

32ND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL LAW AND RELIGION SYMPOSIUM

Building Paths to Flourishing: Regional, National, and International Protections of Religious Freedom

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International Center for Law and Religion Studies
J. Reuben Clark Law School – Brigham Young University Provo, Utah, USA

Directory of Speakers

Afghanistan



Lutforahman Saeed

Visiting Scholar, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University; former Assistant Professor, Islamic Law Faculty, Kabul University

Lutforahman Saeed joined the International Center for Law and Religion Studies in 2022 as a visiting scholar. During his time at the Center, he will play a key role in upcoming projects, including Islamic perspectives on human dignity and freedom of religion in Islam. A member of the Sharia (Islamic) Law faculty at Kabul University for more than 27 years, Professor Saeed earned his BA in Islamic studies from Kabul University in 1991 and his LLM from the University of Washington School of Law in 2010. He completed his PhD summa cum laude in the field of Islamic law and human rights at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg in December 2019, where his PhD thesis received the STAEDTLER Foundation's award for outstanding dissertation in 2020. Professor Saeed specializes in Islamic law and Islamic studies and has published in local and international journals. His book, *Islam, Custom and Human Rights: A Legal and Empirical Study of Criminal Cases in Afghanistan After the 2004 Constitution*, was published in January 2022. Professor Saeed has served as the country director of Legal Educators Support Program–Afghanistan for nearly eight years, and in 2019 he cofounded Afghanistan Legal Research and Development Organization.

Argentina



Maria del Pilar Bosca Chillida

Director General of Cults, General Directorate of Cults, Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Maria del Pilar Bosca Chillida earned a bachelor's degree in history from the University of El Salvador. For the past eight years, she has led the Office of Religious Affairs within the Directorate of Religious Entities and Affairs in the Government for the City of Buenos Aires. Before that, she worked in the city's legislative branch. Since December 2023, she has served as the Director General of Religious Affairs for the Buenos Aires city government. She has been a member of CALIR, the Argentine Council for Religious Freedom, since 2024. Pilar has twice been a candidate for the Buenos Aires City Legislature, representing the Republican Proposal Party. In 2025, she participated in the FIDELA Ministerial in Washington, DC.

Australia



Jeremy Patrick

Senior Lecturer, University of Southern Queensland School of Law and Justice

Jeremy Patrick has studied and taught law in the United States, Canada, and Australia. As a senior lecturer in the University of Southern Queensland School of Law and Justice, he developed and teaches a course on alternative approaches to legal scholarship. His scholarship draws upon legal history, comparative law, and legal realism and focuses primarily on the areas of constitutional law and law and religion. His monographs and edited collections include *Beyond Doctrine: Alternative and Critical Approaches to Law in Australia* (Federation Press, 2025), *The Impact of Law's History: What's Past Is Prologue* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2022), *Faith or Fraud? Fortune-Telling, Spirituality, and the Law* (UBC Press, 2020), and *Constitutional Recognition of First Peoples in Australia: Theories and Comparative Perspectives* (Federation Press, 2016). Dr. Patrick is a founding coeditor of the *Australian Journal of Law and Religion*.



Ben Saunders

Associate Professor, Deakin Law School

Ben Saunders is an associate professor at Deakin Law School. He completed his PhD at the University of Queensland in 2017 on the drafting of the Australian Constitution. His research interests include constitutional law and interpretation, freedom of religion, natural law, and the intersection between Christianity and law. Professor Saunders's publications include a critical modern edition of John Ponet's *A Short Treatise on Political Power* [1556] (Davenant Press, 2025) with Theodora J. Saunders; *Natural Law: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Lexham Press, forthcoming); *The Crisis of Civil Law: What the Bible Teaches About Law and What It Means Today* (Lexham Press, 2024); and *Responsible Government and the Australian Constitution: A Government for a Sovereign People* (Hart Publishing, 2023).

Azerbaijan



Ramin Mammadov

*Chairman, State Committee on Affairs with Religious Associations,
Republic of Azerbaijan*

Ramin Mammadov earned a bachelor's degree in international law and international relations as well as a master's degree in international relations from Baku State University. He has served in multiple government positions, including working as a specialist at the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and deputy head of the staff of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan. He was later appointed deputy chairman of the State Committee for Work with Diaspora. In 2020, Mr. Mammadov was nominated as the single candidate of the New Azerbaijan Party for the parliamentary seat from the 64th Sabirabad constituency. He was elected as a member of the party's board at the Seventh Congress of the New Azerbaijan Party held on 5 March 2021. He is a member of several international organizations, including the European Union-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network.



Anar Rahimov

Head of the International Cooperation Department, State Committee on Affairs with Religious Associations of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Anar Rahimov has an extensive background in advisory roles, having previously served as an advisor at the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Parliament of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, and the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries. He currently serves as the head of the International Cooperation Department at the State Committee on Religious Affairs of Azerbaijan. In this role, he is responsible for overseeing and managing international partnerships and cooperation related to religious affairs and contributing to the development and implementation of the country's policies in this field.



Agil Shirinov

Rector, Azerbaijan Institute of Theology

Agil Shirinov received his PhD in social sciences—specifically in Islamic philosophical theology—from Marmara University, Türkiye. His thesis was on the existence and deity according to Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. Professor Shirinov worked as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Theology of Baku State University from 2008 to 2018. His teaching and research interests cover the history of Islamic denominations, including radical denominations of Islam and relations between Islamic theology (kalam), medieval peripatetic philosophy, and Sufism. Professor Shirinov has authored six books and more than 20 articles on Islamic theology and philosophy as well as on the history of different Islamic denominations. He currently serves as the rector of Azerbaijan Institute of Theology.

Belgium



José Luis Bazán

Legal Adviser, the Commission of Catholic Episcopal Conferences of the European Union

José Luis Bazán obtained his PhD from the University of Navarre in Spain with a thesis on the protection of private and family life in the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. While at the university, he was an assistant professor of philosophy of law and human rights and a member of the Institute of Human Rights. He has lectured at Rey Juan Carlos University, the International University of La Rioja (Spain), and the Catholic University of Paris and has been a frequent speaker at international human rights conferences and political fora—including the European Parliament—since 2010. Dr. Bazán is a legal advisor on international

religious freedom, migration, and asylum in the Commission of Catholic Episcopal Conferences of the European Union. He is also an independent international affairs consultant working on the situation of religious minorities in Syria (proposal for its constitutional process), Iraq (measures for the protection of Christian minorities), Lebanon (provision of health and education services by churches), Nigeria (Middle Belt conflict), Mozambique (situation in Cabo Delgado), Democratic Republic of the Congo (crisis with Rwanda), and Pakistan (blasphemy legislation). Dr. Bazán is a member of the editorial committee of the *Religious Freedom in the World* report, which is published by the international charity Aid to the Church in Need, and he contributed to its 2023 report. He has published several articles and working papers in his areas of expertise.



Jelle Ludo Creemers

*Director, Institute for the Study of Freedom of Religion or Belief,
Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven*

Jelle Ludo Creemers is a professor and the academic dean of religious studies at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit (ETF) in Leuven, Belgium, where he also currently serves as academic dean. He is the director of the Institute for the Study of Freedom of Religion or Belief at ETF Leuven, which conducts interdisciplinary research on the intersection of religion, human rights, and secular society with a particular focus on the European continent. Professor Creemers's primary research interest is in religion-state relations in Belgium and the implications for religious minorities, for which he received research grants from the Flemish Research Foundation in 2015 and 2021. He has written several academic and professional papers on church-state relations in the *Journal of Church and State*, *Trajecta*, and the *International Journal for Religious Freedom*. He has also coedited academic volumes on FORB-related topics in *Annua Nuntia Lovaniensia* (2019), the ICLARS Series on Law and Religion (Routledge, 2025), and the Boundaries of Religious Freedom series (Springer, forthcoming).

Bolivia



Jorge Emilio Dockweiler Cardenas

*Dean, Faculty of Theology, Philosophy, and Letters, Universidad de
Aquino Bolivia*

Jorge Emilio Dockweiler Cardenas has forged a remarkable career in the academic, political, and ecclesiastical spheres. He studied architecture and economics at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés and holds postgraduate degrees in higher education and a master's degree in business administration. He is committed to education and has served as national rector of the Universidad de Aquino Bolivia (UDABOL), where he also founded the architecture and urban planning program and pastoral leadership program. He currently serves as dean of the Faculty of

Theology, Philosophy, and Letters at UDABOL. In the political arena, he has served as a councilor, deputy, and mayor of the Southern District of La Paz. As an evangelical Christian pastor and writer, he has dedicated his life to ecclesiastical leadership and community service.

Botswana

Ramaotwana Ramaotwana

Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Botswana Government National Level

Brazil

Quezia Barreto Brito

Attorney; Correspondent, International Law and International Relations Commission



Quezia Barreto Brito holds a master's degree in ethnic and contemporary relations and a postgraduate degree in civil procedure law. She is the director of communications and outreach at the National Association of Islamic Jurists. Dr. Barreto is a member of the law and racial relations program at the Federal University of Bahia and is a member of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society. She is the media coordinator for the Research Center on Psychoanalysis, Identity, Blackness, and Society and a correspondent for the International Law and International Relations Commission.

Fabio Leite

Attorney; Professor, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro



Fabio Leite earned a PhD in public law from the State University of Rio de Janeiro. He also holds a master's degree in state theory and constitutional law from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, where he now works as an associate professor. In addition, Professor Leite is a research productivity fellow of the National Research Council, a fellow at the Rio de Janeiro State Research Foundation, a research fellow at the Freedom of Expression and the Press and Social Media Research Center of the Rio de Janeiro State School of Magistrates, and an associate researcher at the Brazilian Center for Law and Religion Studies. Professor Leite is a member of the International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, the Latin American Consortium for Religious Freedom, and the Lusophone Alliance for Religious Freedom. He is coordinator of the Research Group on Freedom of Expression in Brazil.



Jorge Miguel Rampogna

Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, South American Division, Seventh-day Adventist Church

Pastor Jorge Miguel Rampogna serves as the director of public affairs and religious liberty as well as communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in eight South American countries. He holds a degree in theology from the Universidad Adventista del Plata (UAP), and completed postgraduate studies in corporate communication and digital influence management. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in pastoral theology at UAP. He leads initiatives in interreligious dialogue, freedom of conscience, and institutional diplomacy, and he coordinates communication and media strategies to strengthen the Adventist mission in the region. He is married to Lia Treves and has two daughters.

Cambodia



Sophanara Khan

Department Head, Department of Religious Affairs of Cambodia

Sophanara Khan earned a master's degree in development management from Norton University in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; his studies focused on social and economic development issues at both local and international levels. In 2006 he began working at the Ministry of Cults and Religion in Phnom Penh, serving as an officer in the General Department of Religious Affairs. In this capacity, he contributed to the administration and regulation of religious institutions across the country. From 2008 to 2019, Mr. Khan served as deputy director of the Department of Paganism, where he helps oversee policy implementation, stakeholder engagement, and departmental operations related to indigenous religious practices. In the fall of 2018, he successfully completed a technical course in public financial management at the Economics and Finance Management Institute. This intensive course provided training in program-based budgeting, fiscal accountability, and public finance reform strategies consistent with Cambodia's evolving financial governance framework. In 2019, Mr. Khan was promoted to director of the Department of Paganism, taking full leadership responsibility for departmental governance, strategic planning, and coordination with both national and local religious communities.

Viseis La

Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Cults and Religion

La Viseis earned a bachelor's degree in law from the Royal University of Law and Economics and a master's degree in European law from University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. He

was awarded a Chevening Scholarship—one of the most prestigious scholarship programs in the world. Mr. La worked for the Ministry of Commerce from 1999 to 2023 before he was appointed as undersecretary of state of the Ministry of Culture and Religion. Since then, he has been appointed head of the committee for drafting a law on belief and religion. In addition, he has recently been entrusted with a position to assist with legal reform for the Ministry.

Canada



Julia Beazley

Director of Public Policy, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Julia Beazley serves as director of public policy for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). With more than two decades of experience advocating for justice, human dignity, and care for those who are marginalized, Ms. Beazley has worked on a range of issues, including human trafficking, prostitution, euthanasia and assisted suicide, poverty, and religious freedom. Her deep understanding of how faith can inform public policy has made her a leading voice in championing the protection of vulnerable communities while promoting civil discourse. Ms. Beazley works out of and directs the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life in Ottawa.

André Schutten

Senior Legal Counsel and Director of Training, Christian Legal Fellowship

André Schutten is senior counsel and director of training and development at Christian Legal Fellowship. Called to the bar in 2011, he conducts regular analysis on the impact of government bills and court judgments. He has made arguments before the Supreme Court of Canada in five cases and arguments in five provincial courts of appeal. Mr. Schutten has been published in several law journal collections on issues including constitutional interpretation, equality and disability rights, religious and associational freedom, and freedom of expression. His writing has been published in *Canadian Diversity*, *The Supreme Court Law Review*, and the *National Journal of Constitutional Law*, and he has been cited in Canadian court judgments. He has appeared before legislative committees of the House of Commons and the Senate of Canada, and he has presented on legal issues to groups such as the Ontario Bar Association and the Runnymede Society. He also participated in the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, Creed, and Freedom of Religion and contributed to its resulting publication. Mr. Schutten, his wife, and four children live in Caledonia, Ontario, where he has served as an ordained elder, a part-time organist, and a former Infantry reservist.

Chile

Rocío Cortés-Rodríguez

Professor, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Rocío Cortés-Rodríguez is an assistant professor in the Department of Theology at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. She specializes in interreligious dialogue, focusing on the interactions between Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Indigenous religious traditions. Throughout her academic career, Dr. Cortés-Rodríguez has explored the complex dynamics of coexistence in religiously diverse contexts. During her master's studies at the University of Helsinki (Finland), she examined the coexistence of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in 10th-century al-Andalus (present-day Andalusia). She later expanded her research during her PhD at the University of Notre Dame (USA), focusing on interreligious interactions in contemporary settings. In 2019, she introduced Chileans to scriptural reasoning methodology, an innovative method of interfaith dialogue that has fostered new opportunities for mutual understanding and collaboration among faith communities. Since 2022, Dr. Cortés-Rodríguez has served on the board of the Association for Interreligious Dialogue in Chile. This role reflects her ongoing pastoral commitment to the Department of Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue at the Archbishopric of Santiago.



Ana María Constanza Guzmán Labra

Legal Adviser, National Office of Religious Affairs, Republic of Chile

In 2019, Ana María Constanza Guzmán Labra earned her Bachelor of Legal Sciences with distinction from the Central University of Chile, and in 2020, she was sworn in as an attorney before the Supreme Court of Chile. In addition to her legal training, she has pursued diploma programs in human resource management, public procurement and contracting, and leadership and coaching. She is currently completing a master's degree in public management and administration. Labra brings over 10 years of experience in private legal practice, and she is currently part of the legal firm Lex Soluciones. Throughout her career, she has actively participated in legislative advisory roles and served as Chief of Staff during both of Chile's recent constitutional processes. She has recently taken on a new professional challenge as Advisor at the Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency (Segpres), specifically within the National Office of Religious Affairs. Labra has been married for 13 years to Héctor Felipe Ortega Sepúlveda, and they are the proud parents of two daughters.

Colombia



Alejandro Jaimes Medina

National Director of Religious Affairs, Government of Colombia

Alexander Jaimes Medina is a lawyer. He holds the honorary title of Doctor Honoris Causa from the Remzion University in Jerusalem, Israel, and is currently a doctoral candidate in Public Administration, Finance, and Justice at the University of Salamanca, in Spain. He has also pursued doctoral studies in Human Rights at the University of Zaragoza, Spain. He earned a master's degree in administrative law, and is a specialist in Administrative and Constitutional Law. Previously, he served as National Director of Human Rights at the Ministry of the Interior. With over 19 years of experience in the public sector, Medina has held various roles including Coordinator, Chief Legal Advisor, and Director in institutions such as: INVIAS (National Roads Institute), ICBF (Colombian Institute of Family Welfare), Personería de Bogotá (Office of the Ombudsman of Bogotá), Congress of the Republic of Colombia, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of the Interior. He is also a university professor, having taught in Colombia, Spain, and Washington, specializing in disciplinary law, administrative law, constitutional law, and human rights. Medina is a member of the Colombian Institute of Procedural Law and the World Association of Constitutional Justice. He has also served as an alternate judge (Conjuez) at the Superior Court of the Judicial District of San José del Guaviare. Currently, he serves as the Director of Religious Affairs at the Ministry of the Interior, continuing his commitment to public service and the defense of religious freedom.

Denmark



Bjorn Ottesen

President, Danish Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Bjorn Ottesen is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Denmark. His earlier work experience includes lecturing in pastoral studies at Newbold College of Higher Education, where he became a senior lecturer and head of the Department of Theological Studies. He has worked as a local pastor in Adventist churches in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark and as president for the national Danish and Swedish Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Bjorn has been married to Annette Maj-Britt for 45 years, and together they have four daughters and four grandchildren.

Dominican Republic



Jorge Manuel Duarte Reynoso

President, Dominican Evangelical Confraternity

Jorge Manuel Duarte Reynoso studied industrial electronics at the Loyola Polytechnic Institute, specializing in telecommunications, where he rose to senior management positions in his professional career. Jorge came to his faith in Christ as a teenager, and he later pursued theological studies in Santo Domingo. At the age of 28, he was ordained as a pastor, and in 2010, he committed himself to full-time ministry. He is widely recognized as an expert in intergenerational dynamics within churches, and in the development of generational leadership strategies. Currently, Reynoso serves as the Lead Pastor of *Puerta Abierta Central Christian Congregation*, the President of the *Dominican Evangelical Confraternity (CONEDO)*, the Secretary of the *Council for the Board of Christian Dialogue and Representation*, Board Member of the *Dominican Bible Society*, and as a Council Member of the *Christian Institute of Higher Studies Pastoral Board*. Reynoso is married to Julissa Perdomo, and together they have a daughter named Abril.



Reynaldo Franco Aquino

Presidente, Universidad Nuestro Pacto Internacional

Dr Reynaldo Franco Aquino is a former bank executive and business manager, with a strong academic background, including a bachelor's degree in social communication, a master's degree in family counseling, and a PhD in modern languages. He has held various public functions, as a member of the Electoral Court Tracking Commission, a member of the National Council of Education, a member of the Economic and Social council, for six years, and as council for four heads of state. Additionally, he has held leading academic professorships at different universities, and for the over sixteen years, he has been president of Unpi University in the Dominican Republic.

Ecuador



Victor Bernardo Rey Riquelme

Professor, CREE Ecological Reflection and Spirituality Community

Victor Bernardo Rey Riquelme studied philosophy at the University of Concepción, after which he studied theology for four years at the Baptist Theological Seminary. Upon graduation, Professor Rey was ordained a Baptist pastor at La Estrella de Pudahuel Baptist Church in the western part of Santiago. He later earned a bachelor's degree in social sciences from the

Alberto Hurtado Catholic University in Santiago, Chile. He continued his postgraduate studies at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, where he earned a master's degree in social communication. Professor Rey has taught and worked in pastoral care in Chile, Ecuador, and Belgium and has worked with several social development, educational, ecumenical, and theological training organizations, such as Map International, World Vision, Latin American Council of Churches, and Latin American Theological Fraternity. He currently resides in Quito, Ecuador, where he promotes ecumenical rapprochement, interreligious dialogue, nonviolence, environmental advocacy, and integral spirituality. He and his wife, Jenny, have two children.

El Salvador

José Ernesto Clímaco Valiente

Court Magistrate, Supreme Court of Justice

Ethiopia

Dagnachew Melese Tefera

Legal Advisor on Religious Freedom for Sub-Saharan Africa, Arise Africa

Federated States of Micronesia

Francisco Simran

Senator, Pohnpei State Legislature

Francisco Simran served a two-year mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Utah Salt City South Mission. Afterward, he attended BYU–Hawaii and graduated with a bachelor's degree in electronic and computer hardware. Mr. Simran moved to Maui and worked for American Airlines as a field technician. In 1997 he and his family moved back to his native Pohnpei, where he worked for the Department of Education and later for the College of Micronesia–FSM. Mr. Simran is currently serving as a senator in the Pohnpei State Legislature.

Germany

Akif Tahiev

Postdoctoral Researcher, Goethe University Frankfurt

Ghana



Kwaku Agyeman-Budu

Dean, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration

Kwaku Agyeman-Budu is a lawyer and a legal academic. Since January 2013 he has been teaching various law courses at the Faculty of Law of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) in Accra, Ghana. Dr. Kwaku holds bachelor's degrees in art and law from the University of Ghana and a qualifying certificate in law from the Ghana School of Law. He also has a master's degree in international law and justice and a doctor of juridical science degree from Fordham University School of Law in New York City. A senior law lecturer, he was formerly head of law centers at the GIMPA Law School, where he oversaw the management of the African Center of International Criminal Justice and the African Center on Law and Ethics. On 1 September 2022, he was appointed dean of the GIMPA Law School, becoming the youngest dean of law in the history of Ghana. Dr. Kwaku's research interests include constitutional law, intellectual property law, international human rights law, and international criminal law and justice.

Guatemala



Nery Rodenas Paredes

Director, Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala

Nery Rodenas Paredes has completed advanced studies in human rights and military justice in Guatemala and the United States, including courses at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois; the University of San Francisco; and the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. He has served as the titular commissioner of the National Commission for Children and Adolescents, a member of the electoral commission of the National Council for the Attention to Persons with Disabilities, and a peace mediator with Intrapaz at Rafael Landívar University. Mr. Rodenas Paredes has also contributed as a columnist for the newspaper *La Misión*.

Ronald Yomelfy Portillo Córdón

Diputado Por Listado Nacional, Congreso Guatemala

Ronald Portillo is a Guatemalan congressman serving in the 10th Legislature (2024–2028) and a distinguished legal professional in the public sector. He holds a bachelor's degree in legal and social sciences, graduating cum laude, and is a certified attorney and notary. His academic background includes a master's degree in public administration from Universidad Galileo, a master's degree in management with a specialization in entrepreneurship from the A.B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University, as well as an LLM in finance from Universidad

Francisco Marroquín. He has held key positions within Guatemala's Ministry of the Interior, notably serving as Third Deputy Minister for the Prevention of Violence and Crime, Executive Director IV of Community Violence Prevention, and technical secretary for the national policy on life. He has also served as a congressional advisor from 2017 to 2018. His commitment to Guatemala has been recognized for its impact in violence prevention, youth development, and academic excellence, combining technical expertise with a deep sense of public service.

India

Alok Bansal, Director, India Foundation

Captain Alok Bansal is Director, India Foundation. He is also Adjunct Professor at New Delhi Institute of Management and the Secretary General of Asian Eurasian Human Rights Forum, an organisation accorded ECOSOC status by UNESCO. He was the founder Executive Director of the South Asian Institute for Strategic Affairs (SAISA) and the facilitator of India Policy Group on Afghanistan for Track II Dialogues by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. He was a visiting professor at the Pakistan Studies Programme of MMAJ Academy of International Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia. He has been the Executive Director of the National Maritime Foundation and has also worked with the IDSA, and CLAWS. He served in the Indian Navy for 32 years, before seeking premature retirement as Captain. He has authored/edited ten books, besides writing numerous research papers, chapters in books and articles. He participates regularly in Track II Dialogues, TV and radio talk shows and delivers talks in various civil and military institutions in India and abroad.



Lira Goswami

Lawyer and Partner, Associated Law Advisers

Lira Goswami is a founding partner of Associated Law Advisers. She has a law degree from Delhi University, a master's degree from Columbia University in New York City, and more than 30 years of experience in international business transactions and strategic advisory work. She regularly advises multinational clients doing business in India and also foreign governments and diplomatic missions, such as the British and Canadian High Commission and foreign governments. Ms. Goswami is an independent director on the boards of Maruti Suzuki India Limited and Cummins India Limited. She was formerly a member of the governing board of Kamla Nehru College, where she recently instituted the Significant Impact Award for students who are making a major impact on the lives of others. She mentored the college's spring 2022 cohort of global policy diplomacy and sustainability students and regularly speaks on cross-border issues, sustainability, moral leadership, and empowerment of women. Her pro bono activities include legal assistance for charitable organizations including Save the Children.

Dexter Sudarsan Maben

Pastor, Church of South India, Karnataka Central Diocese

The Reverend Dr. Dexter Sudarsan Maben holds a doctorate in New Testament from the Kirchliche Hochschule Bethel in Bielefeld, Germany. He is known for his editorial and scholarly contributions, notably the book *Borders and Margins: Re-Visioning Ministry and Mission*, which explores theological engagement from the perspective of marginalized communities. The work emphasizes the importance of diverse voices and the need to reimagine ministry in ways that are authentic and transformative. Rev. Dr. Maben's theological work is deeply rooted in themes of justice, marginality, and transformative ministry. His roles include associate professor of New Testament and chair of the Department of Biblical Studies at United Theological College in Bangalore, India. He has also been the secretary for the Society for Biblical Studies in India and presbyter-in-charge at St. Andrew's Church in Bangalore.

Rohinton Fali Nariman

Justice, Supreme Court of India, retired



Rohinton Fali Nariman is a distinguished former judge of the Supreme Court of India; he is known for his deep expertise in constitutional and civil law. He earned a bachelor's degree in commerce from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi. He also earned an LLB from the University of Delhi (where he ranked second in his class) and an LLM from Harvard Law School. He began practicing law in 1979 and was designated as senior counsel by Chief Justice Manepalli Narayanarao Venkatachaliah in 1993. Judge Nariman served from July 2011 to February 2013 as solicitor general of India. He also served as a member of the Bar Council of India. He was appointed to the Supreme Court of India in July 2014 and served until August 2021. He played a key role in cases such as the Triple Talaq verdict, Sabarimala temple entry, and freedom of speech matters. He founded the Supreme Court Lawyers Welfare Trust to support young lawyers.

Nazneen Rowhani

Secretary General, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India



Nazneen Rowhani is the secretary general of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India—the national governing body of the Indian Bahá'í Faith. She has served in this role for 15 years.

Indonesia



Matius Ho

Executive Director, Leimena Institute

Matius Ho is the executive director of Leimena Institute in Jakarta, Indonesia. He led the development of the Cross-Cultural Religious Literacy program that since 2021 has trained thousands of teachers in Indonesia on competencies to strengthen peaceful multifaith and multicultural societies. Under his direction, Leimena Institute has partnered and collaborated with the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights and many leading religious and educational institutions. He has been invited to speak about the program in many countries. Mr. Ho wrote the chapter on Indonesia in *The Routledge Handbook of Religious Literacy, Pluralism, and Global Engagement* (2021). He worked in Indonesia and Singapore with Accenture, a multinational consulting firm, and served as vice secretary of Akademi Leimena Foundation, Leimena Institute's precursor, before cofounding the institute in 2005. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from University of Wisconsin–Madison. In 2025, he was awarded an honorary doctor of divinity degree by the Henry Martyn Institute at the International Centre for Research, Interfaith Relations, and Reconciliation in Hyderabad, India.

Jacklevyn Manuputty

General Chair, Indonesia National Council of Churches

The Reverend Jacklevyn Manuputty, a graduate of Hartford Seminary's international peacemaking program as well as its master of arts program, was awarded an honorary doctor of divinity degree by the Hartford Seminary Board of Trustees. Rev. Manuputty is the cofounder of the Maluku Interfaith Institution for Humanitarian Action in Indonesia, which creates institutional capacity-building programs, develops positive public discourse, and builds a network of pluralistic conflict-prevention observers. He is actively involved in peacemaking, facilitating dialogues and promoting interfaith cooperation among many groups in the Muslim-majority country. In addition, Rev. Manuputty works on eco-justice issues, including the #SaveAru project. From 2017 to 2019, he was the assistant to the special envoy of the president for Dialogue, Interfaith Cooperation, and Civilization, and in 2019 he was elected general secretary of the Council of Churches in Indonesia, a position he still holds. Rev. Manuputty has received several awards for his interreligious peacemaking work, including the World Harmony Week Prize from King Abdullah II of Jordan in 2018; the Peacemakers in Action Award from the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding in New York City in 2012; and the Ma'arif Award for dedication in the field of peacebuilding and interfaith relations.

Iraq



Florin Seudin

*Department Head, Department of Ethnic and Religious Minorities Affairs,
Presidency of the Kurdistan Region*

Florin Seudin is a human rights activist. Since 1999 she has worked with different UN agencies as well as in the private and public sectors. She is the head of the Ethnic and Religious Components Department for the Presidency of the Kurdistan Region. Ms. Seudin worked in an advisory role during the United Nations country assessment of Iraq's status on gender, justice, and law. She also advised on the role of women in the Kurdistan Regional Government's Economic Plan. She was awarded the Certificate of Parliament of Kurdistan as a women's rights protector in 2018, and she received the Human Rights Defender Award from Heartland Alliance International in 2018 for her contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights in Iraq. She was awarded the Minorities Rights Defender Award by the International Council for Religion and Humanitarian Dialogue for her efforts in spreading the values of love and peaceful coexistence and for promoting peaceful dialogue between different religions and civilizations of the world.



Abdullah Waise

President, Islamic Scholar Union, Kurdistan Region

Abdullah Waise is a member of the teaching staff in the College of Islamic Sciences at Saladin University. In 2015 he completed a doctorate in comparative jurisprudence. Dr. Waise is president of the Union of Islamic Religious Scholars in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. He has participated in many conferences abroad, including in the Republic of Türkiye, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Algeria, Belgium, and Russia. He has written more than 10 books and has had nine papers published in scientific and academic journals. Dr. Waise is interested in issues of coexistence and the rights of religious entities as well as contemporary Islamic issues.

Italy



Matteo Corsalini

Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Social, Political, and Cognitive Sciences, University of Siena

Matteo Corsalini is a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Social, Political, and Cognitive Sciences at the University of Siena. His research areas include freedom of religion or belief, international human rights law, corporate law, and corporate governance. Dr. Corsalini is the author of several publications in the field of law and religion, including the book *Business, Religion and the Law: Church and Business Autonomy in the Secular Economy* (Routledge, 2023). In 2021, under the supervision of Professor Marco Ventura, Dr. Corsalini earned a PhD in law and religion from the University of Siena Department of Law. From 2022 to 2023, he was a postdoctoral researcher and adjunct professor at the University of Padua School of Law. From 2022 to 2024 he collaborated with the University of Warsaw, Faculty of Law and Administration, providing doctoral training to PhD students in law and religion as part of an international co-supervision project funded by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange. In 2025, Dr. Corsalini was awarded the National Scientific Qualification for appointment as an associate professor in law and religion. He currently serves as an adjunct secretary of the European Consortium for Church and State Research and as a book review editor for *Religion & Human Rights* (Brill).



Andrea Pin

Professor of Comparative Public Law, University of Padova

Andrea Pin is a full professor of comparative public law at the University of Padova, where he is also the director of the Department of Public, International, and Community Law. Professor Pin has clerked for the Italian Constitutional Court and held visiting positions at several universities including Emory, Notre Dame, and William and Mary (United States); Bar-Ilan and Reichman (Israel); Lomonosov Moscow State (Russia); and Trinity College (Ireland). His academic articles have appeared in American, British, French, German, Italian, and Spanish journals. His scholarship has examined the relationship between Catholicism, Islam, and the secular state; religious freedom in the West and the Middle East; the notion of human dignity; and the challenges to freedom posed by artificial intelligence. His latest books are *Religious Freedom Without the Rule of Law? The Constitutional Odysseys of Afghanistan, Egypt, and Iraq and the Fate of the Middle East* (Brill, 2024) and *Dignity in Judgment: Constitutional Adjudication in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

Kenya



Francis Sylvester Kuria Kagama

Secretary General, African Council of Religious Leaders, Religions for Peace International

Francis Sylvester Kuria Kagama serves as the secretary general of Religions for Peace International and its African affiliate, ACRL-RfP, guiding more than 90 interreligious councils globally. He is also the administrative chair of the international steering group of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. With over two decades dedicated to interreligious peacebuilding, Dr. Kuria empowers youth and women at all levels through Kenya's Women of Faith Network and Interfaith Youth Committee. His leadership at the African Council of Religious Leaders has instituted and strengthened numerous IRCs across Africa, creating the continent's largest multireligious platform. He has been instrumental in combating radicalization and violent extremism, promoting women's rights, and fostering intergenerational dialogues for peace. Dr. Kuria actively collaborates with various United Nations agencies on initiatives promoting peace, health, and human rights, demonstrating his commitment to partnering with the UN for tangible social change. His early career included roles in finance and emergency response.



Willybard Lagho

Roman Catholic Bishop; Chairman, Interreligious Council of Kenya

The Rt. Reverend Willybard Lagho was ordained a Catholic priest for the Archdiocese of Mombasa on 25 April 1987. He taught in St Mary's Junior Seminary in Kwale County, Kenya, from 1990 to 1992 before beginning a master's degree in religious studies at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi. Rev. Lagho also studied Arabic and Islamic studies at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Rome. Beginning in January 2000, he taught Islamology at St. Mathias Mulumba Seminary in Eldoret County; he later taught Introduction to Islam and Interreligious Dialogue at St. Augustine's Seminary in Bungoma County. Rev. Lagho served as the rector of St. Augustine's Senior Seminary from 2001 to 2006. While there, he was selected by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in Rome to join other panelists in developing a curriculum on interreligious dialogue for Catholic, English-speaking higher-education institutions and universities in Africa. In 2008 he began serving as a consultant for the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. He is currently a board member of the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics–Mombasa after serving as chairman of that council for six years.

Korea, Republic of



Chae Young Kim

Professor, Sogang University

Chae Young Kim is a professor of religious studies at Sogang University in Seoul. He served as president of the Korean Association for Religious Studies from 2014 to 2016. Currently, he participates in a network that builds associations of young scholars of religious studies in East Asia. He also serves as an editorial board member for the international journals *Religion* and the *British Journal of Religious Education*. He translated William James's book *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature* and Ernest Becker's *The Denial of Death* into Korean. Professor Chae has also published Korean books and articles dealing with interreligious and intercultural dialogue, psychology of religion, religious education, and contemporary religious experience and human dignity issues in Korea and beyond.



Dae Sun Kim

Chairman, United Religions Initiative of Korea

Reverend Dae Sun Kim, a devoted Won-Buddhist minister, has served in various leadership roles since 1981. Beginning as an assistant minister at the Jeju Temple, he has dedicated more than four decades to spiritual and social service. From 2006 to 2012, he led the Department of Culture and Society within Won-Buddhism, and he later served as head of the Pyongyang Diocese (2012–2015). His commitment to peace and reconciliation is reflected in his founding of the House of Peace—a shelter for North Korean defectors—where he currently serves as chair. Rev. Kim has also played a key role in civic and interfaith initiatives. He was a standing member of the Presidential Advisory Council on Democratic and Peaceful Unification (2005–2012), he cochaired the 100th Anniversary Committee for the March 1st Movement (2015–2019), and he is now executive representative to Korean Interfaith Solidarity. Since 2016 he has directed the Won Multicultural Center and served on the boards of several NGOs, including the Nanum National Movement and the Life Movement Coalition. Through these roles, Rev. Kim continues to promote multiculturalism, social welfare, and interreligious harmony.

Kyrgyzstan



Natalia Alenkina

Associate Professor, American University of Central Asia

Natalia Alenkina is an associate professor at the American University of Central Asia and a licensed advocate in Kyrgyz law. She serves as a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic. She is accredited by the Ministry of Justice as a legal and human rights expert. Natalia is also a member of the ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR and acts as the Vienna International Arbitral Centre's Ambassador in Kyrgyzstan. She contributed to the drafting of the Civil Procedure Code and the Law on Mediation of Kyrgyzstan and is currently advising the Ministry of Justice on the implementation of the Singapore Convention on Mediation. Her research focuses on alternative dispute resolution, arbitration, mediation, the privatization of justice, and legal pluralism.

Mexico



Cristian Badillo Gutiérrez

Director General, Conciencia Nacional por la Libertad Religiosa

Cristian Badillo Gutiérrez holds a bachelor's degree in law and in business administration with an emphasis in entrepreneurial and business development. He has a master's degree in religious freedom and human rights and a doctorate in education. His studies are in human dignity, bioethics, public policy, and new citizenship. Gutiérrez is an entrepreneur in the publishing, automotive, construction, education, and food sectors. He has collaborated with national and international nongovernmental organizations. He is currently director of the National Awareness for Religious Freedom Foundation, an organization dedicated to promoting and defending religious freedom as a fundamental human right in Latin America. Gutiérrez is director of the International Center for Freedom and Religion Studies (CIELRE) and director of the International Observatory on Religious Freedom (OILR). He has given more than 200 seminars, lectures, and scholarly presentations in Latin America, the United States, and Europe. His teachings and scholarly interests include religious freedom, conscientious objection, freedom of speech, human rights, and legislation and public policies.



Martha Alejandra Ibarra Merito

Reverend, Evangelical Covenant Church

Reverend Martha Alejandra Ibarra Merito is an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Covenant Church in Mexico. As a church founder, theologian practitioner, and activist, she holds a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in critical gender studies and theology from the Comunidad Teológica de México. She is also the founder of the nonprofit Esperanza Migrante, which provides holistic accompaniment for migrants transiting through Mexico City. For the last 15 years she has worked for Merge, an organization of the Covenant Church of the United States that accompanies and subsidizes community development projects worldwide. Since 2021, Rev. Ibarra has been the director of strategic planning at Merge. She also serves on the board of the Mennonite Central Committee. She is passionate about human rights and gender justice and is currently working on the intersections of migration, religion, and gender. Her research focuses on the problem of sex trafficking of Central American migrant women in transit through Mexico. Rev. Ibarra, a bicultural Mexican-Chilean woman, has been married for 19 years and has two incredible children, Isabel and Caleb. She currently lives in Mexico City.

New Zealand



Simon David O'Connor

*Director, External and Strategic Engagement, Family First New Zealand;
Former Member of the New Zealand Parliament*

Simon David O'Connor is a former member of New Zealand's Parliament, having served for 12 years. During that time, he was a strong proponent of religious liberty, freedom of speech, and human rights. He initially chaired the Health Committee and then was the chair of the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Committee. He currently runs a small consultancy that works with organizations such as Family First New Zealand—a pro-family and pro-life advocacy group. He hosts their regular podcast and also hosts online radio, writes a regular column for Substack called On Point, and maintains a strong social media presence on a range of issues. Mr. O'Connor earned a number of degrees from the University of Auckland, including a master's degree in political philosophy and a bachelor's degree in theology. He has a particular interest in human rights and ethics. He is married to Rachel and has five stepchildren and one foster child.

Nigeria



Ahmed Salisu Garba

Vice Chancellor, Al-Muhibbah Open University

Ahmed Salisu Garba earned his first and second degrees in law from the University of Jos and his PhD from Bayero University in Kano, Nigeria. His research interests include law and religion, constitutional law, law and public policy, international law and religion, and Islamic law. Professor Garba has written and presented many papers in the UK, the USA, and Africa on the intersection of law and religion, including in matters of religion and global policy. In addition, he has published in reputable peer-reviewed journals. Professor Garba was a visiting scholar at the University of Iowa College of Law from August to December 2013. He was a fellow of the ICLRS Young Scholars Fellowship on Religion and the Rule of Law at Oxford from July to August 2018. He was formerly the dean of law at Bauchi State University, Gadau, and now serves as deputy vice chancellor at the same institution.

Pakistan



James Channan

Director, Peace Center

Father James Channan is a Pakistani Catholic priest and a member of the Dominican Order. He was ordained a priest on 9 April 1980. He has been engaged in promoting interfaith harmony—especially Christian-Muslim dialogue—for the past 40 years. He was appointed by Pope John Paul II as consultor to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Vatican, and for the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims, where he served for 15 years. He has completed advanced studies at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic Language and Islam in Rome and at Emmanuel College, Harvard University, and American University in the United States. He is the author of four books and has participated in hundreds of national and international conferences on religious freedom and interfaith harmony. Since 2010, Father Channan has served as director of the Peace Center in Lahore. He is well-known in Pakistan and elsewhere for his efforts to promote religious freedom and build bridges of harmony, peace, and respect among all religions.



Sikander Ahmed Shah

Associate Professor of Law, Lahore University of Management Sciences

Sikander Ahmed Shah is a professor of human rights and international law at the Shaikh Ahmad Hassan School of Law (SAHSOL) at Lahore University of Management Sciences. His work focuses on religious rights, freedom of belief, and interfaith harmony. A founding member of SAHSOL, he has advised government and civil societies on constitutional protections, minority rights, and Pakistan's international human rights obligations. He has conducted trainings for judicial officers and legal workers on minority (ethnic and religious) and gender protection, inclusivity, and rights-based service delivery. His academic work and public service reflect a strong commitment to advancing inclusive legal frameworks and fostering interfaith understanding in Pakistan.



Muhammad Zia Ul-Haq

Director General, International Islamic University

Papua New Guinea

Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake

Justice, Supreme Court and National Courts, Papua New Guinea

Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake is a distinguished jurist serving as a judge of the Supreme Court and the national courts of Papua New Guinea; he is the first African to hold this position. In 2013 he was appointed by the UN secretary-general to be a judge of the Residual Special Court of Sierra Leone, and in 2020 he became a justice of the Seychelles Court of Appeal. Previously, Justice Dingake served as a judge of the High Court and Industrial Court of Botswana and taught law at the University of Botswana. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of Pretoria, the University of Cape Town, and the Institute of Development Labour Law in Italy. Justice Dingake holds a PhD in law from the University of Cape Town, an LLM from the University of London, and an LLB from the University of Botswana. He also earned postgraduate certifications from the University of Oslo and the London School of Economics. An honorary professor of public law at the University of Cape Town and an adjunct professor at James Cook

University, Australia, he has authored several books on law and justice. He is a leading figure in African judicial and human rights initiatives.

Peru



Alberto Alfonso Borea Odría

Judge, Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Alberto Alfonso Borea Odría is a distinguished Peruvian constitutionalist, former legislator, diplomat, academic, and current judge of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. He holds a law degree from the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru and pursued postgraduate studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and Complutense University of Madrid. Dr. Borea’s career spans public office and legal education. He served as deputy (1985–1990) and senator (1990–1992) in Peru’s Congress, where he sponsored key constitutional reforms, including legislation on habeas corpus, judicial oversight, and prohibition of presidential reelection. From 2004 to 2005, he represented Peru as ambassador to the Organization of American States, chaired its committee on legal and political affairs and the permanent council, and founded the “Cátedra de las Américas.” In 2006, he ran for president of Peru under the Fuerza Democrática party. He has served as a professor of constitutional law at leading Peruvian universities, including the Pontifical Catholic University, San Martín de Porres, and the University of Lima as well as at the University of San José in Costa Rica. On 27 January 2025, Dr. Borea was sworn in as a judge of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, continuing his lifelong dedication to democratic values, human rights, and constitutionalism.



Juan Guillermo García Montúfar Sarmiento

Professor of Law, Universidad de Lima

Juan Guillermo García Montúfar Sarmiento heads the real estate department at Estudio De la Flor, García Montúfar, Arata & Asociados in Lima, Peru. He has served as principal external counsel to leading real estate investment entities in Peru and also to property formalization initiatives in Peru, El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico, Egypt, and Tanzania. Professor García Montúfar has advised the Ministry of Justice of Peru on mediation and reconciliation and has previously counseled the World Bank and the Institute for Liberty and Democracy on matters of administrative and civil law. He served as president of the commission appointed by the minister of justice to draft the Bill on Religious Freedom and to oversee its passage through Congress. Professor García Montúfar was also responsible for organizing Peru’s first international symposium on religious freedom—an event organized by the Ministry of Justice with sponsorship from the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham

Young University. In addition to his legal practice, Professor García Montúfar has taught real estate law at the Universidad de Lima and Universidad San Martín de Porres.

Eduardo Muga Melgarejo

General Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, Government of Peru

Eduardo Muga Melgarejo is an attorney. He earned his law degree from the University of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, as well as a master's degree in public contracting from the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences (UPC), and a master's degree in civil and commercial law from Federico Villarreal National University. He currently serves as Director General of Justice and Religious Freedom at the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights in Peru. In this role, he is responsible for promoting and strengthening national and international coordination efforts with public and private organizations at all levels related to the administration of justice, coordinating and promoting the quality of legal education and the practice of law, at the national level, and managing relations between the executive branch and religious entities. He has served in multiple advisory and legal roles across various ministries in Peru, including Advisor to the Deputy Minister of Justice, Advisor to the National Program for Action Platforms for Social Inclusion (PAIS) under the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, a legal consultant for the national Program "Tu Empresa" under the Ministry of Production, Head of the Legal Advisory Office for the National Infrastructure Program PRONIED, under the Ministry of Education, Head of the Legal Advisory Office for the Office of Special Projects, under the Ministry of Culture, and Special Consultant in Public Works Execution, for the Safe Water Program for Lima and Callao.

David Ángel Torres

Attorney at DTB Abogados; Area Director for Spanish-Speaking South America, J. Reuben Clark Law Society

David Ángel Torres is a Peruvian attorney with a juris doctor from the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, where he also earned his PhD in law and political science. He holds an LLM in comparative law from Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School, with a focus on property law, contracts, international business transactions, and constitutional law—particularly the First Amendment. He is the founding partner of DTB Abogados, a Lima-based law firm with a strong practice in civil, real estate, corporate, and arbitration law. His professional background includes international legal experience at Kirton McConkie in Salt Lake City and governmental work at the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity in Utah. Mr. Torres has been actively involved in religious freedom research and advocacy as a founding member and past president of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society (JRLCS)—Lima Chapter. Under his leadership, the chapter organized forums on constitutional law and religious liberty in Peru, hosted interfaith panels, and published research on a blog on which Mr. Torres discussed legal

frameworks that support religious pluralism. He currently serves as area director for Spanish-speaking South America for JRCLS.



Carol Kristell de Lourdes Villanueva Anticona

Partner, Flor Studio, García Montufar, Arata & Associates, Lawyers

Carol Kristell de Lourdes Villanueva Anticona is a partner at Estudio De la Flor, García Montufar, Arata & Associates. She earned her law degree from the National University of San Marcos (Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos), the oldest university in the Americas. She holds a master's degree in business law from the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences (UPC) and is a specialist in real estate and urban law, civil law, and administrative law. Carol provides legal counsel to both public and private sector entities, focusing on legal and physical diagnostics of facilities, land title studies and building regularization for sanitation, acquisitions, transfers, and security purposes, as well as design and structuring of real estate contracts and operations. She provides comprehensive advising on the planning and development of large-scale real estate projects nationwide. As part of her professional practice, she provides specialized legal counsel to religious organizations, supporting their institutional development in areas such as real estate, construction, and regulatory compliance. Villanueva has taught at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP) and the University of Piura (UDEP) and is a frequent lecturer on topics related to her areas of expertise.

Philippines

Jude Acidre

Congressman, House of Representatives

Representative Jude Avorque Acidre is serving his second term in the House of Representatives under the TINGOG Party-list. He currently chairs the House Committee on Higher and Technical Education, and serves as co-chairperson of the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II), which is tasked to review and strengthen the country's education system. In two terms, he has helped author and pass more than sixty measures into law — each one rooted in the goal of improving lives and building opportunities. Among the causes he continues to champion are the Civil Annulment Reform Bill, which aims to make annulment more accessible to families; the Optional Teaching of Religion in Public Schools, which seeks to nurture values among the youth; and the creation of a National Council for Faith-Based and Community Partnerships, to strengthen cooperation between government and faith communities. Rep. Acidre began his journey at the Sacred Heart Seminary, finished his degree in Political Science at the University of the Philippines Tacloban, and earned his master's in public administration from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. These experiences, grounded in both study and

service, shaped his belief that genuine leadership is about hard work, discipline, and compassion. Outside Congress, he continues to serve as Chair of the Multi-Sectoral Governance Council of the Eastern Visayas Medical Center, member of the Multi-Sectoral Governance Council of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and Board Member of the Philippine Red Cross Leyte Chapter. He also leads The Gaudium et Spes Center for Faith and Religion in Public Life, which promotes faith-driven dialogue on justice, peace, and the common good. Every week, through his “Fifth Gospel” column in the Manila Standard, he reflects on what it means to live out one’s Christian faith in politics and public life. He is married to Ms. Kochakorn Khattapan, Deputy Center Director of the SEAMEO Center for Innovation and Technology in Education.



Paterno R. Esmaguél II

Senior Multimedia Reporter, Rappler Inc.

Paterno R. Esmaguél II is a senior journalist covering religion for Rappler, an internationally acclaimed news website in the Philippines. Mr. Esmaguél joined the Rappler team in 2012 as one of its first multimedia reporters and served as the organization’s news editor from 2020 to 2023. Now, he is known for his news reports and videos that tackle freedom of religion and religious diversity. He writes a Sunday column, The Wide Shot, that tackles religion and public life in Asia’s biggest Christian-majority country. On top of his current work as a religion reporter, Mr. Esmaguél is a journalism instructor at two of the Philippines’ leading Catholic schools: the Dominican-run University of Santo Tomas and the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Manila University. He holds a master’s degree in journalism from Ateneo and a master’s degree in Asian studies, focusing on religions in plural societies, from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.



Celeste Ruth Cembrano-Mallari

Professorial Lecturer, University of the Philippines College of Law

Celeste Ruth Cembrano-Mallari is assistant director of the Institute of Government and Law Reform at the University of the Philippines’ Law Center and a lecturer in international law at the Philippine Judicial Academy, the training center for judges in the Philippines. She is also a senior lecturer at the University of the Philippines College of Law, where she earned her law degree. She holds a an LLM from Kyushu University in Fukuoka, Japan, and was a fellow of the Nippon Foundation capacity-building and training program at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Ms. Mallari is currently engaged in research and policy work in administrative law—particularly in its intersections with international legal standards. She is also involved in projects relating to private law and data governance, with a focus on evolving legal frameworks for data protection. She previously held editorial roles in

several legal publications, including managing editor of the *Philippine Yearbook of International Law*. Her work reflects a continuing commitment to legal development, both in academic and institutional settings.

Charmaine Reonico

Court Attorney VI, Supreme Court of Manila, Republic of the Philippines

Rwanda

Doris Uwicyeza Picard

CEO, Rwanda Governance Board



Doris Uwicyeza Picard is the chief executive officer of the Rwanda Governance Board; she also serves as a cabinet member. She is a senior policy expert who leads on complex governance, migration, and diplomatic initiatives to ensure that Rwanda's policies reflect both national priorities and global best practice. Dr. Picard holds a doctorate in public international law and has extensive experience in translating policy vision into actionable frameworks—particularly in areas involving international relations, rule of law, and the strengthening of national institutions. Her work focuses on the nexus of governance, human rights, and sustainable development, engaging diverse stakeholders from multilateral organizations, partner governments, and civil society.

Slovak Republic

Michaela Moravčíková

Researcher, Lecturer, and Vice Dean, Faculty of Law, Trnava University



Michaela Moravčíková is a researcher and lecturer at the Faculty of Law of Trnava University. She studied theology and law in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. Her work focuses primarily on issues of freedom of conscience and religion, issues of conscientious objection, relations between the state and churches, the legal status of religious minorities, and religion and politics (with a special focus on Central and Eastern Europe in a historical context). In 1997 she began working as a researcher at the Institute for State-Church Relations in Bratislava, and she served as its director from 1999 to 2011. Since 2011, she has been engaged in research and teaching at Trnava University, where she has been director of the Institute for Legal Issues of Religious Freedom since 2012. Dr. Moravčíková also lectures regularly in Poland. She was previously a member of the expert working group that devised a new model for financing churches and religious societies in the Slovak Republic, and she now serves as a member of the expert working group on agreements between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See.

South Africa



Waheeda Amien

Acting Judge, Gauteng Division of the High Court; Professor, University of Cape Town

Waheeda Amien is a professor of legal pluralism, religious family law, and human rights in the Faculty of Law at the University of Cape Town. She is primarily involved in research on legal pluralism as it relates to minority religious family laws. Professor Amien is a member of the South African Law Reform Commission's advisory committee on matrimonial property law. She is also a member of the executive body of the International Commission on Legal Pluralism, of the steering committee of the International Network of Scholars Researching Unofficial Marriages, and the advisory board of the Dullah Omar Institute at the University of the Western Cape. She serves on the editorial boards of several leading international journals, including *Legal Pluralism and Critical Social Analysis*. She recently served as an acting judge of the North Gauteng Division of the High Court in South Africa, and her work on the recognition and regulation of Muslim marriages in South Africa was used extensively in the seminal case of *Women's Legal Centre Trust v. President of the Republic of South Africa* in 2022. Professor Amien teaches and supervises master's and doctoral students and publishes prolifically in her areas of specialization. She has provided expert opinions to a range of local and international entities, including the United Nations Expert on Minority Issues, the South African Presidency, and the South African Commission on Gender Equality.



Lebogang Mmakganya Modiba

Judge, Johannesburg High Court, Gauteng Division, South Africa

Lebogang Mmakganya Modiba has been a judge of the High Court of South Africa, Gauteng Division, since 2016 and a judge of the Electoral Court of South Africa since 2021. She is the former president of the Special Tribunal of South Africa (2022–2024) and acted as a justice of the Supreme Court of Appeal, South Africa, from December 2024 to May 2025. She holds a B Proc Degree from the University of the Witwatersrand (1995), a master of law degree in human rights and constitutional practice from University of Pretoria (1997), and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University (2005). While attending Harvard, she was an Edward Mason Fellow. Judge Modiba is married to Samuel (Sami) Modiba, a practicing attorney, and together they were blessed with two children. As devout Christians, they actively seek the manifest presence of God and endeavor to fulfill His divine will in their personal and professional lives.

Mzwandile Wilson Molo

General Secretary, South African Council of Churches

Mzwandile Wilson Molo is the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. He is deeply committed to justice and dignity for all. His faith is informed by belief in a God whose kingdom is based on universal human dignity, love, and service. Rev. Molo believes in a future where the world is built on a moral vision of service for the common good.

**Lee-Shae Salma Scharnick-Udemans**

Associate Professor and Senior Researcher, University of the Western Cape

Lee-Shae Salma Scharnick-Udemans is an associate professor and senior researcher in the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. Her publications focus on the dynamics between the political economies of religion and media, and she addresses topics such as religious normativity, racialization of religion, and religious privilege, pluralism, and diversity. A religious studies specialist, Dr. Scharnick-Udemans's work spans religious traditions and includes the study of mediated expressions of Islam, Christianity, Satanism, new religious movements, and indigenous African religions.

**Maniraj Sukdaven**

Professor, University of Pretoria

Maniraj Sukdaven is an associate professor and director of the Oxford Centre for Religion, Public Life, and Security in Africa at the University of Pretoria. In addition, he is an adjunct professor in Christianity at the University of Tehran and a minister of religion in the Reformed Church in Africa. Previously, he taught at the University of the Free State in South Africa. Professor Sukdaven holds a bachelor of theology degree from the University of KwaZulu-Natal as well as a master's degree in religion studies and a PhD in Hinduism from the University of the Free State. He has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals as well as chapters in books, and he is the coauthor of three books on African intellectual heritage. His main areas of academic research are interreligious, intra-religious, and trans-religious dialogues and their impact on religious beliefs and practices, religious worldviews, and social cohesion.



Michael Swain

Executive Director, Freedom of Religion South Africa

Michael Swain was raised in England, graduating from the University of Bristol with an honors degree in law before immigrating to South Africa in 1983. He is a cofounder and former vice president of the Every Nation (formerly His People) movement of churches and ministries. Mr. Swain has spent more than 30 years in Christian ministry in South Africa, Europe, and the United States. He has also enjoyed success as a businessman, having founded and run companies in diverse areas, including software development, events management, marketing, and communications. Mr. Swain currently serves as the executive director and primary spokesperson for Freedom of Religion South Africa (FOR SA). He is also an allied lawyer with the Global Advocacy Alliance.



Abdulkader Ismail Tayob

Professor Emeritus, University of Cape Town

Abdulkader Tayob is a professor emeritus of Islam at the Department for the Study of Religions at the University of Cape Town. He has held numerous visiting positions in the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Tunisia, Singapore, and Pakistan. Professor Tayob has taught and published on Islam in South Africa, the history of religions, and the discourses of contemporary Islam. He has published four books, numerous essays in prestigious journals, and book chapters in collaboration with colleagues in different parts of the world. His current projects focus on religious studies and Islamic intellectual history as well as religion and ethics in religious traditions. He is working on a book-length study of moral economies of contemporary African Muslim societies. In 2019 he received the Humboldt George Forster Award for Research and Teaching Excellence, and in 2024 he was recognized with the Hamilton Naki Award by the National Research Foundation in South Africa.

Tanzania



Ilvin Mugeta

Judge, High Court of Tanzania, Arusha Region

Ilvin Mugeta obtained his LLB from the University of Dar es Salaam in 2000 and his LLM from Mzumbe University in 2011, focusing on the efficacy of regulatory authorities in the public utilities of water and electricity. He is currently pursuing a PhD in probate and administration, tracing the development and application of the principles that inform court

decisions in Tanzania and considering its multiethnic societies and their plural succession laws. Judge Mugeta joined the Judiciary of Tanzania in January 2002 as a resident magistrate. In 2004 he began performing both judicial and administrative functions at the district and regional court levels. In 2013 he worked to establish the Directorate of Judicial Services Inspection and Ethics. In 2015 he was appointed registrar of the High Court, and in 2018 he was appointed judge of the High Court. Since 2022 he has served as vice president of the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association representing the east, central, and southern Africa Regions.

Thailand



Montri Sillapamahabundit

Presiding Judge, Court of Appeal for Specialized Cases

Montri Sillapamahabundit graduated from Thammasat University with his first law degree in 1986 and was admitted to the Thai Bar Association as a permanent member a year later. He pursued further studies at Chulalongkorn University, where he earned a master's degree in business law. He entered to the Thai judiciary as a judge trainee in 1992, and after three years of judiciary practice, he was granted a scholarship to pursue law studies abroad at in the LLM programs at American University's Washington College of Law and Cornell Law School. Judge Sillapamahabundit returned to Thailand in 1998 and was assigned to the Office of the Judiciary, where he spent four years drafting and amending laws as well as consulting and making recommendations on bills distributed to the judiciary by the Parliament and Government. He was then assigned to the Alternative Dispute Resolution Office, where he helped develop modern court-annexed mediation as well as a judicial reform program. In 2007 he returned to the bench and worked as a chief judge for three years before returning to the Office of the Judiciary in 2010. At this time, he worked as an executive director of the Thai Arbitration Institute, a major arbitration institute in Thailand. Justice Sillapamahabundit was promoted to the upper court in the court of appeal in 2015 and rotated to several courts in Bangkok. He now works at the Court of Appeal as a presiding justice in the intellectual property and international trade section.

Timor-Leste



Jacinto dos Santos

Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry of Rural Development and Community Housing

Jacinto dos Santos completed his study of philosophy and theology in Malang, Indonesia, in 1993. In that same year, he escaped to Melbourne, Australia, as a refugee and became a human rights activist fighting for the independence of East Timor. He became an Australian citizen in 1998. In

2000, Mr. dos Santos returned to East Timor as an international legal interpreter and translator for four languages (Tetum, Portuguese, Indonesian, and English), supporting the UN mission in East Timor. After 10 years in that role, Mr. dos Santos became a national training specialist at ADB, then a human resources advisor at the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Transports and Communication. Mr. dos Santos has also worked in the Ministry of Territorial Planning. He is currently an institutional development advisor in the Ministry of Rural Development and Community Housing.

Türkiye



Mustafa Saldirim

Assistant Professor, Istanbul Maltepe University

Mustafa Saldirim teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the fields of civil procedure law and enforcement and bankruptcy law. From 2014 to 2024, he served as deputy secretary general of the Court of Cassation of the Republic of Türkiye; during this period, he carried out projects supported by the European Union and the United Nations and was responsible for international relations, laws, judicial reform, and strategic planning. He worked as a public prosecutor (1995–2002), as an investigating judge responsible for the education of convicts at the General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses (2002–2007), and as an investigating judge at the Court of Cassation (2007–2014). He received his master's degree (1998) and PhD (2004) at Ankara University Faculty of Law. He also participated in the one-year arbitration and commercial law programs of the Banking and Commercial Law Research Institute of Ankara University Faculty of Law and the European Union and international relations program of the European Communities Research and Application Center. Mr. Saldirim received mediation training at the Singapore Mediation Center and participated in the mediation training program in Türkiye, after which he became a certified mediator. In November and December 2017, he conducted research at the Council of Europe Enforcement Office and observed practices regarding the execution of ECHR decisions and the working system of the Council of Ministers of the European Union. Mr. Saldirim has published books and articles in various areas of law, organized voluntary public outreach programs to develop young people's understanding of law and justice, and presented numerous papers at national and international meetings. He is married and has two children.

Ukraine



Dmytro Vovk

Visiting Associate Professor, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

Dmytro Vovk is a visiting associate professor at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, where he teaches international human rights, law and religion, and the rule of law. He is also an affiliated researcher of the Cardozo Law Institute of Holocaust and Human Rights and the Centre for Public, International and Comparative Law at University of Queensland.

Professor Vovk has been a rule of law, constitutional law, and religious freedom expert for several international institutions. From 2019 to 2025, he was a member of the OSCE/ODIHR Expert Panel on Freedom of Religion or Belief, where he coordinated the working group on freedom of religion or belief and gender. He also testified before the US Commission on International Religious Freedom and briefed the US State Department and members of the UK Parliament. He has published extensively on religious freedom and church-state relations in post-Soviet countries and beyond. Among his recent publications are *Human Dignity, Judicial Reasoning, and the Law: Comparative Perspectives on a Key Constitutional Concept* (Routledge, 2024); “Freedom of Religion and Gender Equality Across the OSCE Region” for the *Review of Faith and International Affairs* (2022); “The Soviet and Post-Soviet Law: Failed Transition from Socialist Legality to the Rule of Law” for the *Ideology and Politics Journal* (2021); and *Religion During the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict* (Routledge, 2019). Professor Vovk is a coeditor of the blog *Talk About: Law and Religion*.

United Arab Emirates



Pranav Desai

Director, BAPS Hindu Mandir

Pranav Desai is a prominent figure in both the corporate world and the community sphere. As the director of BAPS Hindu Mandir, Abu Dhabi, he plays a pivotal role in leading the public and government relations team and managing media affairs. Mr. Desai’s dedication extends beyond the temple as he actively collaborates with Indian community leaders across the UAE, fostering social, cultural, and spiritual connections. He served and supported hundreds of community members during the COVID-19 pandemic under the guidance of his spiritual guru His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj. Under the leadership of Reverend Brahmavihari Swamiji, head of BAPS Hindu Mandir, Mr. Desai has a strong presence in interfaith dialogues: He has attended numerous conferences in the UAE and he regularly interacts with religious leaders from other faiths. In his professional life, Mr. Desai has been a program manager with Abu Dhabi Investment Authority since 2010, contributing to the success of this prestigious institution. On a

personal note, he is married to Shaily Desai (Majmudar), who serves as academics services manager at Abu Dhabi Women's College, Higher Colleges of Technology. She is also an active volunteer and a leading female figure at BAPS Hindu Mandir. Together, they are a dynamic force in making a positive impact in both the academic and cultural realms of Abu Dhabi.

Fawaz Habbal

Director General, Emirates Scholar Research and Studies Center

Fawaz Habbal is an associate professor with a PhD in e-government applications and business information technologies. He specializes in process automation, artificial intelligence, and innovative business technologies. His research interests encompass computer applications, AI in data prediction, and data science. Dr. Habbal has extensive experience in strategy, particularly within innovation, digitalization, and information technology across various industries. As the founder, director general, and a member of the board of trustees at the Emirates Scholar Research & Studies Center in the UAE, Dr. Habbal's leadership is pivotal in steering research efforts toward impactful academic contributions. A leader of a multidisciplinary research team, he demonstrates a profound understanding of research methodologies, knowledge dissemination, and aligning research with organizational objectives.

Firas Habbal

President, Emirates Scholar Research and Studies Center

Firas Habbal is the president of Emirates Scholar Research and Studies Center and the chief executive officer of Geminus Investment Group. With a strong background in leadership, business development, and scientific research, Dr. Habbal has made significant contributions to various organizations. His educational background includes a PhD in international business management, a master's degree in project management, and a bachelor's degree in internet commerce. He is member of multiple research committees and president of more than 15 scientific conferences in the UAE. Dr. Habbal has been a regional director at multiple organizations, and he has served as an associate professor in the Department of Business at three different universities: Al Ain University of Science and Technology, American University in the Emirates, and Fujairah Academy. He is currently serving as editor in chief of three international journals and is an editorial reviewer for several other international journals. Dr. Habbal has chaired more than 20 international conferences, both in the UAE and globally. His research interests are quality management, international management, data management, technology acceptance, artificial intelligence, and data sensing. He has published more than 20 papers in indexed journals, presented at six international conferences, and contributed to six registered patents.

United Kingdom



Husna Ahmad
CEO, Global One 2015

Husna Ahmad OBE is the CEO of Global One 2015, a faith-based international NGO focused on women. She is the secretary general of the World Muslim Leadership Forum, an honorary professor in practice at the Computer Science Department of University College London (UCL), and cochair of IXN for Good at UCL. She is also an associate professor at the Department of Arts and Law at the University of Birmingham. Professor Ahmad has been appointed chair of the steering committee of UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Faith for Earth Initiative. She is also a member of the Interfaith Women's Council of UNEP. She is a key advisor of the Global Muslim Business Forum and a member of the UN Multi-faith Advisory Council's Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development. Professor Ahmad also sits on the steering committee of the World Bank's Moral Imperative Initiative. She is currently a board member of Faith for the Climate, Palmers Green Mosque; a member of the Women's Faith Forum UK; and an executive committee member of Barnet Multi Faith Forum. She is an international speaker, author, and thought leader who focuses particularly on faith, gender, environment, and peacebuilding. She is the global coordinator for the Alliance of NGOs and CSOs for South-South Cooperation, which works in collaboration with the UN office of South-South Cooperation. She was appointed an officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the New Year's Honors list in 2010 for work promoting social justice with disadvantaged communities.



Elizabeth Rose Berridge
Senior Research Fellow, Regents Park College, University of Oxford

Baroness (Elizabeth) Berridge of the Vale of Catmose has been in the House of Lords since January 2011. On her appointment, she was the youngest female peer. Most recently she served as schools' minister (Parliamentary under-secretary of state) in the Department for Education and minister for women (February 2020–September 2021). From July 2019 to February 2020, she was the government whip for four government departments—Justice, Education, Communities and Local Government, and Work and Pensions. After reading law at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Baroness Berridge undertook barrister's training at the Inns of Court Law School in London and practiced at Kings Chambers in Manchester, specializing in personal injury and licensing law. In 2005 she became executive director of the Conservative Christian Fellowship, a role she held until her elevation as a life peer in 2011. Having lived in Trinidad and Ghana, she pioneered relationships with Britain's ethnic minority communities for the Conservative Party. Since 2012 she has become a key voice in the deepening worldwide

discussion on freedom of religion and belief. She was a member of the steering group of the International Panel of Parliamentarians, a group whose pledge is to work together to end belief-based persecution worldwide. Baroness Berridge was the first chair of the Freedom Declared Foundation, standing down to become a trustee when she was appointed as Parliamentary under-secretary of state in February 2020. She was also the cofounder and cochair of the All-Party Group on International Freedom of Religion and Belief (2013–2019) and the director of the Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion or Belief at the University of Birmingham.

William Gibson

Emeritus Professor, Oxford Brookes University

William Gibson is an emeritus professor at Oxford Brookes University and a member of the Theology Faculty of the University of Oxford. He has held visiting fellowships at Yale University, Baylor University, and the Huntington Library. A fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, Professor Gibson has written widely on religion and the state between 1660 and 1900. He is the author or editor of more than 20 books on the period; his most recent publications are *Samuel Wesley and the Crisis of Tory Piety, 1685–1720* (Oxford University Press, 2021) and *Halifax: The Character of a Trimmer and Other Writings* (Oxford World's Classics, 2025). Professor Gibson is currently completing a study of James II and Wales.



James Daniel Holt

Associate Professor of Religious Education, University of Chester

James Daniel Holt is an associate professor of religious education at the University of Chester. In this role, he explores the representation and teaching of religion and worldviews in schools. He has lectured and written widely on issues of religion, Christian education, religion and popular culture, and the representation and experience of minority religions. Dr.

Holt is chair of the board of trustees for Freedom Declared Foundation, a UK-based charity advocating for freedom of religion and belief. He is chair of examiners for the General Certificate of Education (GCSE), international GCSE, and A-level religious studies with one of the major awarding organizations in England. He is the author of *Beyond the Big Six Religions: Expanding the Boundaries in the Teaching of Religion and Worldviews* (University of Chester Press, 2019), *Religious Education in the Secondary School: An Introduction to Teaching, Learning and the World Religions* (Routledge, 2015, 2022), and *Towards a Latter-day Saint Theology of Religions* (2020). He is currently writing a series of six books for Bloomsbury that introduce each of the six largest world religions: *Understanding Sikhism*, *Understanding Buddhism*, and *Understanding Hinduism* were published in 2023 and 2024; *Understanding Judaism* will come out in early 2026.



Peter Petkoff

Director, Centre for Law and Religion

Peter Petkoff is a senior law lecturer at the Brunel Law School, where he is a member of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies and the director of the Religion, Law, and International Relations Program—a collaborative international research network at Regent’s Park College, Oxford. As program director, he brings together lawyers, theologians, philosophers, and social and political scientists with the aim to develop innovative interdisciplinary strategies for studying law, religion, and international relations from legal and theological perspectives. Mr. Petkoff is managing editor of the *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* and author of the book *Holy Sites and International Law* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He is a legal consultant on media freedom and freedom of expression for the Representative on Freedom of the Media at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and has been a TEPSA consultant of the European Parliament as well as a consultant for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief at the House of Lords.



Russell Rook

Member, Good Faith Partnership; Member, House of Lords

Having previously worked for the Salvation Army and founded a charity delivering innovative community services in disadvantaged communities, Russell Rook OBE went on to serve as a parliamentary aide to Baroness Sherlock of Durham in the House of Lords. He served on the Labour Welfare team in Parliament before becoming an advisor on faith and civil society to the then-leader of the opposition, Ed Miliband MP. As a partner at the Good Faith Partnership, a social consultancy helping leaders from different sectors to design creative solutions to society’s more intractable problems, Dr. Rook leads the RAMP Project, a cross-party initiative seeking to transform the immigration debate in the UK. He worked with government and civil societies to help co-construct the Community Sponsorship Scheme for Refugees. Dr. Rook also serves as the chair of Reset, a new charity that builds the capacity of local communities to welcome and integrate refugees across the UK, and he regularly works with the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, helping other countries to develop sponsorship programs. In January 2025, Dr. Rook entered the House of Lords as Reverend Lord Rook of Wimbledon. He lives in Southwest London with his wife, Charlotte, who is a professional cellist, and their two teenage sons, Joe and Toby.



Brandon Reece Taylorian

Research Associate, University of Lancashire

Brandon Reece Taylorian is a research associate at the University of Lancashire in Preston, UK. He specializes in the legal personality of religious organizations, in particular the registration issues that religious communities face. Dr. Taylorian's systematic approach to the subject of registration has led to his development of a Spectrum of Religious

Registration to contextualize and scale the different restrictions states impose on unregistered religious communities or those communities excluded from registration. An alumnus of the 2024 Young Scholars Fellowship on Religion and the Rule of Law at Oxford, Dr. Taylorian's scholarly work on religious freedom synthesizes normative legal studies with historical, sociological, and philosophical perspectives. His interest in law and religion stemmed not only from his founding of a new religion called Astronism, which he aims to register as a religious organization, but also from his family history research on his Latter-day Saint, Quaker, and Lefebvrist ancestors in England who, across different centuries, were persecuted or ridiculed for their dissenting beliefs.

United States



Tala AlNassar

Student, Brigham Young University

Tala Alnasser, a senior at BYU, is an Arab-Muslim student who is studying public relations and French and minoring in sociology. Interested in the intersection of religion, law, and politics, Ms. Alnasser's academic research focuses on religion, law, and society, with a particular interest in how Western frameworks of religious freedom and secularism shape

understandings of Islam in predominantly Muslim countries. Drawing on her international experience from living and studying abroad, her interfaith leadership on campus, and her commitment to cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue, she explores how the "Christian Gaze" continues to manifest in everyday life, especially looking at how Islam and Sharia are framed in modern discourse and the way in which they affect Muslim identity and practice. After graduation, Ms. Alnasser plans to continue her research, contributing to legal academia in the Sharia Law.



Jonathan Ammons

Director of Interfaith Relations, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Jonathan Ammons serves as director of interfaith relations for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In addition to his work for the Church, he currently serves as president of the NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), an association of civil society leaders engaged in promoting FoRB within the United Nations. He also serves on the national board of governors of the Religion Communicators Council and is a Stephen M. Kellen Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is the recipient of a number of fellowships and awards, including the Oxford Young Scholars Fellowship in Religion and the Rule of Law, the Handa Fellowship in Interreligious Communication, the Interfaith Center of New York's Interfaith Civic Leadership Fellowship, and the DeRose-Hinkhouse Award for Excellence in Religious Communications and Public Relations. Mr. Ammons holds a bachelor's degree in humanities from Brigham Young University and a master's degree in government and democracy studies from Johns Hopkins University. He and his wife, Brianne, have four wonderful children and enjoy hiking, camping, and other outdoor activities with their family.



Amy Lynn Andrus

Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

Amy Lynn Andrus is an associate director at the International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS), J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University. She earned a JD, an MA in international development, and a BA (summa cum laude) in English from BYU. Ms. Andrus served as an attorney advisor in the US Attorney General's Honors Program, working for the US Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review. She co-administers the ICLRS Young Scholars Fellowship on Religion and the Rule of Law, held annually at Christ Church, Oxford. Ms. Andrus is coauthor of the volume *Religion and Law in the USA*, published as part of the *International Encyclopaedia of Laws: Religion* (Wolters Kluwer 2024).



Shima Baradaran Baughman

*Woodruff J. Deem Professor of Law, J. Reuben Clark Law School;
Distinguished Fellow, Wheatley Institute, Brigham Young University*

Shima Baughman is the Woodruff J. Deem Professor of Law and a Distinguished Fellow at the Wheatley Institute at BYU. She has taught law for over fifteen years at the University of Malawi, BYU, and the University of Utah, where she was also an associate dean. She is a former Fulbright scholar, one of the top cited faculty in her field, and a nationally recognized expert on bail, prosecutors, and police. Her current scholarship examines criminal justice policy, forgiveness, prosecutors, and how religious institutions impact criminal justice reform. Baughman's work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, *The Washington Post*, *Forbes*, on National Public Radio, and other media outlets. She presented her work at Stanford, Cornell, Michigan, Texas, NYU, UCLA and many other law schools, as well as to groups of federal and state judges and attorneys across the country. Her articles have been published in top law journals including *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, *USC Law Review*, *Georgetown Law Journal*, *Texas Law Review*, and the *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*.



Brent J. Belnap

Senior Counsel, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, United States of America

Brent J. Belnap was born and raised in the State of Utah in the United States. He received a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University and a Juris Doctorate from Columbia University School of Law in New York City. After law school, he worked in Manhattan as an international transactional lawyer, handling a broad variety of finance, securities, corporate, and mergers and acquisitions matters. He subsequently became in-house counsel and senior vice president with Citigroup, where he worked for 10 years. He later worked as managing director with a financial advisory/investment banking firm, mostly on corporate restructuring matters. In 2012, after living in New York City for 26 years, Brent was invited to join the Office of General Counsel of a large global religious organization (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Brent worked as Area Legal Counsel in Moscow, Russia, and, most recently, in Accra, Ghana, where he lived with his family for three years. Brent has extensive global experience addressing legal audiences on the rule of law and freedom of conscience and belief. Brent has been an active member of ACLARS for nearly a decade. He has also appeared on the "Today Show" and has been cited in numerous press articles, including in *The New York Times*. Brent and his wife Lorinda have six children.



Betsy Bennion

Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

Betsy Bennion recently joined ICLRS to help oversee efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean. For the last decade, she served as a diplomat for the US State Department in Mexico, Pakistan, Washington, DC, and at NATO Headquarters in Belgium. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, she had a legal career. She worked on a prosecution team at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, clerked on both the Utah Supreme Court and the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, taught at BYU Law School, and practiced at several large law firms. She also performed research for Human Rights Watch in San Francisco and provided appellate expertise for the Federal Public Defender Office in Salt Lake City. She holds degrees from Brigham Young University, Stanford University, the University of Utah, and the University of California, Los Angeles. She grew up in Palo Alto, California, and Geneva, Switzerland. Besides her tours abroad with the US State Department listed above, she has also lived in Brazil, England, Israel, and the Netherlands.



David Campbell

Senior United States District Judge, United States District Court, District of Arizona

David Campbell is a senior United States district judge for the District of Arizona, having served on the Court since 2003. He currently chairs the US Courts' Committee on International Judicial Relations. He previously chaired the US Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure, which oversees the work of five advisory committees on the federal rules of civil, criminal, bankruptcy, and appellate procedure and the federal rules of evidence. Earlier, he chaired the advisory committee on the federal rules of civil procedure. Judge Campbell is a member of the American Law Institute and a fellow of the American Bar Foundation. He has worked with courts in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Turkey, and the Gambia on judicial case management and related topics, and he has taught civil procedure and constitutional law at the Arizona State and Brigham Young University law schools. Following his graduation from the University of Utah Law School, he served as a law clerk for Justice William H. Rehnquist of the United States Supreme Court and Judge J. Clifford Wallace of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Judge Campbell worked as a commercial litigator with the Phoenix, Arizona, law firm of Osborn Maledon before becoming a judge.



Christina J. Clark

Senior Education Engagement Fellow, Religious Freedom and Business Foundation

Christina J. Clark was born and raised in Cannes, France. She attended Sorbonne University in Paris, France, and she received her master's degree and PhD in romance languages from the University of Oklahoma. Ms. Clark has taught at the university level for 30-plus years and is the senior education engagement fellow for Religious Freedom and Business Foundation. She has enjoyed promoting the message of the foundation through various public-speaking opportunities around the world.



Elizabeth A. Clark

Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University; Program Chair, International Law and Religion Symposium

Elizabeth A. Clark, an associate director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University, is the US member of the OSCE/ODIHR advisory panel for freedom of religion or belief. Professor Clark has written extensively on freedom of religion or belief, particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Working in behalf of the US State Department, USAID, national governments, and international NGOs, she has analyzed legislation and drafted legislation on religion for more than a dozen countries. She has spoken at UN and OSCE forums and at more than 100 academic conferences throughout the world. She has also testified before the US Congress and the US Commission on International Religious Freedom.



Gregory Clark

Vice President, Religious Freedom & Business Foundation

Gregory Clark received his BA from Brigham Young University in 1976. He then served as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. Mr. Clark received his juris doctor from the University of Idaho College of Law, then worked in the oil and gas industry for about 16 years (Exxon and Occidental Petroleum Corporation). He was Occidental's legal manager in Ecuador and its managing counsel for the Middle East while living in Qatar. He was assigned as Asia Area legal counsel for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in May 2022. He previously served as the area legal counsel for the Church in Mexico (2001–2005), Peru (2005–2009), Brazil (2012–2015), and the Dominican Republic (2015–2018). Mr. Clark is a cofounder and vice president of the Religious Freedom and Business Foundation. He has spoken at the

SEAFORB Conference in Bali, Indonesia, and has trained Parliamentarians from Southeast Asia on religious freedom in the workplace.



Gary B. Doxey

Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

Gary B. Doxey is an associate director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University. He joined the Center in 2005 and serves as regional advisor for Latin America. He also heads the Center's development effort. He has authored several commentaries on draft legislation and a number of amicus briefs in Latin America. He also teaches in the History Department at BYU. Professor Doxey's career has been divided between academia and public service. Prior to joining the BYU Law School, he was chief of staff and general counsel to Utah governors Mike Leavitt and Olene Walker and served as deputy commissioner of financial institutions and as associate general counsel to the Utah Legislature. He has a PhD in history from Cambridge University and a JD from Brigham Young University.



W. Cole Durham, Jr.

Founding Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University; President, G20 Interfaith Forum

W. Cole Durham, Jr. is the founding director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies. He graduated from Harvard College and Harvard Law School, where he was the note editor of the *Harvard Law Review* and managing editor of the *Harvard International Law Journal*. Professor Durham has focused on comparative law scholarship with an emphasis on comparative constitutional law. He is the immediate past president of the International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ICLARS) in Milan, Italy, and a coeditor in chief of the *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*. He served as the secretary of the American Society of Comparative Law from 1989 to 1994 and is an associate member of the International Academy of Comparative Law in Paris. In earlier years, he served as chair of both the comparative law section and the law and religion section of the American Association of Law Schools. He is the author (with Brett G. Scharffs) of *Law and Religion: National, International, and Comparative Perspectives*; a coeditor (with Gerhard Robbers) of the *Encyclopedia of Law and Religion*; and a coauthor of a four-volume treatise, *Religious Organizations and the Law*.



Kemal Erkan

USA Representative, Marmara Group Foundation

Kemal Erkan is the CEO and founder of United Medical, LLC, and the cofounder of the American Surgery Center. Since 2000, he has been a transformative force in the healthcare sector, particularly in advancing electronic medical records (EMR), accountable care organizations, medical practice administration, and revenue cycle management. Mr. Erkan holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration and political science from Ankara University in Türkiye, and dual MBA degrees in computer information systems and finance from Goldey-Beacom College in Delaware. He has served on the Cerner™ EMR and Practice Management advisory boards and played a pivotal role as an adjunct professor in launching healthcare-focused academic programs at Goldey-Beacom College. Mr. Erkan's leadership and service have earned widespread acclaim across healthcare, public policy, and global relations. His awards include the Marmara Foundation Appreciation Award (2025); Extraordinary Leader Award (2022)—MGMA; Man of Distinction Award (2022)—YWCA of Delaware; Lifetime Achievement Award (2020); MGMA Rise Above Recognition Award (2020); Outstanding Achievement in Healthcare (2019)—TURKOFAMERICA; Young Society Leader (2018)—American Turkish Society; and Leadership in Philanthropy and Global Affairs. Internationally, Mr. Erkan is a board member and the official United States Representative of the Marmara Foundation, a distinguished nongovernmental organization accredited by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. In this role, he contributes to global discussions on peacebuilding, regional diplomacy, and sustainable development. He is also the cofounder of Friends of Tigray & Türkiye Delaware, a humanitarian initiative supporting victims of the Tigray genocide and survivors of the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye. Mr. Erkan brings his values-driven leadership into the political sphere as a finance committee member for both US Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester and State Senator Sarah McBride.

Don Fletcher

International Legal Counsel, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Philippines



Danielle J. Forrest

Judge, Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

Danielle J. Forrest is a United States circuit judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit based in Portland, Oregon. Before joining the federal bench in 2019, she was a state trial judge in Oregon, where she served as the chief civil judge and the presiding judge. Judge Forrest graduated summa cum laude from the University of Idaho College of Law. She clerked for Judge Paul J. Kelly Jr. of the Tenth Circuit, Judge Michael W. Mosman

of the US District Court in Oregon, and Judge Diarmuid F. O'Scannlain of the Ninth Circuit. Judge Forrest practiced commercial litigation in Portland, and she has taught advanced civil procedure and litigation skills as an adjunct professor at Lewis & Clark Law School.



Megan Green

Student, Brigham Young University

Megan Green is a senior at Brigham Young University who is majoring in geography with an emphasis on geospatial intelligence and minoring in Africana studies and global environmental studies. After serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where she worked with East African refugees in San Diego, California, she developed a lasting interest in the African continent and its diverse cultures, languages, and religious traditions. She has pursued this passion through completing in-country research in Tanzania and developing a historical African-cultures-and-languages database. Ms. Green, a native of the Atlanta, Georgia, area, enjoys hiking, traveling, and spending time outdoors.



Scott E. Isaacson

Senior Fellow and Regional Advisor for Latin America, International Center for Law and Religion Studies

A shaping force behind the formation of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Scott E. Isaacson currently serves the Center as regional advisor for Latin America. He is a member of the Latin American Consortium for Religious Liberty and a shareholder in the law firm Kirton McConkie. From 1998 through 2004, he served as international legal counsel in the Office of General Counsel for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where he supervised all Church legal work in South America. Previous to this, Mr. Isaacson was with the firms of King & Isaacson, P.C., and Davis Graham & Stubbs. The author of numerous scholarly publications, Mr. Isaacson is a graduate of BYU in English (*magna cum laude*). A Hinckley Scholar during his undergraduate years, he was one of those extremely rare persons who achieved a perfect score on the Law School Admissions Test. At BYU Law School, he was a J. Reuben Clark Scholar, *BYU Law Review* note and comment editor, and research and writing assistant to Dean Rex E. Lee.



Paul Kerry

Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

Paul Kerry is an associate director of BYU Law School's International Center for Law and Religion Studies and an associate professor of history at BYU. He works in the fields of religion, law, and intellectual history; First Amendment; and international humanitarian projects. He is a contributor to the multiyear project *A Documentary History of Jewish-Christian Relations: From Ancient Times to the Present Day* (Cambridge University Press, 2024). He served as the senior academic advisor to the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief (2022–23) and co-organized the 2023 International Sermon Studies Association Conference at Christ Church, Oxford. Professor Kerry is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and an honorary fellow of the Woolf Institute, Cambridge. He has held fellowships at Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Princeton, and the London School of Economics and Political Science.



Cynthia Juárez Lange

Senior Fellow, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University; Executive Director, FIDELA

Cynthia Juárez Lange is an attorney. She received her JD from Southwestern University School of Law and her BA in political science from Brigham Young University. She was a managing partner of the Worldwide Executive Committee for Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy from 1986 to 2020. She was an adjunct professor of law for Southwestern University School of Law and served as a trial attorney for the US Department of Justice, Immigration, and Naturalization Service. She is currently on the board of directors for the National Immigration Law Center and Immigrant Justice Fund as well as the board of directors for Days for Girls. From 2010 to 2021, she was the program chair for the Practicing Law Institute Immigration Symposium. In 2021 she and her husband, Dennis Lange, accepted an assignment as codirectors of an ICLRS initiative to the Organization of American States in Washington, DC.



Dennis Lange Beltrán

Senior Fellow, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University; Executive Director, FIDELA

Dennis Lange is a nephrologist. In 2021 he and his wife, Cynthia Juárez Lange, accepted an assignment as codirectors of an ICLRS initiative to the Organization of American States in Washington, DC. Dr. Lange received a BS in biology and an MD from the University of California, Los Angeles. He is currently pursuing a master of public health degree from the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Lange worked with Kidney Specialists Medical Corporation from 1997 to 2016 and, during that same period, also served as medical director of Lifeline Dialysis Service. He was medical director for Montebello Dialysis Clinic and DaVita Kenneth Hahn Plaza Dialysis Clinic for many years. Prior to that he was a physician with Kidney Specialists Medical Group.



Denise Posse Lindberg

Senior Fellow, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

A native of Havana, Cuba, Denise Posse Lindberg received her primary and secondary education in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the United States. She graduated with her BA from Brigham Young University and earned master's and PhD degrees from the University of Utah. She later received a juris doctor degree, magna cum laude, from BYU's J. Reuben Clark Law School. Following law school, she clerked at the US Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit for Judge Monroe G. McKay and at the Supreme Court of the United States for Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Judge Lindberg practiced appellate and healthcare law in Washington, DC, and Salt Lake City, Utah, prior to her 1998 judicial appointment to the Third District Court bench. She left full-time judicial service in 2015 but continues as a senior district judge with the State of Utah Judiciary. She is a senior fellow with BYU's International Center for Law and Religion Studies. She also serves on the executive committee of the Latin American Consortium for Religious Liberty. She has participated as speaker or moderator at events throughout Latin America and the Caribbean on topics ranging from judicial independence, the rule of law and mediation to religious freedom, peace-building, and human dignity.



Eve Lindberg

Student, Brigham Young University

Eve Lindberg is a student at BYU studying statistics. She is interested in public policy and how governments, nonprofits, and churches work together to solve social problems. Ms. Lindberg is currently preparing to serve a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



Neil A. Lindberg

Senior Fellow, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

Neil Lindberg, an attorney, is a senior fellow at the International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS). From 2018–2021, he and his wife, Denise, represented ICLRS and Latter-day Saint Charities at the Organization of American States in Washington, DC. Prior to serving as a senior fellow at the Center, Mr. Lindberg practiced land use and municipal law in Maryland and Utah for many years. He has served on the J. Reuben Clark Law School Alumni Board and on the board of the Utah Land Use Institute. In addition to a juris doctor, Mr. Lindberg holds bachelor of science and master of public administration degrees from Brigham Young University.



Dana Lloyd

Assistant Professor, Villanova University

Dana Lloyd is an assistant professor of global interdisciplinary studies and affiliated faculty at the Center for Peace and Justice Education at Villanova University. She holds a law degree from Tel Aviv University and a PhD in religion from Syracuse University. Professor Lloyd is the author of *Land Is Kin: Sovereignty, Religious Freedom, and Indigenous Sacred Sites* (University Press of Kansas, 2023) and the editor of *Native American Religion: Teaching and Learning on Stolen Land* (forthcoming, Routledge). Her articles have appeared in journals such as *Law, Culture and the Humanities*; *Journal of Law and Religion*; and *Indigenous Religious Traditions*.



Quin Monson

Professor, Political Science, Brigham Young University

Quin Monson received his PhD from Ohio State University in 2004. He does research in public opinion; campaigns and elections; survey research methods; and religion and politics. He is the co-author of *Seeking the Promised Land: Mormons and American Politics* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014) and his work has also appeared in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Political Analysis*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and *Political Behavior*, among others.



David H. Moore

Dean, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

David Moore is a scholar of international law, development, human rights, and US foreign relations law. His work has appeared in leading journals, including the *Harvard*, *Columbia*, *Virginia*, and *Northwestern* law reviews. Dean Moore serves on the roster of experts of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Moscow Mechanism. In 2020 he was elected to a brief term on the UN Human Rights Committee. From 2019 to 2023, Dean Moore was an associate director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies. He worked at various US government agencies, taught at three different law schools, and clerked for US Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. Dean Moore is a summa cum laude graduate of BYU Law School, where he served as editor in chief of the *BYU Law Review* and graduated first in his class. He also received his BA from BYU. He and his wife, Natalie, are the parents of seven wonderful children.



Brendan Murphy

Student, Brigham Young University

Brendan Murphy is a senior at BYU studying philosophy and English literature, with minors in Scandinavian studies (Finnish emphasis) and logic. He worked as a speech writer and policy advisor while interning at the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief at the UK Parliament. Since then, he has worked in nonprofit advisement, as a research and teaching assistant, and as editor in chief for BYU's undergraduate philosophy and literary criticism student journals. He plans to attend graduate school in philosophy. He is from Springville, Utah, and enjoys spending time with his loved ones, playing and watching sports, skiing, and traveling.



Jordan Pendergrass

Media Specialist/Headlines, International Center for Law and Religion Studies

Jordan Pendergrass is the Headlines Lead for the International Center for Law and Religion Studies. In this role he has primary responsibility for assembling and disseminating the International Law and Religion Headlines digests. He first began working with the Center in 2010. Jordan earned a master's degree from Georgetown University, with an emphasis in international religious freedom. He graduated from BYU with a bachelor's degree in Geography and a Spanish minor. He is married and has five children.



Henry Purser

Student, Brigham Young University

Henry Purser is a junior at BYU who is majoring in English and minoring in philosophy. He served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Charlotte, North Carolina, and São Paulo, Brazil. He currently serves as editor in chief of the *BYU PreLaw Review*, works as a paralegal at Sumsion Business Law, and does research at the Maxwell Institute. He plans to graduate in the spring of 2027 and begin graduate school that fall.



Tina Ramirez

President and Executive Director, Hardwired Global

Tina Ramirez serves as the president and executive director of Hardwired Global. Previously, she served as a policy advisor for the US Commission on International Religious Freedom; a foreign policy advisor for the US Congress, where she founded the bipartisan International Religious Freedom Caucus; and a director of Government Relations and International Programs at Becket Law. Ms. Ramirez has published extensively and is the author of *Iraq: Hope in the Midst of Darkness* (2017), a contributing author and editor of *Human Rights in the United States: A Dictionary and Documents* (2010 and 2017), and author and editor of *Human Rights: Great Events from History* (2019). She holds a certificate from the International Institute for Human Rights in Strasbourg, France; an MA in education from Vanguard University; and an MA in international human rights from the University of Essex, UK. Ms. Ramirez has spoken before the United Nations and the African Union and testified before the US Congress. In 2012 she was awarded the Ahmadiyya Muslim Humanitarian Award for her congressional work defending the Ahmadiyya Muslim community worldwide. She previously served as vice president and

secretary of the United Nations NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief in New York and is a former board member for the Valentine First Freedom Center in Richmond, Virginia.



Andrew Reed

Richard L. Evans Chair of Religious Understanding and Associate Professor of Church History, Brigham Young University

Dr. Andrew Reed is the Richard L. Evans Chair of Religious Understanding and Associate Professor of Church History. He studied Russian, Ukrainian, and European history at Arizona State University and holds Master's degrees from the University of Oxford and from the University of Cambridge. He is currently working on a monograph on the well-known Russian orientalist and hebraist Daniil Avraamovich Khvol'son and Religious Tolerance in nineteenth-century Russia, and also a monograph on Interfaith theology and ethics. One of the major themes within his work is the development and history of relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. He teaches comparative religion courses and church history. He is the Chair of the BYU Council for Interfaith Engagement and an organizer and participant for the Jewish - Latter-day Saint academic dialogue. He founded the BYU Interfaith Student Association in 2018. In 2023, he was awarded an Arthur Vining Davis Foundations Grant for "Interfaith Leadership and Religious Literacy". The grant project "Building Interfaith Leaders for Future Service to the World" provides essential funding to enable the BYU Council for Interfaith Engagement to help students and faculty build greater awareness and understanding of the world's faith traditions while striving to equip students to be peacemakers and bridge builders upon graduation from BYU.



C. Shane Reese

President, Brigham Young University

C. Shane Reese began his tenure as the 14th president of Brigham Young University on 1 May 2023. Prior to his appointment, he served as BYU academic vice president from 2019 to 2023 and dean of the BYU College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences from 2017 to 2019. He also serves as a member of the Department of Statistics faculty and is an elected fellow of the American Statistical Association. President Reese's research has centered on Bayesian hierarchical models and Bayesian optimal experimental designs. He has created statistical models addressing a range of issues, from predicting the power of solar storms to determining the safest method for destroying chemical weapons to assessing climate impact on glaciers in high mountain Asia and Antarctica. His work has also been used by the US Olympic volleyball team as well as the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles. President Reese earned a doctoral degree in

statistics from Texas A&M University and master's and bachelor's degrees in statistics from BYU.



Gene Schaerr

Senior Fellow, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University

Gene Schaerr specializes in civil appeals, writ proceedings, and similar matters, both in appellate courts and in the law-focused proceedings at the trial-court or agency level that often determine success or failure on appeal. He has argued and won dozens of cases in a variety of forums—including the U.S. Supreme Court (where he has argued six cases), every federal circuit, and numerous federal district courts and state appellate courts. His win rate in the dozens of federal appeals he has argued in the past six years is over 75 percent. He was a coordinator of Sidley Austin's appellate practice from 1993 until 2005, and from 2005 until 2014 was the chair of the nationwide appellate practice at Winston & Strawn. In January 2014, Mr. Schaerr formed his own boutique litigation firm. Substantively, Mr. Schaerr's experience includes not only virtually every area of federal constitutional law, but also administrative law, antitrust, arbitration, class certification, contract law, defamation, higher education law, immigration, insurance coverage, labor and employment, patent and trademark, privacy, product liability and warranty, statutory interpretation, and tax. He has represented clients in virtually every sector and state and local government. He also teaches courses in Supreme Court litigation, religious-freedom litigation, and advanced litigation skills as an adjunct professor of law at Brigham Young University. Mr. Schaerr began law practice in 1987 following clerkships on the U.S. Supreme Court (for Chief Justice Warren Burger and Justice Antonin Scalia) and on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit (for then-Judge Kenneth Starr). He graduated in 1985 from Yale Law School, where he was Editor-in-Chief of the *Yale Journal on Regulation* and Senior Editor of the *Yale Law Journal*. From 1991 to 1993, he served in the White House as Associate Counsel to the President, where he was responsible for a wide range of constitutional and administrative-law issues, including those involving economic regulation, higher education, separation of powers, federalism, and religious freedom.



Brett G. Scharffs

Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

Brett G. Scharffs is Rex E. Lee Chair and Professor of Law and director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University Law School. He received a BSBA in international business and an MA in philosophy at Georgetown University and, as a Rhodes Scholar,

earned a BPhil in philosophy at Oxford. He received his JD from Yale Law School, where he was senior editor of the *Yale Law Journal*. He is a recurring visiting professor at Central European University in Budapest and at the University of Adelaide Law School. For several years, he has helped organize certificate training programs in religion and the rule of law in China and in Vietnam and has taught and helped organize programs at several Indonesian universities on sharia and human rights. Author of more than 100 articles and book chapters, he has made more than 300 scholarly presentations in 30 countries. His casebook, *Law and Religion: National, International and Comparative Perspectives* (with W. Cole Durham, Jr.), has been translated into Chinese and Vietnamese, with Turkish, Burmese, and Arabic translations in process. He is coauthor with Elizabeth Clark and Amy Andrus of *Religion and Law in the USA*, a contribution to Wolters Kluwer's *International Encyclopaedia of Laws*.



Aaron Shumway

Director of Religious Education, Faculty Advisor for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Initiative, BYU–Hawaii

Aaron Shumway grew up in Laie, Hawaii. He graduated from Liahona High School in Tonga, and after an additional year of high school in California, he attended BYU–Hawaii. Following a mission to Taiwan for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he returned to BYU–Hawaii, where he met his wife, May Villanueva, a student from the Philippines. Professor Shumway graduated from BYU–Hawaii with a degree in English and attended Washington and Lee University School of Law. He practiced real estate and business law in Honolulu for 12 years prior to becoming a religious educator. He has served as the director of religious education at BYU–Hawaii since 2021 and also serves as a faculty advisor for the Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Initiative at BYU–Hawaii. He and his wife have six children and two grandchildren, and they enjoy spending time with family in whatever activity comes up, be it singing at home, playing at the beach, or lying on the front lawn gazing at the night sky.



Hannah Clayson Smith

Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

Hannah Clayson Smith became an associate director at the International Center for Law and Religion Studies in 2023. She joined ICLRS following clerkships at the US Supreme Court for Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito and a decade of service as senior counsel at Becket Law. At Becket, she helped secure victories in key religious liberty cases, including *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. EEOC*, *Holt v. Hobbs*, *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, and *Zubik v. Burwell* (the Little Sisters of the Poor case). She has contributed to more than 35

Supreme Court briefs and represented more than a dozen major faith groups. Ms. Smith has been awarded BYU's Alumni Achievement Award, the JRCLS's Women-in-Law Leadership Award, and the Center for Constitutional Studies's James Madison Award. As a law student, she received the J. Reuben Clark Award and the Law Faculty Award for Meritorious Achievement and Distinguished Service. She received her BA from Princeton University and her JD from BYU Law School, where she graduated Order of the Coif. She served as a full-time French-speaking missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in France and Switzerland. She and her husband, John, have four wonderful children.



Michalyn Steele

Professor of Law, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

Michalyn Steele is the Marion G. Romney Professor of Law at BYU Law. She teaches constitutional law, Native American law, and civil rights. She is a 2001 graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center and has worked in private practice representing Native American tribes and as a trial attorney at the US Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

Professor Steele's scholarship focuses on the rights of Indigenous peoples; her work has been published in the *Harvard Law Review*, the *New York Law Review*, the *UCLA Law Review*, and other publications.



Kunihiro Terasawa

Associate Professor, Wartburg College

Kunihiro Terasawa joined Wartburg College in 2012 and teaches classes in world religions in dialogue, Buddhist traditions, religions of China, religions of Japan, and Islam and the modern world. He is a board member and an international advisor for East Asia for the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies, is active in the Cedar Valley Interfaith Councils, and is a

board member of the US chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom—the oldest interreligious dialogue organization in the US. Dr. Terasawa's recent research focuses on how interreligious/transnational solidarity of religions can overcome ultranationalist populism in the Pacific Rim. During a sabbatical in 2019–20, he became a visiting professor at South Korea's Sogang University (fall 2019) and Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (spring 2020).



Jennifer Mie Kajiyama Tinkham

Program Lead and Adjunct Assistant Professor for the Legal Studies Program, Faculty of Business and Government; Faculty Chair and Advisory Board Member, Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Initiative, Brigham Young University–Hawaii

Jennifer Mie Kajiyama Tinkham graduated from BYU–Hawaii as valedictorian in 2002, studying political science and Japanese. As an undergraduate, she worked in the US Senate for the secretary of the Senate, the Hawai'i Attorney General's Office, the Hawai'i State Supreme Court, and the Hawai'i State House of Representatives. She served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Japan Nagoya Mission. Upon her return, she attended the J. Reuben Clark Law School, focusing her studies on international law and alternative dispute resolutions. Professor Tinkham also completed a master of public administration degree at the BYU Marriott School of Management, with an emphasis in nonprofit and human resources management. She is a licensed attorney and a certified court mediator, divorce mediator, and arbitrator. She has worked for several judges and law firms, working on cases ranging from business law to worker's compensation and, most recently, family law. She also serves as the Legal Studies Program director at BYU–Hawaii.



Cecilia Titizano

Professor; Program Director, Jesuit School of Theology, Santa Clara University

Cecilia Titizano is a native of Bolivia of Quechua-Aymara descent. Dr. Titizano is core faculty at NAITTS (formerly known as the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies), an Indigenous learning community. She also directs the Latina/o Theology and Ministry Leadership Network and the Instituto Hispano of the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University. Her research, speaking, and publications encompass Indigenous theologies, Andean philosophy and ethics, and Indigenous feminist decolonial thought. She currently serves on the advisory board of Memoria Indígena and is part of the Comunidad de Sabias y Teólogas Indígenas del Abya Yala.



Christine Venter

Teaching Professor, Notre Dame Law School

Christine Venter, a Zimbabwean native, obtained her undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. After practicing civil rights law in South Africa for several years, she relocated to the US to pursue master's and doctoral degrees in international human

rights law at Notre Dame Law School. Her dissertation involved an analysis of cultural rights and women's rights under the South African constitution. She is a teaching professor of law at Notre Dame Law School, where she teaches in the areas of international human rights law, legal writing, and appellate advocacy.



David Whippy

*Director, David O. McKay Center for Intercultural Understanding,
Brigham Young University–Hawaii*

David Whippy is an assistant professor at Brigham Young University–Hawaii, teaching in the Intercultural Peacebuilding program. He teaches courses on intercultural peacebuilding, intercultural mediation, NGOs and conflict resolution, peace ecology, restorative justice, and peace education.

Professor Whippy serves as the director of the David O. McKay Center for Intercultural Understanding, supporting student peacebuilding initiatives that provide students with knowledge, experience, and the practical tools necessary to be influences for peace in their homes, in their communities, and in the world.

Uzbekistan

Olim Astanakulov

Vice Rector for International Cooperation, International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

Since April 2025, Olim Astanakulov has been serving as vice rector at the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan. Prior to this, he worked as head of the Department of Islamic Economy and Finance as well as head of Ziyarah Tourism at the same institution. Between 2019 and 2021, he served as dean of the master's program at the Academy of Public Administration under the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan. From 2012 to 2019, he was dean of the Faculty of Financial Management at the Tashkent Institute of Finance.

Muzaffar Kamilov

Deputy Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Issues Related to Representative Bodies, Nongovernmental and Nonprofit Organizations, Religion, and Youth Affairs; Rector, International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, Presidential Administration

Muzaffar Kamilov studied at Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies. After graduation he continued his academic career as an intern-researcher, including language training at Cairo University. From 1997 to 2000, he pursued postgraduate studies at the same institution. His professional path in academia includes serving as deputy dean of the Faculty of International Relations and Economics and later as vice rector for scientific affairs of the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies. Between 2009 and 2016, he worked at the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, heading departments focused on spiritual and moral education.

In 2016, he became vice rector for spiritual and enlightenment affairs of the Tashkent State University of Economics. From 2018 to 2022, he served as first deputy chairman of the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers. He was rector of the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan (2021–2023) and advisor to the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan on cooperation with public and religious organizations (2022–2024). Currently, he serves as rector of the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan and deputy advisor to the president on issues related to representative bodies, NGOs, religion, and youth affairs.

Vietnam



Trọng Nguyễn

Deputy Chairman, Government Committee for Religious Affairs

Nguyễn Tiến Trọng is deputy head of the Government Committee for Religious Affairs. He holds a bachelor of laws degree and served as deputy director of the Department of Homeland Security under the Ministry of Public Security from 2015 to 2021. Since 2021, he has served as deputy head of the Government Committee for Religious Affairs. Throughout his career, he has been a member of the drafting committee for the Law on Belief and Religion, Decree No. 95/2023/ND-CP, as well as a member of the editorial board of the 2023 White Book on Religion. With his deep knowledge of various religions and his extensive practical experience, he has made important contributions to the development, improvement, and implementation of legal frameworks to safeguard the right to freedom of belief and religion.