

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ANNUAL REVIEW

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2026

The United States of America at 250: Life, Religious Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

8:30 A.M.–5:00 P.M.

Registration

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER

9:00–10:30 A.M.

Opening Session

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOMS 2258–2260

Welcomes

Elizabeth A. Clark, Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University; Program Chair, Religious Freedom Annual Review

Brett G. Scharffs, Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies; Rex E. Lee Chair and Professor of Law, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University

C. Shane Reese, President, Brigham Young University

Speakers

Elder Robert M. Daines, General Authority Seventy, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Rev. Dr. David G. Latimore, Director, Betsey Stockton Center for Black Church Studies, Princeton Theological Seminary

Colleen Sheehan, Professor of Politics, School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership, Arizona State University

10:30–10:45 A.M.

Break

10:45–11:45 A.M.

Breakout Sessions

(CHOICE OF BREAKOUT SESSIONS THROUGHOUT THE DAY)

Multi-Faith Neighbors

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 2265

Moderator: Micah Fries, Director, Multi-Faith Neighbors Network; Director of Engagement, Glocal.net

Speakers: Phil Adams, Pastor, Park Community Church, Illinois

Rabbi Ari Hart, Senior Rabbi, Skokie Valley Synagogue, Illinois

Imam Sulaiman Salaam, Al-Haqq Islamic Center, Missouri

Original Understandings of Religion-State Separation in the US

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 2267

Moderator and Respondent: Barbara McGraw, Professor of Social Ethics, Law, and Public Life and of Politics, Saint Mary's College of California

Speakers: Steven K. Green, Fred H. Paulus Professor of Law and Affiliated Professor of History and Religious Studies, Willamette University

Mark David Hall, Professor of Politics, Robertson School of Government, Regent University

Parental Rights: Mahmoud v. Taylor and Its Progeny

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 2254

Moderator: Annika Boone Barkdull, Research Fellow, J. Reuben Clark Law School

Speakers: Eric Baxter, Senior Counsel, Becket Fund for Religious Liberty

Shannon Minter, Legal Director, National Center for LGBTQ Rights

Gene C. Schaerr, Partner and Cofounder, Schaerr Jaffe, LLP

Religious Persecution, Asylum, and Refugee Status: Contemporary Issues

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOMS 2258–2260

Moderator: William Duncan, Constitutional Law and Religious Freedom Fellow, Sutherland Institute

Speakers: Lance Conklin, Attorney at Law, Conklin Immigration Law

Mobarakeh Nouri, Speaker, Colorado Refugee Speakers Bureau

Olivia Whiteley, Strategy Director, Reliable Refuge; Advocacy Strategy Consultant, Refugee Advocacy Lab

NOON–1:00 P.M.

Lunch

1:15–2:15 P.M.

General Session

Future of Religious Freedom in the United States

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOMS 2258–2260

Moderator: Elizabeth A. Clark, Associate Director, ICLRS

Speakers: Howard M. Friedman, Distinguished University Professor and Professor of Law Emeritus, University of Toledo

Melissa Rogers, Nonresident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution; Distinguished Scholar in Faith, Law, and Public Policy, Wake Forest University

Brett G. Scharffs, Director, ICLRS

2:15–2:30 P.M.

Break

2:30–3:30 P.M.

Breakout Sessions

Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic World

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 2265

Moderator: Paul E. Kerry, Associate Director, ICLRS

Speakers: Orit Avishai, Professor of Sociology, Fordham University

Barbara A. McGraw, Professor of Social Ethics, Law, and Public Life and of Politics, Saint Mary's College of California

Charles Randall Paul, Founder and President, Foundation for Religious Diplomacy

The Black Church: Realizing the Promises of the Declaration

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 2267

Moderator: **Rev. Dr. David Latimore**, Director, Betsey Stockton Center for Black Church Studies, Princeton Theological Seminary

Speakers: **Juan M. Floyd-Thomas**, Associate Professor of African American Religious History, Vanderbilt University Divinity School and Vanderbilt Graduate Department of Religion

Rev. Dr. Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of Ethics and Society, Vanderbilt University Divinity School; Interim Chair of African American and Diaspora Studies, Vanderbilt University

Rev. Dr. Byron Thomas, Senior Pastor, Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church, Georgia

Peacemaking and Religious Freedom (Civility Credit)

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOMS 2258–2260

Moderator: **Betsy Bennion**, Associate Director, ICLRS

Speakers: **Micah Fries**, Director, Multi-Faith Neighbors Network; Director of Engagement, Glocal.net

Benjamin P. Marcus, Senior Constitutional Law Fellow, GLAD Law

Emily de Schweinitz Taylor, Mediator and Developmental Psychologist, Brigham Young University

Public Funding of Religious Education

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 2254

Moderator: **Erin Cranor**, University Counsel, Brigham Young University

Speakers: **Annika Boone Barkdull**, Research Fellow, J. Reuben Clark Law School

Richard Katskee, Assistant Clinical Professor of Law and Director of Appellate Litigation Clinic, Duke University

3:30–3:45 P.M.

Break

3:45–4:45 P.M.

Breakout Sessions

Interfaith Grassroots Religious Freedom Efforts: Religious Freedom Advisory Council

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 2265

Moderator: **Gary B. Doxey**, Associate Director, ICLRS

Speakers: **Bill Benac**, National Chair, Religious Freedom Alliance Council; Cofounder, Pathway India

Allyson Egbert, President and Cofounder, Las Vegas Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity

Hannah Clayson Smith, Associate Director, ICLRS

Founding Ideals and Civic Education (Ethics Credit)

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 2254

Moderator: **Gene C. Schaerr**, Partner and Cofounder, Schaerr Jaffe, LLP

Speakers: **Robert Burton**, Director, Civic Thought and Leadership Initiative at the Center for Constitutional Studies, Utah Valley University

Colleen Sheehan, Professor of Politics, School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership, Arizona State University

Religious Freedom Rankings in US States

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOMS 2258–2260

Moderator: **W. Cole Durham, Jr.**, Founding Director, ICLRS

Speakers: **Derringer Dick**, Strategic Research Associate, Becket Fund for Religious Liberty

Mark David Hall, Professor of Politics, Robertson School of Government, Regent University

4:45–5:00 P.M.

Break

5:00–6:00 P.M.

General Session

Religious Freedom and the Pursuit of Happiness

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOMS 2258–2260

Moderator: **Hannah Clayson Smith**, Associate Director, ICLRS

Speakers: **Shima Baughman**, Woodruff J. Deem Professor of Law, J. Reuben Clark Law School; Distinguished Fellow, Wheatley Institute

Ram Cnaan, Professor; Director, Program for Religion and Social Policy Research, School of Social Policy and Practice, University of Pennsylvania

Byron Johnson, Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences; Director, Institute for Studies of Religion; Founding Director, Institute for Global Human Flourishing, Baylor University

Closing Remarks

BYU CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOMS 2258–2260

Moderator: **Amy Andrus**, Associate Director, ICLRS

Speakers: **Brett G. Scharffs**, Director, ICLRS

Elizabeth A. Clark, Associate Director, ICLRS



Scan for additional information on conference speakers.

Breakout Session Tracks

Pluralism and Peacemaking

Realizing the Promises of the Declaration—Religion in US History

Religious Liberty Developments