

**Blog Webinar**  
**Law, Religion, and Coronavirus in the United States: A Six-Month Assessment**  
**October 2, 2020, 11:00 a.m. ET (via Zoom)**

**Co-organized by**

International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University Law School

Center for the Study of Law and Religion, Emory University Law School

Notre Dame Program on Church, State & Society, Notre Dame Law School

Center for Law and Religion, St. Johns University School of Law

Eleanor H. McCullen Center for Law, Religion and Public Policy, Villanova University Charles Widger  
School of Law

A blog webinar will be held via Zoom on October 2, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. ET. Each blog post author will have three minutes to summarize their key argument. All of the blog posts will then be simultaneously posted on each of the blogs of the five sponsoring institutions.

The Webinar will be divided into five panels, each moderated by a professor from one of the organizing institutions.

1. **Constitutional Law (Jane Wise, moderator)**
  - a. Doriane Coleman, "Religious Exemptions to COVID Vaccination Requirements"
  - b. Caroline Mala Corbin, "Religious Liberty in a Pandemic: Constitutional Challenges to Mass Gathering Bans"
  - c. W. Cole Durham, Jr., "Coronavirus, the Compelling State Interest in Health, and Religious Autonomy"
  - d. Jeffrey Hammond and Michael DeBoer, "Conflicts between Religious Liberty and the New Public Health"
  - e. Samuel Levine, "Hands-Off Religion in the Early Months of COVID-19"
  
2. **Law, Religion, and Culture (Justin Lattrell, moderator)**
  - a. Robin Fretwell Wilson, "Respecting the Needs of Worshippers is Essential to Containing COVID-19"
  - b. Kathleen Brady, "COVID-19 and Restrictions on Religious Institutions: Constitutional Implications"
  - c. Angela Carmella, "Commemorating Lives Lost in Times of Pandemic and Protest"
  - d. Andrew Lewis and Daniel Bennett, "Church Closures, Religious Freedom, and the Coronavirus Pandemic: Assessing the Christian Legal Movement's Response"
  - e. E. Isabel Park, "Worldview and Spirituality: Outlooks of the Church and Individuals Shaped by Crisis"
  - f. Joanna Smith, "Slaughterhouses as Sites of Exception"
  
3. **Legal and Religious Practice(s) (Michael Moreland, moderator)**
  - a. Matthew Cavedon, "Attention: Physical Presence for Court and the Catholic Church"

- b. Patrick Hornbeck, "Revival Statutes, Clergy Sexual Abuse, and COVID-19"
  - c. Dwight Newman, "When the State Tells You How to Run Your Church Service: Analyzing Coronavirus Guidance Documents on Religious Services"
  - d. Daniela Tarantino, "The 'Drive Confession:' The Care of Souls in a Pandemic"
  - e. Alejandro González-Varas Ibáñez, "Law, Religion, and Coronavirus between the United States and the European Union"
4. **Religious Organizations (Mark Movsesian, moderator)**
- a. Mary Anne Case, "COVID and Egalitarian Catholic Women's Movements"
  - b. Christopher Lund, "Quarantines, Religious Groups, and Some Questions About Equality"
  - c. Adelaide Madera, "The Impact of Coronavirus on Public Funding of Religious Organizations"
  - d. Zachary Pohlman, "'Churches' in a Time of Coronavirus"
5. **Theological Implications/Reflections (Stephanie Barclay, moderator)**
- a. Paul Marshall, "Political Theology and Church Restrictions"
  - b. Terri Montague, "Redeeming Justice"
  - c. Brett G. Scharffs, "The COVID Crisis as a Crisis of Trust"
  - d. Anton Sorkin, "Christian Public Engagement in a Time of Crisis"
  - e. George Walters-Sleyon, "Through the Eyes of James Cone: COVID-19, Police Brutality, and The Black Church"

The purpose of the blog conference and webinar is to provide an opportunity for thoughtful reflection on the implications for law and religion in the United States of the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the economic and racial justice crises, from our current perspectives approximately six months into the crisis. The content and format of the webinar will in part be determined by the proposals for participation, but we anticipate grouping presentations under several topical areas:

- Public Health and Free Exercise: What is the scope of legitimate limitations on religious activities based on public health, including discriminatory or differential treatment of religious gatherings versus other types of gatherings? What can we learn from cases that have already been decided, including in the Federal Courts of Appeals, and in the emergency Supreme Court rulings in cases involving religious organizations challenging state regulation? Are there important differences between what religious organizations should be permitted to do and what they should do? Do legal developments during the coronavirus pandemic make it more or less likely that the Supreme Court will revisit the compelling state interest in its Free Exercise Clause jurisprudence?
- Church Finances and State Funding of Religion: What have been the financial implications of coronavirus for religious institutions, religious schools, and faith-based charities, including participation in government bailout and aid programs? Will the pandemic and its aftermath have lasting effects on how state funding of religion is viewed in the United States and by the Supreme Court?

- Law and Society: How will the pandemic affect religious practice? Will it act as an accelerant for social trends including the “rise of the nones?” Will it result in a religious recession, renaissance, or something else? Will there be different implications for institutions and individuals?
- Church Liability and Clergy Malpractice: Will religious organizations, or religious leaders, face personal liability for harm to parishioners who attend services, or follow advice and counsel of religious leaders, and later contract coronavirus? Will we see an increase in liability in tort or based on theories such as clergy malpractice?
- Science and vaccines: What can we expect from the role of religious organizations and religious people in the debates that will emerge about vaccines and exemptions from vaccines? Are there other implications for religious freedom that will arise from a scientific consensus on public health matters?
- Long-term implications: From our limited vantage point, what will be the long-term implications of the coronavirus and related crises for law and religion in the United States?