and the West African Regional Center for Law and Religion Studies (WARCLARS), the Center organized an Africa-wide conference on “Law and Religious Communities in Africa” in Durban, South Africa, 19-22 January 2020. The conference focused on registration laws for religious communities, which can be used by governments to restrict religious communities. Academic,

religious, government, and civil society leaders from 18 African nations attended the conference and discussed how registration laws should facilitate religious freedom. Conference participants also visited a Hindu temple and received a VIP tour of the soon-to-be-dedicated Durban South Africa Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Professor Durham led the organizing committee for the conference, and he, Professor Scharffs, and Professor David Moore spoke at the conference.



## Eastern Europe

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

# Uzbekistan Religion Law Consultations

20 MAY, 8 JUNE, 6 JULY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2020

Building on a review of an early draft law on religious associations and consultation with Uzbek officials in Tashkent in 2019, the Center was invited by the Uzbek parliament to do a series of roundtables for those involved in drafting the law on difficult topics that would be relevant to the next draft of the law. Professor Clark organized three online roundtables from May through August 2020, focusing on general legislative principles, registration of religious organizations, and censorship of religious materials. Each of these roundtables brought

together three different international experts in discussion with parliamentary leaders and members of the Uzbekistan Committee for Religious Affairs and Ministry of Justice. During the roundtables, the foreign and Uzbek experts each made brief presentations, but the bulk of the time was spent in question and answer and discussion. The roundtables, each originally scheduled to go an hour and a half long, provoked so much engagement and interest that they ended up being twice as long.

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## Europe

### REGIONAL CONFERENCES

#### WEBINAR SERIES

# COVID-19, Religion, and Belief


This 15-part webinar series took a global approach to examining the impact of the pandemic on civil liberties, especially freedom of religion or belief. During the series, guests also touched on cross-cutting themes like the impact of the pandemic on levels of religiosity, religious practice, theological reflection and religious imagination, faith-based humanitarianism, religion, and inclusion and xenophobia. The series brought together government officials, scholars, and practitioners to discuss the threats we face and how we might respond to them.

The series was organized by the Cambridge Institute on Religion and International Studies, the Center for Religious Studies at Bruno Kessler Foundation, the Center for Justice and Society at Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) Law School Rio de Janeiro, the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University Law School, the European Union Office of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the University of Siena. A total of 1,526 people attended the sessions live.




#### WEBINAR SERIES SCHEDULE

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>9 APR<br/>COVID-19, RELIGION, AND BELIEF:<br/>INTRODUCTION TO THE WEBINAR SERIES</p> <p>16 APR<br/>FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF, COVID-19,<br/>AND HUMAN DIGNITY</p> <p>23 APR<br/>CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS' PERSPECTIVE</p> <p>30 APR<br/>EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS' PERSPECTIVE</p> <p>7 MAY<br/>MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS' PERSPECTIVE</p> <p>14 MAY<br/>CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA PERSPECTIVES</p> <p>21 MAY<br/>BUSINESS, RELIGION, ECONOMICS</p> <p>28 MAY<br/>SPECIAL ENVOYS' PERSPECTIVE</p> <p>4 JUN<br/>ASIA PERSPECTIVES</p> | <p>11 JUN<br/>FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF AND GENDER<br/>(IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OSCE/ODIHR)</p> <p>18 JUN<br/>AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST PERSPECTIVES</p> <p>25 JUN<br/>CONTRIBUTIONS OF FAITH-BASED HUMANITARIAN<br/>ORGANIZATIONS</p> <p>2 JUL<br/>CANADA, UNITED STATES, AND UNITED KINGDOM<br/>PERSPECTIVES</p> <p>9 JUL<br/>2020 VISION—LOOKING BACK AND SEEING THE<br/>ROAD FORWARD</p> <p>22 OCT<br/>COMMUNITIES AND STATE RESPONSES TO THE<br/>COVID-19 PANDEMIC<br/>REFLECTIONS ON THE REPORT <i>OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION<br/>COMMITMENTS AND STATE RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19<br/>PANDEMIC</i></p> |
|---|---|



**WEB EXTRA**

Scan to watch recordings of the webinar series.





## Latin America REGIONAL CONFERENCES

### LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL MEETING

# G20 Interfaith Forum

Buenos Aires, Argentina | 21 JULY AND 15 SEPTEMBER 2020

The Latin America Regional Meeting of the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20) focused on how Latin American religious leaders could support regional responses to the COVID-19 pandemic as the area became a new epicenter for the virus.

In addition to discussions regarding COVID-19, the event kicked off three task forces:

1. *Empowering People and Fostering Gender Equality*
2. *Religious Engagement with Safeguarding the Planet*
3. *Frontiers at the Intersection of Governance, Faith, and Technology*

On 15 September, delegates gathered again to finalize policy recommendations for the global G20 Interfaith Forum to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in October.

The Center was key in organizing the meeting, livestreaming the meeting out to viewers, and providing translation from Spanish to English.

#### WEB EXTRA

Scan for more detail on this and other IF20 regional meetings.



### 7º CONGRESSO INTERNACIONAL SOBRE LIBERDADES CIVIS FUNDAMENTAIS

SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON  
FUNDAMENTAL CIVIL LIBERTIES

29 OCTOBER 2020

Associate director Gary Doxey delivered a keynote speech titled “Fundamental Civil Liberties in the Context of COVID-19: The United States Experience” at the Seventh International Congress on Fundamental Civil Liberties, “Liberdade Religiosa, Liberdade de Expressão e Objeção de Consciência” (Religious Freedom, Freedom of Speech, and Objection of Conscience). The conference was sponsored by Associação Nacional de Juristas Evangélicos (ANAJURE) with support from Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie and the International Center for Law and Religion Studies. Other speakers included Dr.

Jónatas Machado from the University of Coimbra in Portugal, and government leaders including Ministro André Mendonça, Dr. Eduardo Sabo Paes, and Dr. Uziel Santana.

The virtual event had an audience of 450, mostly from Brazil. This was the Center’s first formal collaboration with ANAJURE, a professional society for evangelical lawyers. ANAJURE works to defend religious freedom in Brazil’s courts and congress. Leaders from ANAJURE have participated in past symposia in Provo.



## Middle East REGIONAL CONFERENCE

# G20 Interfaith Forum

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia | 13-16 OCTOBER 2020

Entering its seventh year, this year's G20 Interfaith forum (IF20), hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was a game-changer in many ways.

"If we had been able to meet in Riyadh, this would have been a truly historic event," forum president and ICLRS founding director Cole Durham said in his address at the forum's opening meeting. "Our host had agreed to open its doors to what probably would have been the most diverse gathering of religious leaders ever to have met in Saudi Arabia at one time. The challenge of COVID-19 has blocked that possibility, but we should not allow the disease to defeat the good intentions behind the invitation."

Despite the challenges, however, the event pressed forward in a digital format and found unprecedented support and interest. One hundred and fifty international religious and policy experts presented in six plenary sessions and 12 panels, watched via multiple streaming services by more than 2,000 registered participants worldwide.

Canadian Multifaith Federation ambassador Dr. James Christie, who sits on the IF20 advisory council, said that the forum was truly impressive. "In the pandemic-ridden world of 2020, it has to be said that the Saudi-based IF20 was an extraordinary success," he said. "The four principal partners—IF20, KAICIID, UNAOC, and the Saudi host committee—planned and executed one of the premiere international virtual symposia ever convened."

The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks to raise awareness of the role of religious organizations and faith-based organizations in the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, a comprehensive list of 17 sustainable development goals that seek to ensure that every person has access to the basic necessities of life: health, education, water, security, equality, and a clean environment. The meeting convenes each year in the host country of the upcoming G20 Summit.



## IF20 REGIONAL MEETINGS

In preparation for this year's forum, regional meetings were organized throughout the world. Held electronically, these meetings brought together religious leaders, government officials, academic experts, and business leaders who had been charged by G20 Interfaith Forum organizers with developing policy recommendations to be submitted in November 2020 to world leaders of the G20 summit. Follow-up meetings were also held to finalize the recommendations from each region.

### WEB EXTRA

Scan to learn more about IF20 and the 2020 recommendations.



### MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL MEETING

27 JUNE 2020

*Focus: Governance and Faith; Coexistence; Peace; and Environment*

### EUROPEAN REGIONAL MEETING

29 JUNE 2020

*Focus: Gender Equality; Protecting the Planet; Governance, Faith, and Technology*

### LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL MEETING

21 JULY 2020

*Focus: COVID-19 Response; Empowering People and Fostering Gender Equality; Protecting the Planet; and Governance, Faith, and Technology*

### ASIA/PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING

5-6 AUGUST 2020

*Focus: Education, Youth, and Women; Governance and Faith; Protecting the Planet*

### NORTH AMERICA REGIONAL MEETING

17 AUGUST 2020

*Focus: Refugees; COVID-19 Response; Race*

### AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING

24 AUGUST 2020

*Focus: Hunger; COVID-19 Response; Protecting the Planet; Debt*





## Southeast Asia/Pacific

### REGIONAL CONFERENCE

#### SOUTHEAST ASIA FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF (SEAFORB)

# Webinar on Religion and Development

9-10 AND 17 NOVEMBER 2020



BY GUNAWAN KARTAPRANATA - OWN WORK, CC BY-SA 3.0



This year's SEAFORB conference was held through a series of webinars. The Center participated in two of those webinars.

The webinar "The Place of Freedom of Religion in the Development Agenda of ASEAN" explored practical ways that freedom of religion or belief helps cultivate a social and regulatory environment that allows individuals and communities to facilitate the achievement of a variety of social goods. This includes contributions to advancing sustainable development goals fields of hunger reduction, improved public health, and alleviation of poverty. Moderated by W. Cole Durham, Jr., speakers included Alissa Wahid, national director of Gusdurian Network Indonesia (GNI); Brian Grim, president of the Religious Freedom and Business Foundation, United States; Katherine Marshall, senior fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, United States; and Eugene Yapp, director of Religious Freedom and Liberty Partnership, Malaysia.

The second event was titled "The Place of Freedom of Religion or Belief in Fostering Social Inclusion, Peace, and Peaceful Coexistence in ASEAN." This webinar explored ways and means whereby FORB helps create an environment in which religious actors and others can help reduce the hateful extremism, religious bigotry, harassment, shame, and blame that all too often falls on marginalized religious minorities in ASEAN. It also examined underlying sources of inequality and unjust treatment of targeted minorities in ASEAN, such as refugees, displaced persons, or otherwise disadvantaged groups. Moderated by Eugene Yapp, the panel included Azza Karam, secretary general of Religions for Peace International; Samira Gutoc-Tomawis, advocate for the people of Marawi, Philippines; and Kelvin Yii, member of parliament of Malaysia.

## 2020 CENTER PUBLICATIONS

### Articles and Books

**Babie, Paul T., Neville G. Rochow QC, and Brett G. Scharffs,** eds., *Freedom of Religion or Belief: Creating the Constitutional Space for Fundamental Freedoms* (Elgar, 2020).

**Clark, Elizabeth A., and Dmytro Vovk,** "Legal Reform in Uzbekistan: Prospects for Freedom of Religion or Belief and Covenantal Pluralism," *Review of Faith and International Affairs* 18, no. 4 (2020).

**Durham, W. Cole, Jr., and Elizabeta Kitanovic,** "The Montenegrin Law on Freedom of Religion and Belief and the Legal Status of Religious Communities," *Ecclesiastical Law and Political Papers* (2020).

**Kerry, Paul E.,** "Religious and Secular Presuppositions in First Amendment Interpretations," in *The Cambridge Companion to the First Amendment*, ed. M. Breidenbach and O. Anderson (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

**Kerry, Paul E.,** "Zusammenleben: Goethe's Ideas on Community Building and Transforming Religious Festivals in the Wake of the Napoleonic Wars," *Global Intellectual History* 5, no. 1 (2020): 64-85.

**Neo, Jaclyn L., and Brett G. Scharffs,** "Introduction: Law and Politics of Freedom of Religion in Comparative Perspective," *University of Western Australia Law Review* 47, no. 1 (2020).

**Scharffs, Brett G.,** "Abraham Lincoln and the Cardinal Virtue of Practical Reason," *Pepperdine Law Review* 47 (2020).

**Scharffs, Brett G.,** "Coronavirus and Religious Freedom: A Preliminary View from the United States," in *Revista General de Derecho Canónico y Derecho Eclesiástico del Estado* (October 2020).

With the help of numerous student summer fellows of the Center, Cole Durham completed the 2018-19-20 update of Bassett, Durham, Smith, and Goldfeder, *Religious Organizations and the Law*, 4 vols., 2nd ed., rev. ed. (Thomson Reuters, 2020).

### Media

**Elizabeth A. Clark** gave a television interview on her new book, *Religion during the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict*, for broadcast in Russia and Ukraine by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

Professor Clark also recorded an interview for the National Museum of American Religion.

**Cole Durham** participated in a *WorldAffairs* podcast series with James Richardson and Sayed Razawi.

### Law Reform

**Elizabeth A. Clark** joined other law and religion academics in two Supreme Court amicus briefs on religious freedom issues. *Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrissey-Berru* addresses the scope of a church's ability to select its own leaders and teachers. *Tanzin v. Tanvir* looks at the scope of claims of those whose religious freedom has been limited by the government under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Professor Clark also organized and joined a series of roundtables helping to draft the new Uzbek law on religions with other foreign experts on relevant topics. Professor Durham and Professor Scharffs participated on some of these roundtables (see page 29).

**Gary B. Doxey** coordinated a series of expert submissions and amicus briefs in the case of *Sandra Pavez v. Chile*. This is the first religious freedom case to be decided by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and it will have significant continental ramifications for the ability of religious organizations to have autonomy in the selection of their teachers and leaders.

**Cole Durham** assisted in preparing a document opposing constitutional and legal change in Samoa that would give the customary court jurisdiction to override constitutional protections, including freedom of religion or belief.

Professor Durham also was a signatory in a Supreme Court amicus brief for two cases: *Mitche A. Dalberiste, Petitioner v. GLE Associates, Inc.* and *Small v. Memphis Light, Gas & Water*. Both cases look at reasonable accommodation for employees' religious practice.



STUDENT RESEARCH FELLOWS

Traditionally, Student Research Fellows spend part of the summer externing abroad. While that hasn't been possible this year, our 2020 fellows were hard at work from home. Many still worked via Zoom with the international offices to which they were assigned. Students assisted in Center research, including working on an update of the Treatise and an upcoming book on human dignity, among other projects. "Even though I never got to meet my supervisor in person, our one-on-one Zoom meetings were productive and personal enough where my supervisor could still be a mentor to me," Lauren Malner said. "I don't know how it would have been if I had been in the office—maybe we would have actually interacted less—but I feel like because of our weekly Zoom calls, I left my internship knowing how to be a better lawyer and a better person."

- Reece Barker**  
*Accra, Ghana*
- Leah Blake**  
*Frankfurt, Germany*
- Jaden Cowdin**  
*Salt Lake City, Utah*
- Kimberley Farnsworth**  
*Lima, Peru*
- Morgan Farnsworth**  
*Moscow, Russia*
- Tanner Hafen**  
*Auckland, New Zealand*
- Karissa Hilton**  
*Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic*
- Rachel Johnson**  
*Buenos Aires, Argentina*

- Lauren Malner**  
*Moscow, Russia*
- Brock Mason**  
*Frankfurt, Germany*
- Jordan Phair**  
*Johannesburg, South Africa*
- Marianna Richardson**  
*São Paulo, Brazil*
- Jui-Chieh Tsai**  
*Salt Lake City, Utah*
- Abigail Wadley**  
*Salt Lake City, Utah*
- Tom Withers**  
*Accra, Ghana*

STUDENT MANAGEMENT BOARD

The 2019-2020 Student Management Board did not see a huge disruption in their service to the Center due to the pandemic. Chosen for their interest in law and religion, Management Board members spent their year assisting with various Center projects. The biggest change may have been a move from in-person conferences to online conferences, which, for some, meant missing out on attending conferences abroad. But as usual, their contributions to Center projects were valuable and appreciated.

- |                              |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Austin Atkinson</b>       | <b>Samuel Morales</b>           |
| <b>Andrew Birkinsha</b>      | <b>Madison Moss</b>             |
| <b>Mackenzie Cannon</b>      | <b>Andrew Navarro</b>           |
| <b>Joseph Castro</b>         | <b>Mpilo Nkambule</b>           |
| <b>Erin Cranor</b>           | <b>McKenna Rammell</b>          |
| <b>Summer Crockett</b>       | <b>Kody Richardson</b>          |
| <b>Emely Perez Figueroa</b>  | <b>Miranda Cherkas Sherrill</b> |
| <b>Diana Flores</b>          | <b>Liam Smith</b>               |
| <b>Christopher Fore</b>      | <b>Aaron Stinson</b>            |
| <b>John Geilman</b>          | <b>April Tansiongco</b>         |
| <b>Abdullah Hassan</b>       | <b>Ashley Waddoups</b>          |
| <b>Taha Al Hawamdeh</b>      | <b>Vinicius Veras</b>           |
| <b>Hannah Leavitt-Howell</b> | <b>Chery Yang</b>               |
| <b>Rhett Hunt</b>            | <b>Mishleen Ziadat</b>          |

SYMPOSIUM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2020

The Symposium Executive Committee plays a vital role in the success of the International Law and Religion Symposium each year. This student committee coordinates the logistics of the conference and works closely with delegates. However, this year, with the symposium moved online, their role changed significantly. Students assisted moderators, helped coordinate documents for interpreters, and assisted in other ways to make the online conference a success. Students this year also had the important role of documenting the processes from past years to make sure that no institutional knowledge was lost in the transition from in-person to online event.

- Master Schedule*
- Rhett Hunt**
  - McKenna Rammell**
  - Emma Wilcox**
  - Tom Withers**

- Recruitment and Volunteer Coordination*
- America Andrade**
  - Summer Crockett**
  - Morgan Farnsworth**
  - Aaron Stinson**

- Documents, Interpretation, and Media*
- Amie Erickson**
  - Kristie Lam Moss**
  - Kody Richardson**

- Transportation*
- Joseph Castro**
  - Kimberly Farnsworth**
  - Ben Marsden**
  - Will Morrison**
  - Victor Moxley**

- Concierge*
- Christina Chan**
  - Kai'anui Graham**
  - Christopher Melling**
  - Daniela Rosbach**
  - Chery Yang**

- Hosting*
- Tanner Hafen**
  - Andrew Navarro**

MOOT COURT

For the past two years, select teams of law students have competed in the European Academy of Religion's International Moot Court Competition in Law and Religion in Rome, Italy. Because of the pandemic, the competition was canceled this year. However, we still want to recognize the students who put in a lot of work and preparation for the event prior to its cancellation.

- Austin Atkinson**
- Mackenzie Cannon**
- Summer Crockett**
- Diana Flores**
- Christopher Fore**
- Rhett Hunt**
- Aaron Stinson**
- Ashley Waddoups**



### LLM STUDENTS

Every year, a group of international students attend BYU Law to earn LLM degrees. They come, not as first-year law students, but with degrees from their home countries and often, years of experience in the legal field. Their goal is to gain additional education and experience in the US in order to further their employment opportunities, and thus their impact, on their home countries.

With the assistance of the Stirling Foundation and the Sorenson Legacy Foundation, these students gain significant experience that will benefit them upon return to their countries. Students not only obtain an LLM degree; they also have the opportunity to intern for a US law firm before returning home.

Stirling Fellows and Sorenson Fellows also volunteer time working with the Center. Their experience and language skills are particularly helpful in symposium and conference settings.

Eric Jensen, Robert W. Barker Professor of Law and coordinator of the LLM program at the BYU Law School, said that the value of the LLM program is its focus on lawyers who want to return home to practice. Their impact on the legal field in their home countries is significant; “that impact will only continue to grow as we grow the program.”

Stirling Fellow Samuel Morales of Mexico said, “In order to come to BYU Law School, my family and I had to make significant adjustments. . . . However none of that compares to everything that will come to our lives as a result of the efforts, personal sacrifices, and support of generous people who have made it all possible.”

#### *Stirling Fellows*

- Samuel Morales**  
Mexico
- Mpilo Nkambule**  
Swaziland
- Emely Perez Figueroa**  
Honduras

#### *Sorenson Fellow*

- Vinicius Veras**  
Brazil

#### *Other LLMs who volunteered time at the Center:*

- Taha Al Hawamdeh**  
Jordan
- Mishleen Ziadat**  
Jordan

## Meritorious Service Awards



### MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

Awarded to third-year law students for dedicated service to the Center and the cause of religious freedom.

#### *International Center for Law and Religion Studies Outstanding Service Award*

**Erin Cranor**

#### *ICLRS Meritorious Service Awards*

- Austin Atkinson**
- Andrew Birkinsha**
- Hayley Brooks Cousin**
- Erin Cranor**
- Diana Flores**
- Abdullah Hassan**
- Kevin Moscon**
- Madison Moss**
- Rhonda K. Peck**
- Gabriell Sabalones**
- Miranda Cherkas Sherrill**
- George Simons**



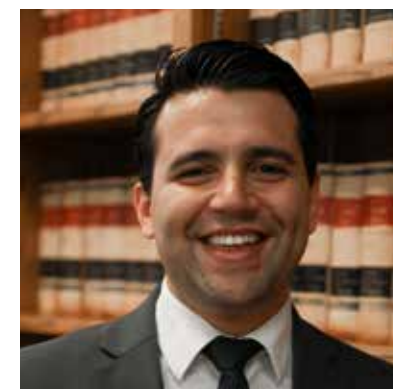
“I just feel like that’s what the Center is all about—making friendships and crossing divides and being able to make connections because we’re all human.”

—Madi Moss



“I have gained a deeper understanding and wider perspective of the importance of protecting freedom of religion or belief—and that such protection can be achieved through academics, education, law reform, creating relationships, building bridges of commonality with people and key actors across the globe.”

—Emely Perez Figueroa



“Here at BYU Law, and working with the Center, there is no way you will have few things to do. What has been helping me is that the people really believe in us. . . . They are [saying], ‘You can do it! You’re good enough to accomplish the things that you’re assigned.’”

—Vinicius Veras



## TALK ABOUT: LAW AND RELIGION

The Center’s blog, *Talk About: Law and Religion*, was conceived in 2014 by former publications director Donlu Thayer as a way not only to stay in touch with those already aware of the Center’s work but also to present the voice of the Center and engage in conversation with a wider international audience. The blog officially launched in 2019 with the involvement of Dmytro Vovk, director of the Center for the Rule of Law and Religion Studies at Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University in Kharkiv, Ukraine. Already a vlogger and a well-connected international expert on religion and the rule of law, Vovk pushed the blog forward to success. He has since become a coeditor of the blog.

Organized around a series of conversations on various topics of religion, law, ethics, and world affairs, the blog has most recently looked at topics such as the digitalization of religion amid COVID-19, human dignity, gender equality, antireligious speech, and state security measures. In October 2020, the blog published 25 posts on law, religion, and the coronavirus. The posts were preceded by a webinar that introduced the topic and featured all 25 authors.

At the end of 2020, the blog had over 150 posts by renowned experts in law and religion.

#### WEB EXTRA

Scan to read *Talk About: Law and Religion*.





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 David Christensen, *immediate past chair*  
 Lynn Anderson  
 Bill Benac  
 Stacey Campbell  
 Jim and Sandy Cook

Martin and Allyson Egbert  
 David and Linda Nearon  
 Milt Shipp  
 Bryce Wade  
 Kenneth and Athelia Woolley

We are grateful for the support of the members of the International Advisory Council (IAC). Their contributions of time, talents, and other resources are critical to the success of the Center in promoting freedom of religion or belief worldwide.



**IN REMEMBRANCE**

The Center mourns the passing of **Blair Garff** from COVID-19. He was a long-time member of the IAC and served on the Executive Committee.

**INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

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 Ken and Athelia Woolley  
 Tim and Teresa Wright  
 Koo and Patricia Yuen

## IAC EXTENSION TOUR

An IAC extension tour was held 19-25 January 2020 in Durban, South Africa. The trip began with the regional conference “Law and Religious Communities in Africa.” Conference participants were invited to attend the open house for the Durban Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with tours being led by Church leaders.

The IAC group also toured the beautiful coastal city of Durban. Once the conference concluded, the IAC and Center personnel traveled north to the spectacular Phinda Forest Lodge, where they enjoyed exhilarating game drives, bush walks, a Zulu village tour, and night safaris.



## ENDOWMENTS



### International Advisory Council Cornerstone Endowment

*Founding Contributors:*

**David S. and Mary L. Christensen**

**Richard P. and Christena Huntsman Durham**

**Duane L. and Eryn G. Madsen**

**David A. and Linda C. Nearon**

### Other Endowments

Two new endowments were established in 2020, one focusing on the Center’s programs in Oxford and one focusing on Latin America.

**Sterling and Eleanor Colton Chair in Law and Religion**

**Andrus African Endowed Fund** for International Law and Religion Studies

**David S. and Mary L. Christensen Endowed Fund** for International Law and Religion Studies

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**Jean and Frank, Barbara and Wayne Friendship FoRB**

**W. George and Helen Lowe Johnson Research Fellowship**

**Gary Stephen Anderson Endowed Fund**

**Latin American Religious Freedom Endowed Fund** (*Founding contributors:* James F. and Allyson L. Larkins)

**Oxford Religious Liberty Endowed Fund** (*Founding Contributors:* H. Brent and Bonnie Jean Beesley)

**Southeast Asia Endowed Fund** for the International Center for Law and Religion Studies

(*Founding Contributors:* Milton P. and Heidi S. Shipp)



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**Blythe Shupe**  
*Communications Specialist*



**Sandy Stephenson**  
*International Advisory Council Liaison*



### ICLRS RECOGNIZED AS A REGISTERED CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION

The Organization of American States (OAS) by unanimous vote recognized the Center as a registered Civil Society Organization (CSO) on March 12, 2020. As a registered CSO, the Center will be notified of all OAS activities and will have an opportunity to participate appropriately. The Center has been work-

ing to obtain this status for over a year. As senior fellows of the Center, Denise and Neil Lindberg are currently living in Washington, DC, where they represent the Center before the OAS. With the Center's new CSO status, Denise and Neil will be positioned to make official contacts on the Center's behalf with officers and staff of the OAS and with the individual diplomatic missions from OAS member countries. They will also have a recognized credential as they participate in meetings.



### DURHAM APPOINTED TO INFORMAL COUNCIL OF EXPERTS

On February 5, 2020, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo launched the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Alliance, "an alliance of like-minded partners who treasure, and fight for, international religious freedom for every human being." Twenty-six countries joined the IRF Alliance pledging to uphold the Declaration of Principles, a constitution for the IRF Alliance solidifying their commitment to protect the right to freedom of religion or belief.

Founding director W. Cole Durham, Jr., was appointed to an informal council of experts which will advise the IRF Alliance.



### DAVID MOORE ELECTED TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

In March, associate director David Moore was nominated by the State Department as the US candidate for the Human Rights Committee. The Human Rights Committee is a body of 18 experts who oversee compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). With the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ICCPR forms what is called the International Bill of Rights. The ICCPR is the primary treaty that guarantees freedom of religion. The State Department led an extensive diplomatic campaign in support of David's candidacy. Members of the Center also reached out to contacts worldwide to recommend David. Notwithstanding setbacks to US diplomacy, David was elected by the 173 states party to the ICCPR to a short term on the committee. He participated as a member of the committee during its concluding session of 2020. During that four-week session, the committee decided numerous cases brought by individuals claiming that their human rights had been violated.

**JANUARY**

**2–5** Association of American Law Schools, *Washington, DC*\*

**19–22** Law and Religious Communities in Africa, Africa Regional Conference, *Durban, South Africa*\*

**22–25** IAC Extension, *Durban, South Africa*\*

**31** Planning Workshop with the AMAR foundation on “Journey from Persecution to Inclusion,” *Provo, Utah*\*

**FEBRUARY**

**4–7** Universal Peace Federation World Summit 2020, *Seoul, Korea*\*

**10** Discussion on the ODIHR’s new publication “Freedom of Religion or Belief and Security: Policy Guidance,” American University, *Washington, DC*\*

**10** Kazakhstan Working Group, US State Department Office of International Religious Freedom, *Washington, DC*\*

**11** USCIRF Briefing on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Security: New Policy Guidance from the OSCE, Senate Visitors’ Center, *Washington, DC*\*

**11** Religious Freedom Roundtable, Embassy of Kazakhstan to the US, *Washington, DC*\*

**17–March 4** Law and Religion Course, National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSAR), *Hyderabad, India*\*

**20** Freedom of Religion and Belief for Everyone Everywhere: Lessons Learned and Good Practices, Special Meeting of the Organization of American States, *Washington, D.C.*\*

**21** 10th Annual National Conclave of Charatiya Chhatra Sansad (Indian Student Parliament), *New Delhi, India*\*

**22** “Varieties of Secularism: A Comparative Perspective,” 15th Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer Memorial Lecture, Jawahar Bhawan, *New Delhi, India*\*

**24** Conference on Human Dignity for Latin American Ambassadors to EU, *Brussels, Belgium*\*

**27** US State Department International Visitor Leadership Program Visit. Interfaith and Government Leaders from Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Greece, and Norway, *Provo, Utah*\*

**27** J. Reuben Clark Law Society Annual Conference, *Phoenix, Arizona*\*

**29–March 1** Conference on Law and Religion, NALSAR, *Hyderabad, India*\*

**MARCH**

**5** Journalism Conference on Freedom of Expression and Religious Freedom Implications of the Inter-American Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance, *Guatemala*\*

**9–13** University of Zagreb Course on Criminal Law, Religion, and Security, University of Zagreb Law School, *Dubrovnik, Croatia*†

**10** Azerbaijani Delegation, Sponsored by the Stirling Foundation, BYU Law School, *Provo, Utah*\*

**APRIL**

**8–15** CEU Teaching, *Vienna, Austria*†

**9** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 1: “COVID-19, Religion and Belief, Introduction to the Webinar Series”†

**16** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 2: “Freedom of Religion and Belief, COVID-19 and Human Dignity”†

**20–May 1** CEU Teaching, *Vienna, Austria*†

**23** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 3: “Civil Society Organizations’ Perspective”†

**30** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 4: “European Union Institutions’ Perspective”†

**MAY**

**1** Uzbekistan Religion Law Consultation Roundtable, “Registration”†

**7** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 5: “Multilateral Organizations’ Perspective”†

**13–15, 18–20** CEU Advanced Course, *Vienna, Austria*†

**14** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 6: “Central and South America Perspectives”†

**20** Uzbek Parliamentary Monitoring Session on Freedom of Religion or Belief†

**21** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 7: “Business, Religion, and Economics”†

**26** First International Forum on Religious Freedom and Citizenship, Legislative Assembly of São Paulo State, *São Paulo, Brazil*†

**28** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 8: “Special Envoys’ Perspective”†

**JUNE**

**4** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 9: “Asia Perspective”†

**8** Uzbekistan Religion Law Consultation Roundtable, General Principles Underlying Laws Governing the Religious Sector

**11** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 10: “COVID-19, FoRB and Gender”†

**17–19** BYU Religious Freedom Annual Review, “Religion and Religious Freedom in the COVID-19 Era: Finding Community and Hope”†

**18** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 11: “Africa and Middle East Perspectives”†

**25** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 12: “Contributions of Faith-Based Humanitarian Organizations”†

**27** G20 Interfaith Forum: Middle East Regional Meeting, *Saudi Arabia*†

**29** G20 Interfaith Forum: European Regional Meeting†

**JULY**

**1** “Developing Covenantal Pluralism in Modern Kazakhstani Society,” Kazakhstan Government Consultation†

**2** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 13: “Canada, United States, and United Kingdom Perspectives”†

**6** Uzbekistan Religion Law Consultation Roundtable, “Religious Literature Regulations (Religious Education Provisions in the Draft Law)”

**7** Religion and Human Rights Master’s-Level Courses, *Yogyakarta, Indonesia*†

**9** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 14: “2020 Vision—Looking Back and Seeing the Road Forward”†

**21** G20 Interfaith Forum: Latin America Regional Meeting, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*†

**30, August 4** Oxford Workshop on “Human Dignity and Human Rights—Christian Perspectives and Practices: A Focus on Constitutional and International Law”†

**AUGUST**

**5–6** G20 Interfaith Forum: Asia Regional Meeting, *Indonesia*†

**17–21** G20 Interfaith Forum: North America Regional Meeting†

**24** G20 Interfaith Forum: Africa Regional Meeting†

**SEPTEMBER**

**4** Uzbekistan Religion Law Consultation Roundtable, “New Draft Law”

**12** Online Prerecorded Sessions, China Certificate Religion and the Rule of Law in China†

**15** G20 Interfaith Forum Latin America Regional Meeting—Final Report for G20, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*†

**16** USCIRF Hearing: Religious Freedom in Russia and Central Asia, *Washington, DC*†

**OCTOBER**

**2** “Law, Religion, and Coronavirus in the United States: A Six Month Assessment”†

**4–7** 27th Annual International Law and Religion Symposium, Religious Freedom: Rights and Responsibilities, Brigham Young University, *Provo, Utah*†

**13–17** Muslim World Regional Conference, G20 Interfaith Forum, *Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*†

**15–16** Religious Freedom Regional Ministerial and Roundtable, *Bogotá, Colombia*†

**20–21** Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly, *Washington, DC*†

**21–22** First International Symposium on Law and Religious Freedom, *São Paulo, Brazil*†

**22** COVID-19, Religion and Belief Webinar Series, Episode 15: “Communities and State Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Reflections on the Report, ‘OSCE Human Dimension Commitments and State Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic’”†

**27–29** First Seminar on Religious Freedom in Portuguese-Speaking Countries, *Brasília, Brazil*†

**28–30** 2020 Annual DFW Summit on Religious Freedom, *Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas*†

**29** Seventh International Congress on Fundamental Civil Liberties, Supreme Court of Brazil, *Brasília, Brazil*†

**NOVEMBER**

**3** US-Kazakhstan Religious Freedom Working Group†

**9** Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting: “Freedom of Religion or Belief in the OSCE Region: Challenges and Opportunities,” OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)†

**9–10** “The Place of Freedom of Religion in the Development Agenda of ASEAN,” SEAFoRB Webinar on Religion and Development†

**11** Uzbekistan Parliamentary Assembly on the Draft Law on Freedom of Religion or Belief†

**16–17** Third Annual Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, *Warsaw, Poland*†

**17** “The Place of Freedom of Religion or Belief in Fostering Social Inclusion, Peace, and Peaceful Coexistence in ASEAN,” SEAFoRB Webinar on Religion and Development†

**25** CALIR International Religious Freedom Day Conference, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*†

**DECEMBER**

**1–3** COVID-19 and Religious Freedom and Identity, cosponsored with Andrews University and the University of Portsmouth, *England*†

**3** ACLARS Webinar†

**7** God in Secular Constitutions†

**18** Certificate and Rule of Law Training, *Myanmar*†

\*Physical event

†Online event



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