

A N N U A L
R E P O R T

2025

BYU LAW



INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR LAW & RELIGION STUDIES



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

In 2025 the International Center for Law and Religion Studies commemorated its 25th anniversary, a remarkable achievement by any measure. But as we gathered in early October for our Annual International Law and Religion Symposium, our community was in a state of heightened awareness of the consequences of the hatred and enmity that are too prevalent in civic life today.

Less than a month earlier, our valley had experienced the ideologically motivated assassination of Charlie Kirk just four miles down the road from BYU, at Utah Valley University. And in the week before the Symposium, an attack on a Latter-day Saint Sunday service in Grand Blanc, Michigan, motivated by religious animus, killed several congregants, including the father of BYU Law librarian Andrea Howard.

The local and international outpourings of love and support that followed these tragedies reminded us of the profound truth of these declarations by Martin Luther King Jr.: “Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that” and “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.”¹

The work of the Center over the past 25 years—and for the next 25 to come—is dedicated to proving the proposition that love is stronger than hate and light is stronger than darkness.

In my opening remarks at our annual symposium, I introduced two themes I’d like to emphasize here.

First, religious freedom is for all people in all places. Religious freedom gives us the opportunity to stand up for principle and to stand up for (and with) each other. This willingness to show up for each other is one of the hallmarks of peacemakers. Religious freedom is not protected in one way, from one place; it is protected in many ways and from many places.

Second, religious freedom invites us to live the best version of our own faith. For Latter-day Saints, this means striving to live the restored gospel of Jesus Christ more fully, more faithfully, more joyfully, more purposefully, more peacefully, and more conspicuously.

During the Symposium, we paused to watch the funeral of Russell M. Nelson, president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who had just passed away at the age of 101. At the

NOTES

- 1. Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love*, (Fortress Press, 1981), 53.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Peacemakers Needed,” *Liahona*, May 2023, 100, churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2023/04/47nelson.
3. Nelson, “Peacemakers Needed,” 100.

Church’s general conference two years earlier, in an address titled “Peacemakers Needed,” President Nelson distinguished between *conflict* (which is a natural feature of life) and *contention* (which is a chosen response to conflict). In that address, President Nelson said:

Contention drives away the Spirit—every time. Contention reinforces the false notion that confrontation is the way to resolve differences; but it never is. Contention is a choice. Peacemaking is a choice. You have your agency to choose contention or reconciliation. I urge you to choose to be a peacemaker, now and always.²

President Nelson continued:

Brothers and sisters, we can literally change the world—one person and one interaction at a time. How? By modeling how to manage honest differences of opinion with mutual respect and dignified dialogue.³

One recurring theme in President Nelson’s message on becoming peacemakers is that “the transforming power of God’s love will change us and empower us to be peacemakers.”⁴ I find it interesting that if we are to become peacemakers, the first change that must take place is within ourselves: We must allow ourselves to be transformed by God’s love.

The hope of the Center’s team is that our commitment to religious freedom and human dignity for all people in all places—and our desire to live our faith as peaceable followers of Jesus Christ—will be manifest in the pages that follow.

Gratefully, as always,

Brett G. Scharffs
Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies

- 4. Lenae Rubey, summarizing the keynote address by Relief Society General President Camille N. Johnson at the annual International Society Conference, 8 April 2024; in Rubey, “International Society Holds 34th Annual Conference,” Newsroom, David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, 12 April 2024, kennedy.byu.edu/newsroom/international-society-holds-34th-annual-conference.



Symposium 4

Regional Conferences 10

Students 34

International Advisory Council 40

Academic Advisory Board, Fellows, and Staff 50

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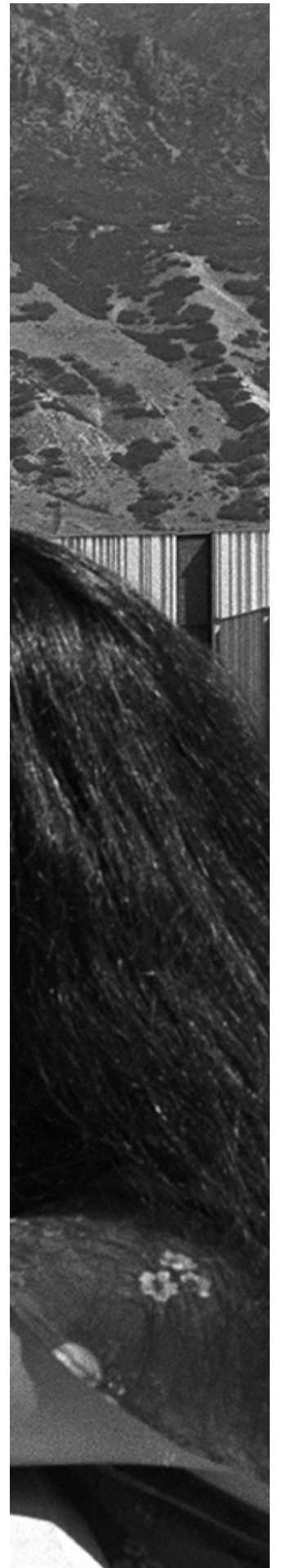
OUR MISSION

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

Expanding, deepening, and disseminating knowledge and expertise regarding the interrelationship of law and religion;

Facilitating the growth of networks of scholars, experts, and policymakers involved in the field of religion and law;

Contributing to law reform processes and broader implementation of principles of religious freedom worldwide.



SYMPOSIUM





32ND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL LAW AND RELIGION SYMPOSIUM

5-7 OCTOBER 2025 | PROVO, UTAH, USA

At a time of national divisions and fraying alliances, the 2025 International Law and Religion Symposium explored how religious freedom is protected in individual countries—judicially and legislatively as well as through regional organizations and under international law. During the three-day gathering, more than 100 delegates from 47 countries looked at how the layers of protection work together to establish religious rights, the rule of law, and pluralism and how this all contributes to human flourishing.

This year’s Symposium was titled “Building Paths to Flourishing: Regional, National, and International Protections of Religious Freedom.” It opened with welcomes from BYU President C. Shane Reese, who asked delegates to involve the younger generation in these conversations, and from BYU Law School Dean David H. Moore, who highlighted religious freedom as a cornerstone of the Law School and its aim to support students of all faiths.

Baroness Elizabeth Berridge, senior research fellow at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom, delivered one of the opening keynotes. She stressed that liberty of conscience is a natural right and underscored the importance of solidarity in promoting flourishing.

Baroness Berridge shared the keynote stage with Andrea Pin, a professor of comparative public law at the University of Padova, Italy. Pin explored religious freedom in the Middle East and North Africa, highlighting the complex interplay between religion, politics, and belonging. He emphasized that advancing religious freedom requires turning it from a source of tension into a shared legal and social commitment, noting that “ethnic ties are woven into the international tapestry, and political negotiations often unfold along religious lines.”

Francis Kuria, secretary general of Religions for Peace International and of the African Council of Religious Leaders-Religions for Peace, also delivered a keynote address on the critical importance of religious freedom and interfaith cooperation. Kuria acknowledged the challenges of our times, pointing to waves of bigotry that are amplified by social media and to the troubling rise of hate crimes. He concluded with a call to action: Creating safe spaces

for dialogue is essential, but real impact requires united action. “Together, through the protection of religious freedom, we can achieve flourishing for all,” he said.

Every second year, the Symposium features a judicial track. In 2025, 14 judges from 10 countries participated in panels and a plenary session. The goal of the judicial panels is to explore the crucial role of courts in defining and protecting religious freedom around the world. Moderator David G. Campbell, a senior United States district judge, emphasized that while religious freedom begins at home and in neighborhoods, its full meaning is often shaped in courts. “Religious freedom is enshrined in constitutions and international agreements, but its interpretation is defined in courts,” Campbell noted.

The closing session included commentary from select speakers on their symposium experiences. ICLRS Director Brett G. Scharffs and Associate Director and Symposium Program Chair Elizabeth A. Clark shared reflections and issued challenges to the delegates as they returned to their homes.

Scharffs urged attendees to view religious freedom not just as a legal right but as a cultural value that nurtures flourishing societies. “The work we are doing is important,” he said. “We must never underestimate the difference we can make in the worlds we build and the partnerships we form.”

Clark offered a final call to action by asking, “When God asks what we did for others in this world, what will we say?” She then noted that the best way to be a light in a darkening world is through continual positive interactions that touch one person at a time.

Plenary sessions of the symposium were interpreted into eight languages.

WEB EXTRA

Scan the QR code to view sessions from the 32nd Annual Symposium.



25 YEARS OF IMPACT

The Annual International Law and Religion Symposium predates the founding of the Center. Originally known as the International Church-State Symposium, the first event was held in 1994. As of 2025, 1,561 delegates from 145 countries have attended.

“We must not think of religious freedom merely as a right or a responsibility, but as a culture—one that, when cultivated, builds societies where human flourishing becomes possible.”

—Brett G. Scharffs, United States



“You can’t do this alone. You do need to walk shoulder to shoulder with people. And that is how we will see the flourishing that we so dearly want to see.”

— Baroness Elizabeth Berridge, United Kingdom



“Religious freedom begins in the home and the neighborhood; it is enshrined in constitutions and international agreements, but often the very meaning of those human rights are defined in courts. Judicial independence is not freedom from the law, but freedom to apply the law.”

—David G. Campbell, United States

“Creating safe spaces for dialogue is essential for shared flourishing. But meaningful impact cannot come from dialogue alone; our strength comes from united action. Together, through the protection of religious freedom, we can achieve flourishing for all.”

—Francis Kuria, Kenya



“The fight for freedom of religion is a fight for equality. When you stand against the power of the state, you must summon every ounce of strength and courage, for the fight for religious freedom is, at its core, the fight for human courage.”

—Jacinto dos Santos, Timor-Leste



A landscape photograph showing a dense forest of green trees in the foreground and middle ground. In the distance, a large body of water is visible under a hazy, light-colored sky. The left side of the image is partially covered by a red vertical band with a white geometric pattern of interlocking lines.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ANNUAL REVIEW

17 JUNE 2025 | PROVO, UTAH, USA

With the theme “Religion, Peace, and Human Flourishing: Understanding the Whys of Religious Freedom,” the 2025 Religious Freedom Annual Review focused on how religious freedom supports peace and human flourishing. The yearly Review is unique in that it is the Center’s only event that is open to the public. During this conference, diverse voices from throughout the US come together to share insights on religious freedom and to educate attendees.

This year’s Review opened with three keynote speakers: Elder Marcus B. Nash, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Lawrence Edward Carter Sr., a professor and founding dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College; and Dr. Harold G. Koenig, founding codirector of the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health in the Duke University Health System. The speakers emphasized that religious freedom not only protects individual conscience but also strengthens societal resilience. They also shared research showing how faith communities contribute to social cohesion, mental health, and moral development.

Plenary sessions focused on religion’s impact in our communities; religious freedom’s contributions to social flourishing; and peacemaking, dignity, and civility. As the conference drew

to a close, G. S. “Mack” McCarter III, founder and coordinator of Community Renewal International, shared his thoughts on why religious freedom matters.

Breakout sessions were offered in four tracks: Legal Developments, Religion’s Impact in Our Communities, Practical Peacemaking, and How Can I Make a Difference?

For the second year in a row, the Rising Generation Initiative sponsored a lunch session to give students and young professionals the opportunity to interact with an expert in the field of law and religion and to network with their peers. Steven T. Collis, director of the Bech-Loughlin First Amendment Center and the Law and Religion Clinic at the University of Texas at Austin School of Law, was the luncheon speaker.

WEB EXTRA

Scan to view recordings of the 2025 Religious Freedom Annual Review sessions.



We exercise our religious freedom by taking the power of love and placing it into everyone to make the decision that will lead us to a new destination—and then, as a human family, to a new destiny. And we march out of this room saying, “I will exercise my religious freedom by loving all people everywhere. I’m committed, and I will do it together with all people who have made that commitment. We will share it, and we will cover the globe.”

—G. S. “Mack” McCarter III



25 YEARS OF IMPACT

The Religious Freedom Annual Review began in 2014 and was originally a conference for lawyers. The very next year, it was expanded to include all who are interested in learning more about religious freedom.



INITIATIVE EXPANDS

Now in its second year, the ICLRS’s Rising Generation Initiative has continued to strengthen a growing network of young adults who are committed to advancing freedom of religion or belief worldwide. In 2025 the Initiative was led by Anna Bryner and Elyse Slabaugh in collaboration with International Advisory Council member Jeff Robinson.

This year, the Initiative brought together 36 Rising Generation Fellows from 15 countries; each fellow undertook various projects designed to educate, engage, and mobilize their communities and peers around issues of religious freedom, interfaith dialogue, and peacebuilding. Fellows advanced this work through social media initiatives that produced accessible, shareable content introducing core principles of religious freedom and peacebuilding; by organizing youth-focused seminars with leading religious freedom experts; by collaborating with the Church’s online magazine *FA Weekly* to publish articles on religious freedom and interfaith cooperation; and by planning interfaith service projects within their local communities.

Fellows also participated in and contributed to major international events, such as the International Religious Freedom Summit, the G20 Interfaith Forum, the Religious Freedom Annual Review, and the International Law and Religion Symposium, as well as other regional conferences and seminars.

As the Rising Generation Initiative continues to develop and grow, it remains a vital platform for empowering young people to become bold, thoughtful, and capable leaders in the global movement to protect and promote religious freedom for everyone everywhere.

To learn more, visit risinggeneration.iclrs.org.



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ALLIANCE COUNCIL

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Center, Associate Director Hannah Clayson Smith set out to host 25 Religious Freedom Alliance Council (RFAC) events during 2025. Considering that the RFAC was established in 2023 and hosted 12 events in 2024, this was no small feat. Additionally, 2025 saw the establishment of an RFAC website and an RFAC social media presence.

The RFAC's mission is to bring together people of goodwill to promote religious freedom in local communities. The council strives to enable cooperative engagement across our deepest differences to build multifaith relationships and resilient communities.

If you would like to get involved with a local alliance or start one in your community, please visit rfacouncil.org.

2025 RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ALLIANCE EVENTS

15 JANUARY | COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA
1st Annual South Carolina Religious Liberty Conference

26 FEBRUARY | COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA
Multifaith delegation visit celebrating passage of the South Carolina General Assembly Resolution commemorating the 356th anniversary of the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina

4 MARCH | LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
Las Vegas Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Forum: "Uniting for Religious Freedom"

8 MARCH | LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
Las Vegas Iftar Celebration

10 APRIL | ORLANDO, FLORIDA
Rising Generation Seminar on Religious Freedom

10 APRIL | DES MOINES, IOWA
12th Annual Iowa Religious Freedom Day: "The Role of Religion in Peacemaking"

11 APRIL | PROVO, UTAH
Preserving Religious Freedom for the Rising Generation Seminar

21 APRIL | ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND
Dinner and Discussion on 376th Anniversary of the Maryland Religious Tolerance Act of 1649

23 APRIL | ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
21st Annual Religion and the Law Symposium

1 MAY | ATLANTA, GEORGIA
4th Annual Freedom of Religion Roundtable

29 MAY | KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
11th Annual UMKC Law and Religious Freedom Conference

10 SEPTEMBER | CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
3rd Annual Interfaith Symposium: "Sacred Spaces for Challenging Times"

12 SEPTEMBER | INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn: "Religious Freedom in America: Developments in Indiana and the Midwest"

16 SEPTEMBER | BOISE, IDAHO
Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn: "Religious Freedom in America: Developments in Idaho and the Rocky Mountain West"

18 SEPTEMBER | DENVER, COLORADO
Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn: "Stronger Together: Faith, Law, and Community Dialogue"

24 SEPTEMBER | CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE
Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn: "Religious Freedom and Human Dignity: How Multifaith Partnerships Strengthen Communities"

25 SEPTEMBER | NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn: "Religious Freedom in America: Developments in Tennessee and the Southeast"

23 OCTOBER | WICHITA, KANSAS
Kansas Summit for Religious Freedom: "Religious Freedom and Human Flourishing"

23 OCTOBER | DALLAS, TEXAS
8th Annual DFW Summit for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity

24 OCTOBER | SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
2025 Law and Religion Symposium

30 OCTOBER | HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA
Alabama Religious Freedom Summit

30 OCTOBER | LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
2025 Las Vegas Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Symposium: "Building Bridges"

14 NOVEMBER | BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA
2025 Louisiana Religious Freedom Summit

18 NOVEMBER | ORLANDO, FLORIDA
Rising Generation Seminar

21-22 NOVEMBER | CACHE VALLEY, UTAH
2nd Annual Interfaith Open House

Latin America

REGIONAL CONFERENCES



FIDELA MINISTERIAL

2–3 FEBRUARY 2025 | WASHINGTON, DC, USA

Key government ministers responsible for religious affairs in their respective nations met at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, DC, to discuss best practices for promoting religious freedom and consider ways to address challenges to religious freedom.

The ministerial was facilitated by FIDELA (Foro Interreligioso de las Américas) with support from the Center and the Government of Chile–National Office of Religious Affairs.

Ministers then attended the opening reception of the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit on 3 February 2025. The reception was sponsored by the Center, the Permanent Mission of Chile to the OAS, and the IRF Summit. It was held at the Organization of American States in the Hall of the Americas. Speakers included Elder Ulisses Soares, Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Brett Scharffs, Center director; HE Luis Almagro, secretary general of the Organization of American States; HE Sebastián Kraljevich, ambassador and permanent representative of Chile to the OAS; Ambassador Samuel Brownback, cochair of the IRF Summit; and Katrina Lantos Swett, cochair of the IRF Summit and president of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice.

WEB EXTRA

Scan to watch presentations delivered at the IRF Summit Opening Reception.



INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SYMPOSIUM

12 JUNE 2025 | SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA

Nearly 150 people representing academia, religious groups, media, and government gathered at the main campus of Universidad Católica de Costa Rica outside the country’s capital of San José for a symposium focused on Central America. Among other things, the symposium, “Freedom of Religion and Belief: Promoter of Mutual Respect, Harmony, and the Protection of Other Fundamental Rights,” explored how protecting religious freedom can heal divisions and promote a society of respect and harmony.

The goal of the event was to inspire participants with an understanding that in this era of polarization and contention, freedom of religion and belief can be a tool to promote mutual respect, harmony, and the protection of other fundamental rights—including freedoms of expression, the press, and assembly.

Key sponsors were the Center, Universidad Católica de Costa Rica, Asamblea Legislativa de la República de Costa Rica (the country’s unicameral congress), and FIDELA.



INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

12–13 AUGUST 2025 | TEMUCO, CHILE

The International Congress “Pathways to Peace: Religions and Cultures in Dialogue” convened at the San Francisco Campus of Universidad Católica de Temuco. More than 200 religious, government, academic, and indigenous community leaders participated, with attendees coming from Chile, the Vatican, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, and the us.

Participants discussed pluralism and religious freedom, global and local perspectives on dialogue, and the contribution of religions to human development and peace, among other topics. Beyond

the formal presentations, discussion tables were set up to facilitate interaction between the participants.

The event was sponsored by the Center, Universidad Católica de Temuco, the International Dialogue Center (KAICIID), Oficina Nacional de Asuntos Religiosos de Chile (ONAR), FIDELA, Asociación Chilena de Diálogo Interreligioso (ADIRE Chile), the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Chile, the Embassy of Morocco in Chile, and additional universities and NGOs in Chile.



24TH ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM OF THE LATIN AMERICAN CONSORTIUM FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

24–26 NOVEMBER 2025 | CANCUN, MEXICO

The annual meeting of the Latin American Consortium drew participation from approximately 40 scholars from across Latin America. The event, titled “State Cooperation with Religion: Experiences and Challenges,” was organized by Dr. Cristian Badillo Gutiérrez, director general of Conciencia Nacional por la Libertad Religiosa, with assistance from the Center.

Speakers emphasized the importance of religious freedom in their respective communities with approximately 25 presentations from various national perspectives. ICLRS Senior Fellow Denise Lindberg shared the experience of state cooperation with religions in Cuba, and ICLRS Senior Fellow Cynthia Lange presented on the us. Betsy Bennion, Scott Isaacson, Neil Lindberg, Cristina Ortega, and Sherie Rogde from the Center also participated.

During the colloquium, Lange was inducted as an extraordinary member of the Consortium.

The Latin American Consortium for Religious Freedom has become the foremost incubator of scholarship and expertise on religious freedom in Latin America, and Consortium members have collaborated with the Center on numerous academic projects, legislative reform, and amicus briefs.

25 YEARS OF IMPACT

Cole Durham helped found the Latin American Consortium in 2000—the same year the Center was founded. The Center has supported and participated in the Consortium’s annual colloquium ever since.



Asia

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

HUMAN DIGNITY AND ASEAN CONFERENCE

23-25 APRIL 2025 | LAIE, HAWAII, USA

The third annual conference cosponsored by the Center and the Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Initiative (RFHD) at Brigham Young University-Hawaii convened on the BYU-Hawaii campus to explore new approaches for pursuing peaceful and inclusive societies in Southeast Asia. The Leimena Institute and the Religious Freedom Institute were additional sponsors.

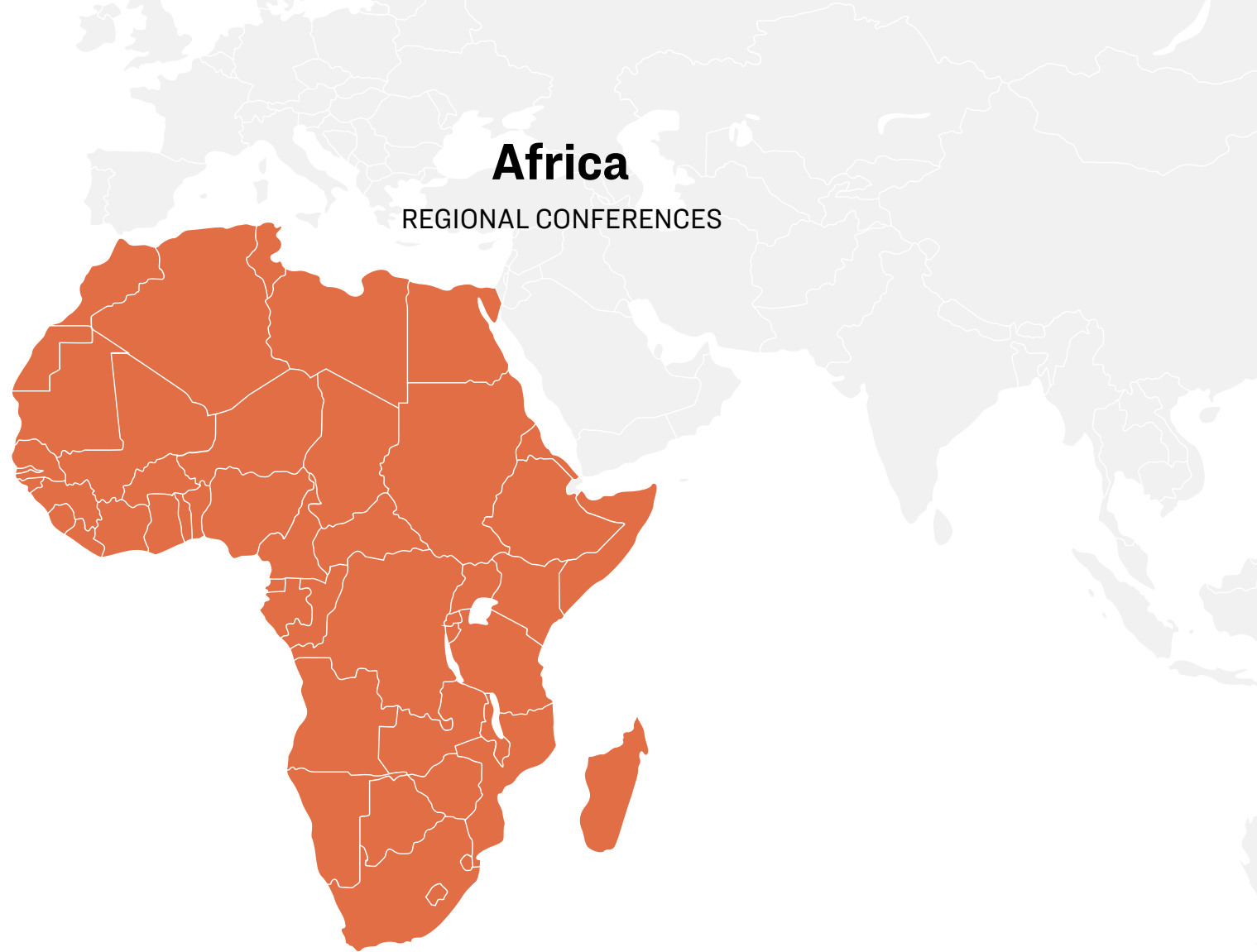
Working from the theme “Pursuing Peaceful and Inclusive Societies in Southeast Asia,” 45 delegates representing Brunei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, and the United States examined human dignity through a variety of lenses. These included multifaith collaboration, cross-cultural religious literacy, and public-private partnership.

Hannah Clayson Smith, an associate director for ICLRS, worked closely with the team at RFHD to organize the conference. She also represented the Center on the program along with Brett Scharffs, Cole Durham, and Senior Fellow David Kirkham.

WEB EXTRA

Scan to view conference recordings.





12TH ANNUAL AFRICAN CONSORTIUM FOR LAW AND RELIGION STUDIES CONFERENCE

18–21 MAY 2025 | BEN GUERIR, MOROCCO

International instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights recognize work as a core component of personhood and a foundation of human dignity. The 2025 African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ACLARS) conference, “Law, Religion, and Work in Africa,” focused on the multiple ways in which law and religion mutually shape understandings of the value of work, the features that work should have if it is to be valuable, and the institutional and cultural protections that workers need to ensure that their labor conditions reach minimum thresholds. Among the valuable human interests that work serves are the moral goods it delivers: the opportunities to develop and exercise productive abilities, including socializing with other people in shared activities;

the contributions it enables workers to make to the well-being of others; and the promotion of self-esteem and self-respect.

About 90 delegates representing 25 countries participated on the program. Presentations addressed the possibilities and challenges faced by Africans in finding and keeping meaningful and dignified work; manifesting their religious identities in the workplace; navigating the differences between religious, public, and private employers; and understanding the shifting roles of law and religion in work and employment.

At the ACLARS general assembly held on 20 May, ICLRS Associate Director Hannah Clayson Smith, who assisted in program development for the event, was elected to the ACLARS board.



25 YEARS OF IMPACT

Collections of papers from ACLARS conferences are published regularly. This began in 2014 with a special issue of the *African Human Rights Law Journal* and has continued every year since then in volumes from Africa Sun Media.



G20 INTERFAITH FORUM

10–14 AUGUST 2025 | CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

The major event of the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20) was inspired by South Africa’s G20 theme, “Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability,” and the overarching African philosophy of *ubuntu*, which was integral to South Africa’s approach to its G20 presidency. Like South Africa, the G20 Interfaith Forum, titled “Ubuntu in Action: Focus on Vulnerable Communities,” recognized that neither individuals nor nations can thrive in isolation and that global priorities should ensure that no one is left behind. Reversing the stalled progress toward the United Nations’ sustainable development goals (SDGs) was essential and demanded paradigm shifts to address overlapping and mutually reinforcing crises.

The IF20’s 2025 key priorities aligned with the priority areas of the G20 Summit, which was held 22–23 November 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The areas of focus were food security and poverty; economic and financial action; interreligious

tensions; migration and refugee movements, human trafficking, and modern slavery; and disaster prevention, response, and recovery.

This year’s forum also included a service project. IF20 delegates, faith communities, and local volunteers gathered to package 32,400 meals—enough to feed 124 children five meals a week for a year—to support feeding programs at early childhood development centers. The event was coordinated by Rise Against Hunger Africa, Islamic Relief, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

WEB EXTRA

Scan to learn more about IF20 and to read the recommendations made to the G20 countries.



25 YEARS OF IMPACT

The IF20 was born in 2014 in Brisbane, Australia. The organization was the brainchild of Brian Adams, then of Griffith University, who partnered with the Center to begin the annual forum. IF20 now functions as its own entity with support from the Center.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

REGIONAL CONFERENCE



DIPLOMACY OF THE HEART CONFERENCE

27-29 APRIL 2025 | SAMARKAND, UZBEKISTAN

Drawing on Samarkand's historic legacy as a crossroads of civilizations, "The Power of Intercultural Dialogue and Education on Peacebuilding" conference attracted more than 50 scholars, students, and religious leaders from 13 countries. Attendees came together to address the roles of religion, law, literature, and cultural heritage in fostering peace and human dignity. The event was marked by high-level local engagement and included presentations from regional officials as well as meaningful East-West academic and interfaith collaboration.

A highlight of the conference was a workshop in which BYU students joined with other youth to discuss how young people can drive meaningful peacebuilding efforts. Workshop participants

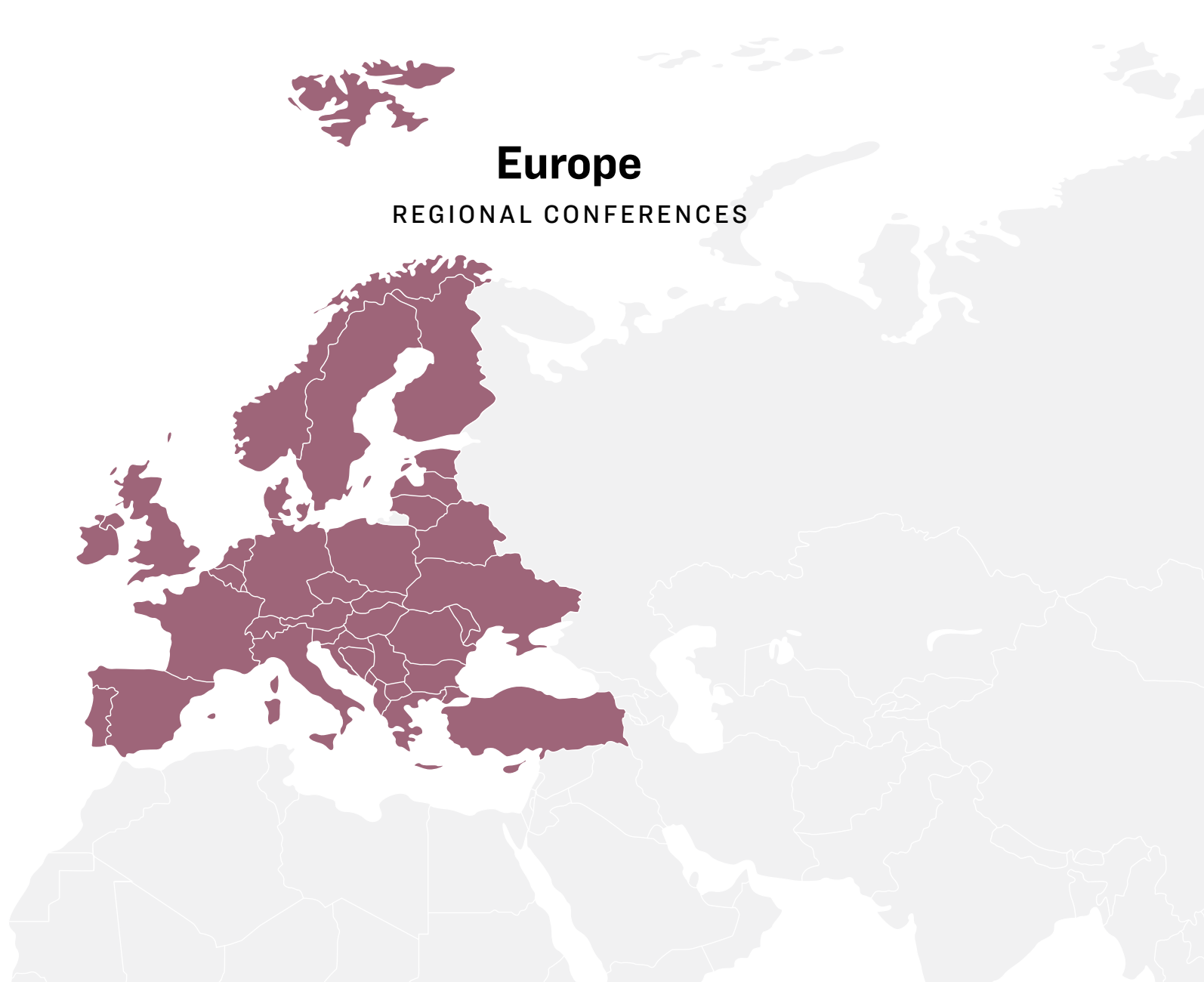
also learned how to design a peace initiative and examined real-world examples of youth-led intercultural dialogue initiatives.

The Diplomacy of the Heart conference is designed to be an ongoing annual event in the region. The Center, the Baskerville Institute, the Stirling Foundation, the Foundation for Religious Diplomacy, and the Heravi Peace Institute at Utah State University were the primary partners. Additional support was provided by the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre, the World Association of Youth of Uzbekistan, the Samarkand regional government, the Faculty of Oriental Studies of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, the Azerbaijan Institute of Theology, the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, and the Remember app.



25 YEARS OF IMPACT

The work of the Center began in Eastern Europe. The fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s brought opportunities to engage with national leaders in Eastern Europe, and the Center has been working in that region ever since. Cole Durham began teaching at Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary, in 1994 and was joined by Brett Scharffs in 2007.



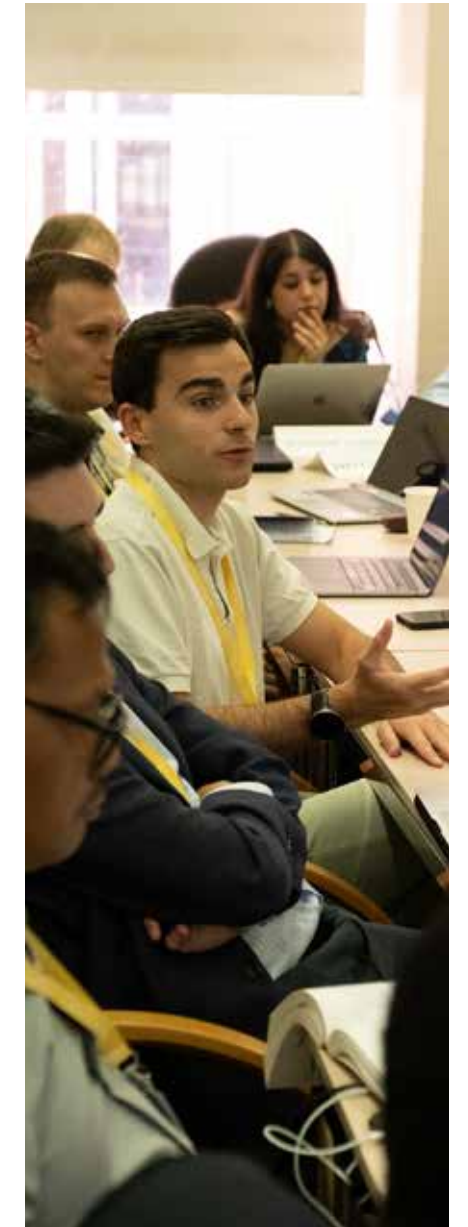
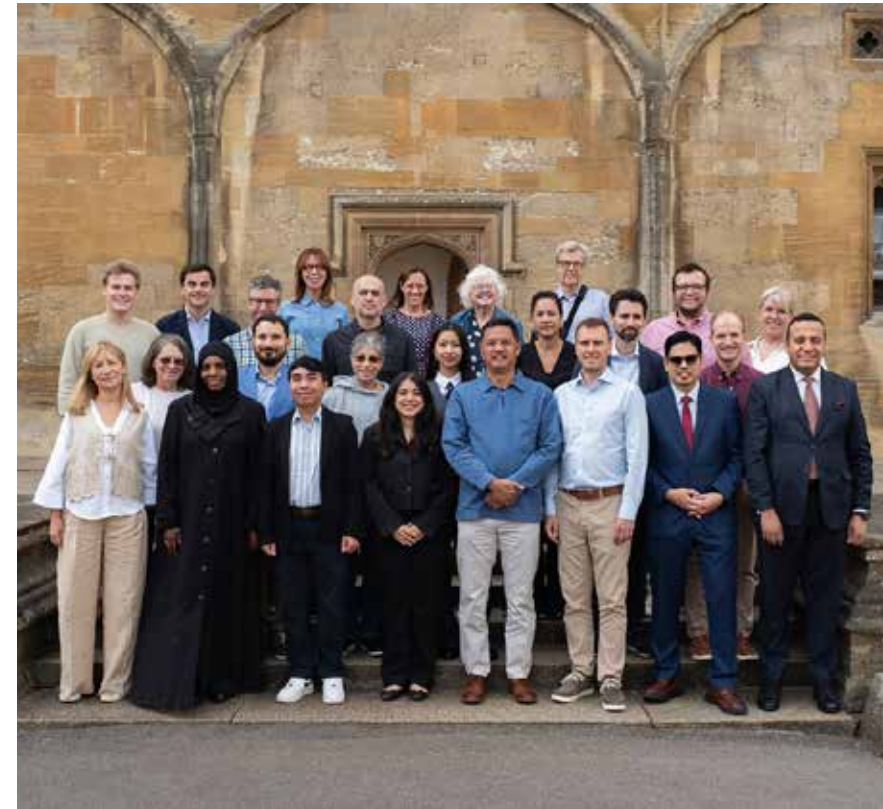
OXFORD YOUNG SCHOLARS FELLOWSHIP ON RELIGION AND THE RULE OF LAW

14 JULY–1 AUGUST | CHRIST CHURCH, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, UNITED KINGDOM

The 2025 cohort of Young Scholars represented the countries of Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Egypt, Georgia, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malaysia, Pakistan, Spain, Ukraine, the United States, and Vietnam. Seventeen scholars gathered in Oxford for three weeks to learn from a diverse group of lecturers in the field of law and religion. Lectures focused on the casebook *Law and Religion: National, International, and Comparative*

Perspectives by W. Cole Durham, Jr., and Brett G. Scharffs.

In addition, the scholars presented their research for feedback from their peers and worked closely with writing instructors to hone and polish their papers with the goal of future publication. Writing instructors for 2025 included former BYU Law writing instructors Mary Jensen and Jane Wise together with ICLRS Senior Fellow Denise Lindberg and ICLRS Associate Director Amy Andrus.



Each year, concurrent with the three-week Young Scholars program, the Center hosts three academic conferences at Christ Church. Leading scholars in the field of law and religion come together—usually in a small workshop setting—to examine a discrete, timely issue and prepare a volume of scholarly works for publication. A 2023 workshop, for example, focused on the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and participants produced a special journal issue commemorating the UDHR’s 75th anniversary. Occasionally, conferences focus on broader global religious freedom issues and involve larger groups of academics, religious leaders, government officials, and NGO leaders, such as the 2019 conference “Religious Persecution in the World Today.”



2025 OXFORD CONFERENCES

16–17 JULY

*Religion-State Relations and Freedom of Religion:
Exploring Durham’s Religious Identification Loop*

Workshop for a book on the religion-state relations model set forth by W. Cole Durham, Jr., Christ Church, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

23–24 JULY

*Religious Freedom and Social Polarization:
A Comparative Perspective*

Sponsored by ICLRS; University of St. Thomas School of Law; Georgetown Center for the Constitution, Georgetown University; and Christ Church, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

28–29 JULY

*Polarization and the Pursuit of Peace:
Multi-Faith Appeals to Human Dignity*

Sponsored by ICLRS; Baylor Ethics Initiative, Baylor University; the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, Gadjah Mada University; and Christ Church, University of Oxford, United Kingdom



I want to express my deepest gratitude for having been invited to participate in this extraordinary program. . . . I found the entire experience deeply enriching both academically and personally. I believe I grew immensely in my career thanks to the opportunities the program offered. I will remain forever grateful to you and the whole team who made this possible.

—Jeremias Brusau, Argentina





Pacific

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

2025 NEW ZEALAND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CONFERENCE

21-22 FEBRUARY 2025 | AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Interfaith leaders from diverse religious backgrounds together with government officials, humanitarian leaders, legal practitioners, and academics from throughout the Pacific gathered in Auckland for a conference examining freedom of religion or belief in New Zealand, Australia, and the broader South Pacific region. The conference, “Freedom to Do, to Be, and to Become: Enhancing Individuals’ Opportunities to Believe and Live as They Choose Within the Framework of the Law,” included elements that showed respect for Indigenous Māori culture. In addition, one of the five panels focused specifically on Indigenous peoples and religious freedom.

Following the event, delegates were invited to visit the open house for the Auckland New Zealand Temple of The Church of

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; the Ponsonby Masjid, Auckland’s oldest mosque; and Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae, a sacred Māori site.

The event was sponsored by the Center in partnership with the University of Waikato’s Te Piringa Faculty of Law, the Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Initiative at Brigham Young University-Hawaii, and the New Zealand chapter of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society. ICLRS Associate Director Hannah Clayson Smith oversaw the organization of the conference and participated in the program. ICLRS Director Brett Scharffs and Senior Fellow David Kirkham also took part in the event.



STUDENTS





2025 SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWS

Each summer a group of students who have completed their first year of law school are selected to participate in an international externship at the Office of General Counsel at either the headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City or one of the eight area legal counsel offices of the Church in countries around the world. After completing their training with the Church’s legal counsel offices, fellows spend the rest of the summer doing research projects with the Center and assisting with conferences and other projects. Summer fellows gain practical experience while also providing valuable contributions to the Center’s work.

- Alexandra Brown**
Mexico City, Mexico
- Amberlee Dredge**
Accra, Ghana
- Merah Hancock**
Salt Lake City, Utah
- Audrey Hughes**
Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Nathan Kaufusi**
Auckland, New Zealand
- Noel Lance**
Johannesburg, South Africa
- Elle McConkie**
Salt Lake City, Utah

- Elisabeth Morris**
São Paulo, Brazil
- Mariah Nuttall**
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- Braden Rivers**
Frankfurt, Germany
- Alisen Setoki**
Tokyo, Japan
- John Zenger**
Manila, Philippines

“

Working alongside talented legal professionals in Frankfurt, I had the opportunity to engage in meaningful cross-border legal work, supporting both the Central European and Eurasian regions. I’m grateful for the mentorship, the challenges, and the chance to explore the intersection of law, policy, and global collaboration in such a dynamic setting.

—Braden Rivers, 2L



2024–25 MASTER OF LAWS (LLM) STUDENTS

Each fall, BYU Law welcomes a group of international LLM students. These students are usually lawyers and judges in their own countries who come to BYU to gain experience in US law, broadening their skills and furthering their influence at home. These students volunteer with the Center on various projects while at BYU and remain friends of the Center after graduating, often joining us at events in their home countries.

- Sophia Chukwufumnaya Chima**
Nigeria
- Dulce Garcia**
Argentina
- Annarose Hayata**
Tanzania
- Julie Khouri**
Palestine
- D. Blamo Kofa**
Liberia
- Songfeng Li**
China
- Ifeanyi Dickson Obi**
Nigeria
- Mary Ann Ojeda**
Philippines
- Julio C. Policarpo Cruz**
Mexico
- Damian Alberto Rosas**
Argentina

“

The LLM degree . . . has allowed me to meet students and professors from different backgrounds and different areas of specialization in the law. Academically, . . . it has broadened my understanding of the global perspective of the law, and it has increased my skill in terms of writing legal articles.

—D. Blamo Kofa, 2025 LLM graduate



2025 SYMPOSIUM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Under the direction of Elizabeth Clark, the Symposium Executive Committee spent weeks planning and coordinating logistical aspects of the 2025 Annual International Law and Religion Symposium. During the symposium, students assisted delegates, coordinated volunteers, and managed travel to and from the event, among other tasks. Their work and dedication were key to the successful execution of the symposium.

- Master Schedule*
Elle McConkie, lead
Makayla Rooks, assistant
Cami Weight, assistant
- Concierge*
Elisabeth Morris, co-lead
Lorena Ortiz Kerby, co-lead
Alyse Frogley
Luiza Rauta
- Documents, Media*
Merah Hancock, co-lead
Graham Bowden, co-lead
Brianna Brown
Miriam McCarter
- Hosting*
Audrey Hughes, co-lead
Matheus Farias, co-lead
Jarom Drummond
- Recruiting/Volunteers*
Josef Gutierrez, co-lead
Tamar Schneck, co-lead
- Transportation*
Amberlee Dredge, co-lead
Hilda Minja, co-lead
Essie Durocher
- BYU-Hawaii Volunteers*
Isabel Contreras-Spencer
Mason Duffie
Kalahikiola Haverly
Riji Levaci
Neelima Mungamuri
Britlyn Smith
Gwyneth Valerio
Isireli Vuetibau



MOOT COURT

The Center sponsored a team of four BYU Law students who competed in the 2025 International Moot Court Competition in Law and Religion in Rome, Italy, on 13-14 March. Participants in the competition could choose to argue before the US Supreme Court or the European Court of Human Rights. The BYU Law team chose to argue before the US Supreme Court. They competed with teams from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Bocconi University, Emory University School of Law, Notre Dame Law School, St. John's University School of Law, and Pepperdine Caruso School of Law. Lauren Allen Warner and Dallin Everton were awarded best written brief at the competition.

BYU Law Moot Court Team

- Joseph Celaya**
- Dallin Everton**
- Taylor Jeanfreau**
- Lauren Allen Warner**



2024-2025 STUDENT MANAGEMENT BOARD

Student Management Board members were chosen based on their interest in law and religion and their skills in writing, research, editing, and languages. Throughout the school year, board members participated in research, writing, and editing projects; conferences; and other assignments with the Center.

- Mary Bowers**
- Joseph Celaya**
- Jenna Crowther**
- Dallin Everton**
- Taylor Jeanfreau**

- Abigail Kime**
- Wendy Neeley**
- Joe Sorensen**
- Lauren Allen Warner**



I am an aspiring environmental attorney, so I was thrilled to attend an interfaith event [in Buenos Aires] about our religious duty to care for the earth. It was fascinating to hear from scientific, religious, and legal leaders about a topic I am so passionate about. I'm so grateful to the Center for facilitating this adventure.

—Audrey Hughes, 2L



MARY ANN OJEDA PLACES THIRD IN WRITING COMPETITION

Notre Dame Law School's Program on Church, State, and Society hosts an annual writing competition that is open to recent law school graduates who are not yet practicing law as well as law students in good standing who are enrolled in a traditional law, master's, or doctoral program at an ABA-accredited US law school.

Mary Ann Ojeda, a 2025 LLM graduate, earned third place in the competition for her paper "To the Last: An RLUIPA-Inspired Framework for Protecting Religious Freedom in Philippine Prisons." She received a cash prize of \$2,000.

Of her paper, Ojeda said, "As a lawyer and a person of faith, I believe religious freedom must reach even the most forgotten places—including prisons. This contest gave me the opportunity to advocate that justice must not end at prison gates—and that the sacred remains sacred, making the last, first."

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL





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Heidi Shipp
Lynn Fehser Anderson
Bill Benac
Craig A. Cardon
David Christensen
David Colton
Jim Cook
Sandy Cook

Allyson Egbert
Martin Egbert
David Harden
Jennifer Harden
Linda Nearon
Bryce Wade
Athelia Woolley
Ken Woolley

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

IAC MEMBERS

Allen and Denise Alexander
Lynn Fehser Anderson
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Gerald and Claudia Williams
Kim Wilson and Gail Miller
Larry and Lynda Wilson
Mark and Carol Wolfert
Ken and Athelia Woolley
Tim and Teresa Wright
Koo and Patricia Yuen

2025 IAC Study Tours

IAC members often travel to Center events to lend their support. In 2025, IAC liaison Sandy Stephenson organized three study tours in conjunction with planned Center events and accompanied groups of IAC members on those trips.

MOROCCO 18-30 MAY 2025

The IAC attended the 12th Annual ACLARS Conference in Ben Guerir. They then visited Marrakech, Fès, Rabat, Casablanca, and the Sahara, gaining a deep appreciation for the beautiful country of Morocco.



OXFORD, UNITED KINGDOM
19-30 JULY 2025

A group of IAC members visited Oxford to support the Young Scholars Fellowship on Religion and the Rule of Law. They attended lectures, met with scholars, and toured Oxford and the surrounding areas.



ROME, ITALY
20-24 SEPTEMBER 2025

Participants in the third study tour attended the Infinite Dignity, Human Freedom, and the Place of Law conference, which was held at Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, Italy.





ENDOWMENTS

Endowments—together with generous support from Brigham Young University, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and individual members of the International Advisory Council—provide the financial means for the Center to accomplish its work. Unlike other methods of funding, endowments are long-term financial tools that assist the Center in planning for the future. The individuals who create endowments for the Center establish a family legacy supporting religious freedom, and they can direct the focus of the Center’s work to global areas that are of particular interest to them.

Many of the endowments were created as a base for others to contribute to areas of special interest, and the Center hopes to establish endowments in more areas. Please contact Sandy Stephenson if you would like to discuss personal options.

CURRENT ENDOWMENTS

The **International Advisory Council Cornerstone Endowment** (2000) was the first endowment to fund the Center and its ongoing work.

Founding Contributors:

David S. and Mary L. Christensen
Richard P. and Christena Huntsman Durham
Duane L. and Erlyn G. Madsen
David A. and Linda C. Nearon

The **Sterling and Eleanor Colton Chair in Law and Religion** (2008) provides support for a wide range of the Center’s work, including supplemental support for BYU Law faculty. The chair is currently held by David H. Moore, dean of BYU Law and a former associate director of the Center.

The **S. David and Julie Colton Endowed Fund for International Law and Religion Studies** (2013) supports the work of the Center in Europe.

The **David S. and Mary L. Christensen Endowed Fund for International Law and Religion Studies** (2014) provides for the work of the Center in the UK, with a focus on growing the connections between the Center and Oxford.

The **W. George and Helen Lowe Johnson Research Fellowship** (2014) focuses on legal scholarship, with an emphasis on freedom of religion and belief.

The **Edward Joseph Leon and Helen Hall Leon Endowed Fund for Law and Religion Studies** (2014) supports the work of the Center in the Middle East.

The **Jean & Frank, Barbara & Wayne Friendship FORB Endowed Fund for the International Center for Law and Religion Studies** (2016) supports the work of the Center in Europe.

The **Gregory P. and Julie L. Cook Endowed Fund for International Law and Religion Studies** (2017) supports the critical work of the Center in China.

The **Andrus African Endowed Fund for International Law and Religion Studies** (2018) provides for the critical work of the Center in Africa, including support of the growing number of religious liberty scholars in the region.

Founding Contributors:

Brent and Cheri Andrus

The **Gary and Lynn Anderson LLM Center Student Fellows Endowed Fund** (2018) provides learning opportunities to enhance BYU Law students’ experiences as they work with the Center.

The **Southeast Asia Endowed Fund** (2018)

Founding Contributors:

Milton and Heidi Shipp

The **Latin American Religious Freedom Endowed Fund** (2020)

Founding Contributors:

James F. and Allyson L. Larkins

The **H. Brent and Bonnie Jean Beesley Oxford Young Scholars Endowed Fund** (2020) provides support and funding for Oxford programs and participants.

The **William and Barbara Benac DFW Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Endowed Fund** (2021) offers funding and support for the establishment and operation of us religious freedom alliances.

The **Allymar Pay It Forward LLM Center Student Fellows Endowed Fund** (2021) helps to pay expenses of international students to earn a master of laws degree at BYU in comparative and us law.

The **Mark and Christi Jensen DFW Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Endowed Fund** (2021) offers funding and support for the establishment and operation of us religious freedom alliances.

The **Neil and Denise Lindberg LLM Center Student Fellows Endowed Fund** (2021) helps to pay expenses of international students to earn a master of laws degree at BYU in comparative and us law.

The **David A. and Linda C. Nearon LLM Center Student Fellows Endowed Fund** (2021) helps to pay expenses of international students to earn a master of laws degree at BYU in comparative and us law.

The **Gene and Martha Schaerr Endowed Fund for Religious Freedom Advocacy** (2022) is used for purposes relating to religious freedom advocacy of the Center.

The **Lee Family Brazil Religious Freedom Endowed Fund** (2023) provides support for the Center’s work in Brazil.

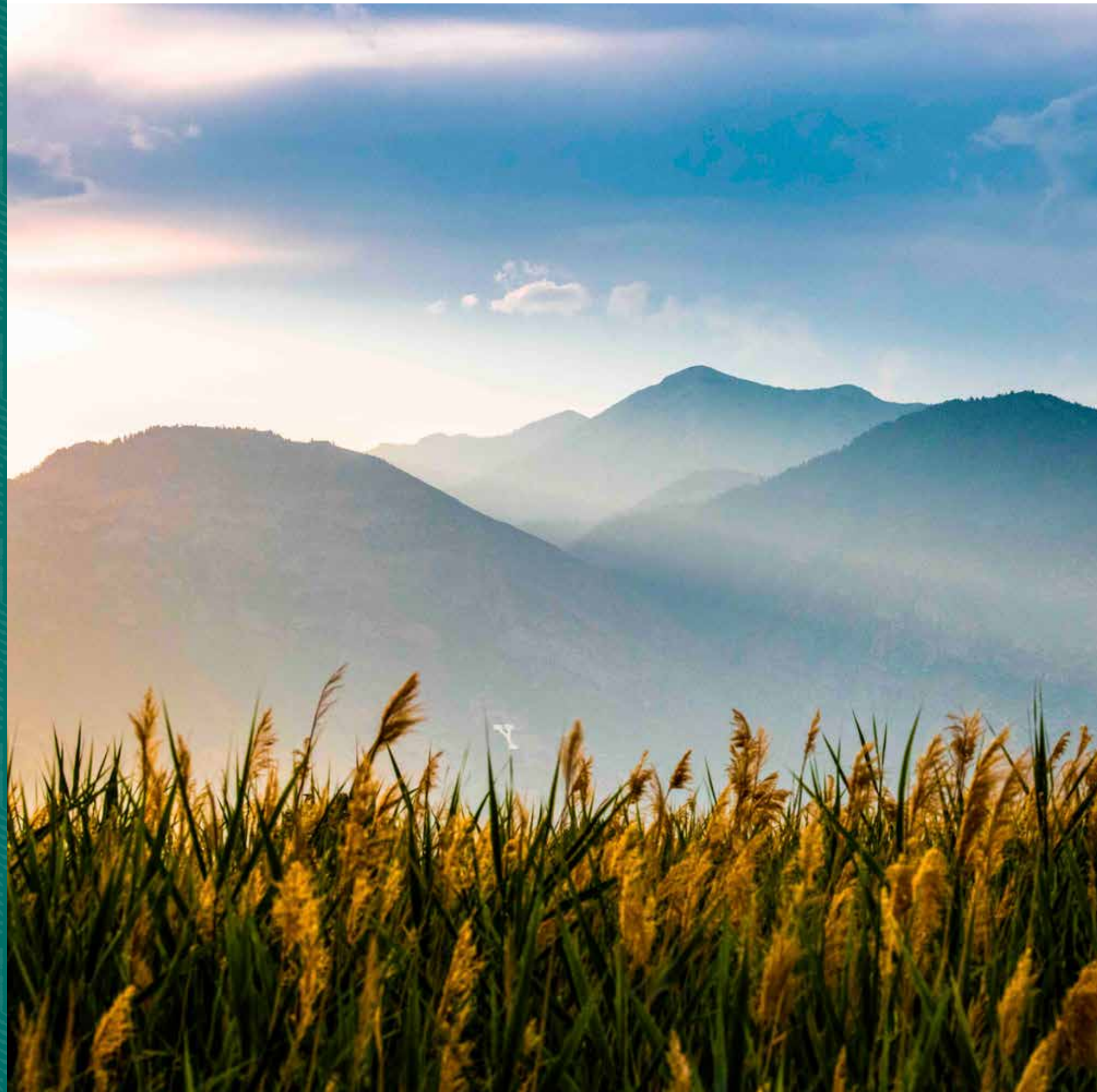
Founding Contributors:

Justin and Tahna Lee

The **Gregory J. Drennan and Monica L. Drennan ICLRS Oxford Endowed Fund** (2024) supports the work of the Center in Oxford.

The **Allymar Pay It Forward Religious Freedom Annual Review Endowed Fund** (2025) supports the Religious Freedom Annual Review.

ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD, FELLOWS & STAFF



ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD

SENIOR FELLOWS



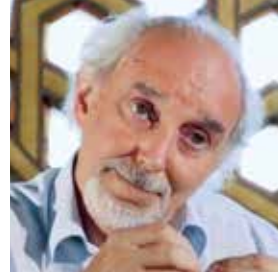
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Cynthia J. Lange



Dennis T. Lange



Denise P. Lindberg



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Cristina Ortega



Erlend D. "Pete" Peterson



Ruth L. Renlund



Gene C. Schaerr



Gordon H. Smith



Timothy P. Stratford



Donlu D. Thayer



Patrick J. Thurston



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Founding Director



Amy Lynn Andrus
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Betsy M. Bennion
Associate Director



Elizabeth A. Clark
Associate Director



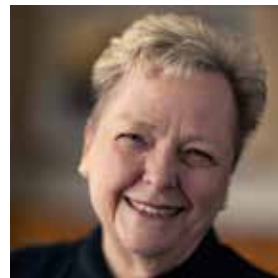
Gary B. Doxey
Associate Director



Paul E. Kerry
Associate Director



Hannah Clayson Smith
Associate Director



Deborah A. Wright
Center Coordinator and Executive Assistant



Tonya Gage
Conference Liaison



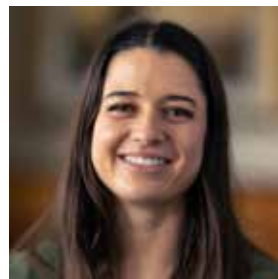
Sherie J. Rogde
Conference Liaison



Blythe M. Shupe
Communications Specialist



Sandy L. Stephenson
International Advisory Council Liaison



Britney Larkin
Database and Registration Assistant



Lutforahman Saeed
Visiting Scholar

2025 Center Achievements



PAUL KERRY APPOINTED TO HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM COMMITTEE

In October, **Paul Kerry** was appointed to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Committee on Religion and the Holocaust. This committee was established to fulfill the mandate of the US Holocaust Memorial Council to provide Holocaust programming throughout the United States in both religious and secular contexts. Kerry joins other scholars and clergy from academic institutions, faith groups, and interfaith organizations.



BRETT SCHARFFS HONORED BY ARTICLE 18 ALLIANCE

At the High-Level International Conference of the Article 18 Alliance (International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance) held in November, **Brett Scharffs** was honored for his long-standing commitment to defending religious freedom.

The Article 18 Alliance is a network of 38 member countries and dozens of experts united by the principles of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its mission is to protect religious minorities, combat discrimination, and promote respect for freedom of religion or belief.

MEDIA

Elizabeth Clark was interviewed on Uzbek national television on 12 September 2025 about her experience at the Dialogue of Declarations conference in Uzbekistan.

Gary Doxey was interviewed on Costa Rican national television on 12 June 2025 regarding religious freedom in Latin America. View the interview at facebook.com/share/v/16bLYRjjt.

APPOINTMENTS

Elizabeth Clark served on the OSCE Advisory Board on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Security.

Gary Doxey completed his multiyear service as chair and member of the Utah Independent Executive Branch Ethics Commission.

Paul Kerry was appointed to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Committee on Religion and the Holocaust.

Hannah Clayson Smith served as a member of the board of directors for two organizations: the Religious Freedom Institute and International Religious Freedom Summit.

LAW REFORM

Elizabeth Clark signed on to a number of US Supreme Court and US Circuit Court amicus briefs related to autonomy and other aspects of religious freedom.

Elizabeth Clark and **Hannah Clayson Smith** were involved in law reform projects in Cambodia and in Kenya.

Gary Doxey was involved in a multiyear project to reform religion law in the Dominican Republic. Personnel from the Center have acted as lead technical consultants and the project has resulted in the filing of a bill currently in consideration by the National Congress.

Hannah Clayson Smith was involved in law reform projects in the Cook Islands and in Vietnam.

TALK ABOUT: LAW AND RELIGION

Blog of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies

The Center’s blog, *Talk About: Law and Religion*, continues to feature diverse voices from around the globe on timely topics related to law and religion.

Over the six years that the blog has existed, it has had 125,000 visits from readers across the globe, representing all but three of the world’s countries. The blog has evolved to include video interviews and a podcast, *Talk About: FORB*.

Of the 62 articles published in 2025, the most popular included a tribute to Pope Francis, a post on Muslim law in the UK, a post on discriminatory practices involving national ID documents, and an interview with **Brett Scharffs** and **Elizabeth Clark** reviewing the 25 years of the Center.

Talk About is edited by **Dmytro Vovk**, an alum of the Center’s Young Scholars Fellowship on Religion and the Rule of Law at Oxford and a Ukrainian law and religion professor currently teaching at the Cardozo School of Law in New York City. **Amy Lynn Andrus**, ICLRS associate director, serves as coeditor.

HEADLINES

The Center’s headlines team daily scours news media for the latest on law and religion. Headlines are searchable by country and topic, and a digest of top headlines, curated by **Jordan Pendergrass**, is sent via email to subscribers three times a week. Those digests are also shared on x @headlines_iclrs. In the past year 5,465 total headlines were collected on the site. To subscribe to headlines emails or to see daily headlines, visit religlaw.org/headlines.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM LIBRARY

The Center maintains a website of religious freedom presentations by general authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as speakers who have been invited to speak on freedom of religion or belief at BYU or at Church-related events. Find these resources at religiousfreedomlibrary.org.

PUBLICATIONS

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Doxey, Gary B. “Libertad religiosa: promotora del respeto mutuo y la paz” [Religious Freedom: Promoter of Mutual Respect and Peace]. *Revista Católica*, Arzobispado de Santiago de Chile, December 2025.

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Scharffs, Brett G. and **Amy Andrus.** Religious Freedom Toolkit. International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, 2025. religiousfreedomtoolkit.byu.edu.

Scharffs, Brett G. and **Alexandra Brown.** “Human Dignity as a Tool for Differentiating Between Maleficent and Beneficent Uses of Artificial Intelligence.” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 23, no. 3 (2025): 5-15. doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2025.2531652.

Scharffs, Brett G. and **Kristen Clarke Kellems**, eds. *The Blessings of Freedom of Religion: Celebrating 25 Years of the International Center for Law and Religion*. Y Mountain Press, 2025.

Scharffs, Brett G., Hannah Clayson Smith, Emily H. Butler, eds. *New Perspectives on Human Dignity in Asia: Cross-Cultural Interpretations and Dialogue*. Routledge, 2025.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM TOOLKIT

Over the past three years, Director **Brett Scharffs** and Associate Director **Amy Andrus**—with assistance from other Center personnel and summer fellows—have worked to develop a Religious Freedom Toolkit that summarizes religious freedom principles and frameworks that have informed the Center’s work for more than 25 years.

Now available online, the Toolkit was originally developed as a resource for general authorities and general officers, area presidencies, area legal counsel, and area communication directors of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as they prepare for conversations and presentations on religious freedom.

The Toolkit features 38 topics, each of which is given four levels of treatment:

- Part I: a brief 1- to 4-sentence **Summary** of the topic
- Part II: a 1- to 2-page **Outline**
- Part III: a 3- to 10-page **Analysis** that includes footnotes and references
- Part IV: **Quotes** from Church leaders relevant to the topic

Our hope is that the Toolkit will help educate and will also facilitate constructive conversations about religious freedom, particularly in this time when religious freedom is being politicized and religious polarization is widespread.

The Toolkit is available at religiousfreedomtoolkit.byu.edu or under the Resources tab on the Center’s website, iclrs.org.

25

YEARS OF IMPACT

Some of the Center’s major publications are known by a single name: the Casebook, the Deskbook, or the Treatise. The Deskbook, formally titled *Facilitating Freedom of Religion or Belief*, is one of the most cited resources in the field.

JANUARY

7–11 American Association of Law Schools (AALS) Annual Meeting, “Courage in Action,” San Francisco, California, USA

15 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 1st Annual South Carolina Religious Liberty Conference, sponsored by LDS Coordinating Council, Columbia, South Carolina, USA

23 Mattone Center Directors Summit, sponsored by St. John’s Law Mattone Center for Law and Religion, New York, New York, USA

FEBRUARY

3 Latin America Regional Conference I: FIDELA Ministerial, Washington, DC, USA

3–6 International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit opening reception, sponsored by ICLRS, Washington, DC, USA

7 ICLRS and Institute of Global Engagement retreat, Washington, DC, USA

10–11 Workshop for special journal issue of *The Journal of Church and Law*, Tartu, Estonia

15 February–22 March Kachin State Comprehensive University Lecture Series on Human Dignity for Myanmar students and professors, online

17–19 “Optimizing Religious Input into the South African G20 Process,” G20 Interfaith Forum Pre-Meeting for Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

18–20 2nd International Conference on Religious Freedom and Peacemaking, “From Religious Freedom to Religious Responsibility: Peacemaking in a Destabilized World,” sponsored by Multi-Faith Neighbors Network (MFNN) and Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), Doha, Qatar

21–22 Pacific Regional Conference: “Freedom to Do, to Be, and to Become: Enhancing Individuals’ Opportunities to Believe and Live as They Choose Within the Framework of the Law,” sponsored by ICLRS; University of Waikato’s Te Piringa Faculty of Law; the Religious Freedom and Human

Dignity Initiative, BYU–Hawaii; and J. Reuben Clark Law Society, Auckland and Hamilton chapters, Auckland, New Zealand

24–28 Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB) meetings, G20 Interfaith Forum Pre-Meeting for Africa, Cape Town, South Africa

26 Multifaith delegation visit celebrating the passage of the South Carolina General Assembly Resolution commemorating the 356th anniversary of the Fundamental Constitutions of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, USA

MARCH

4 Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Forum, “Uniting for Religious Freedom,” sponsored by Las Vegas Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

6–7 Article 18 Alliance Ministerial Conference, Council of Experts spring meeting, sponsored by ICLRS and the Religious Freedom Institute, Geneva, Switzerland

8 Las Vegas Iftar Celebration, sponsored by Las Vegas Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

11–12 Vietnam 20th Anniversary Conference commemorating Certificate and Rule of Law Trainings in Vietnam, sponsored by ICLRS, Institute for Global Engagement (IGE), Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, VNU University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi, Vietnam

12–14 International Moot Court Competition in Law and Religion, sponsored by ICLRS and various law schools, Rome, Italy

20–22 Global Summit on Constitutionalism, sponsored by the Constitutional Studies Program at the University of Texas at Austin and the International Forum on the Future of Constitutionalism, Austin, Texas, USA

APRIL

3–4 International Advisory Council Spring Meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

7 35th Annual International Society Conference, “Becoming One: Addressing Global Disparity,” Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, USA

10 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Orlando Rising Generation Seminar, sponsored by Central Florida Commission on Religious Freedom, Orlando, Florida, USA

10 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 12th Annual Iowa Religious Freedom Day, “The Role of Religion in Peacemaking,” Des Moines, Iowa, USA

10–11 2nd National Meeting of Municipal Officers over Religious Affairs–Chile, sponsored by the National Office of Religious Affairs of Chile (ONAR), online

11 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Preserving Religious Freedom for the Rising Generation Seminar, sponsored by ICLRS and Religious Freedom Institute, Provo, Utah, USA

21 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Dinner and discussion on the 376th anniversary of the Maryland Religious Tolerance Act of 1649, Annapolis, Maryland, USA

23 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 21st Annual Religion and the Law Symposium, sponsored by JRCLS Orange County Chapter, Orange, California

23–25 Asia Regional Conference: 3rd Annual BYU–Hawaii Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Initiative Conference, “Human Dignity and ASEAN: Pursuing Peaceful and Inclusive Societies in Southeast Asia,” sponsored by ICLRS, BYU–Hawaii Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Initiative, the Leimena Institute, and the Religious Freedom Institute–Southeast Asia Action Team, Laie, Hawaii, USA

27–29 Eastern Europe/Central Asia Regional Conference: Diplomacy of the Heart Conference, “The Power of Intercultural Dialogue and Education on Peacebuilding,” sponsored by ICLRS, Baskerville Institute, the Stirling Foundation, and Utah State University, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

MAY

1 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 4th Annual Freedom of Religion Roundtable, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

6 “The Russo-Ukrainian War, Religious Freedom, and US Foreign Policy Under the Trump Administration,” panel discussion, sponsored by the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies, George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA

8–9 5th Annual Conference of the Institute for the Study of Freedom of Religion or Belief (ISFORB), “FORB and Vulnerability,” sponsored by ISFORB, Leuven, Belgium

12–16 Nigerian (Abuja) Law and Religion Studies Curriculum Development Colloquium, “Advancing Legal Education Through the Integration of Law and Religion Studies in Nigeria,” sponsored by ICLRS, the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Sa’adu Zungur University, Al-Muhibbah Open University, the West African Regional Center for Law and Religion Studies, the African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, and the Institute for Global Engagement, Abuja, Nigeria

13–14 Celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week and G20 Interfaith Pre-Meeting for Africa, sponsored by the African Union Interfaith Council, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

18–21 Africa Regional Conference: 12th Annual Conference of the African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ACLARS), “Law, Religion, and Work in Africa,” Ben Guerir, Morocco

18–30 International Advisory Council Morocco Enrichment Extension Tour

22–25 “Women’s Right to Movement Under the Taliban De facto Government and in the Primary Sources of Islamic Law,” Gender, Culture, and Legal Redress Panel, Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, USA

25–30 Africa Week 2025, “Global Security, Global Africa,” Pretoria, South Africa

26–27 3rd International Islamophobia Conference, “Islamophobia in Focus:

Unveiling Bias, Shattering Stigmas,” sponsored by G20 Interfaith Forum, Baku, Azerbaijan

29 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 11th Annual УМКС Law and Religious Freedom Conference, sponsored by University of Missouri–Kansas City Law School, Kansas City, Missouri, USA

JUNE

2–3 UN Special Rapporteur Report on Religious Freedom for Refugees, Nazila Ghanea, UN Special Rapporteur, sponsored by ICLRS and the Amar Foundation, Geneva, Switzerland

2–6 8th Annual JRCLS Religious Liberty Fellowship, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, USA

7–8 International Conference, “Dialogic Human Dignity: Legal and Religious Perspectives,” sponsored by ICLRS and the Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions at Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan

11–13 “Multi-faith Partnerships: Strategies for Integrating Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches,” sponsored by ICLRS, Multi-Faith Neighbors Network, and the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Oxford, England

12 Latin America Regional Conference II: International Religious Freedom Symposium, “Freedom of Religion and Belief: Promoter of Mutual Respect, Harmony, and the Protection of Other Fundamental Rights,” sponsored by ICLRS, FIDELA, Organization of American States (OAS), Universidad Católica de Costa Rica, Colegio de Abogados y Abogadas de Costa Rica, Asamblea Legislativa de la República Costa Rica, and various other academic institutions and governmental bodies, San José, Costa Rica

16–17 IRF Summit Africa, “Africa Together: A Continental Call to Religious Freedom,” sponsored by Pepperdine University, the Religious Freedom Institute, and the International Religious Freedom Summit, Nairobi, Kenya

17 Religious Freedom Annual Review, “Religion, Peace, and Human Flourishing: Understanding the Whys of Religious

Freedom,” sponsored by ICLRS and the Wheatley Institute, Provo, Utah, USA

25–27 55th General Assembly of the Organization of American States, St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda

28–29 “Constitutional Review: China’s Experience and International Perspectives,” sponsored by China University of Political Science and Law, Beijing, China

JULY

2 ICLARS Webinar Series, “Religious Freedom in Ukraine,” sponsored by University of Messina Department of Law and the International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, online

7–18 Woolf Institute Summer School, “Religion, Law and Society from the Medieval to the Modern,” sponsored by ICLRS and the Woolf Institute, Cambridge, United Kingdom

10 Organization of American States reception, sponsored by ICLRS and FIDELA, Washington, DC, USA

11–13 Windsor Dialogue Conference: “FORB: New Approaches for New Administrations,” cosponsored by ICLRS and the AMAR Foundation, Windsor, United Kingdom

11 July–15 August Weekly Online Lecture Series on Faith and Leadership, sponsored by Kachin State Comprehensive University, Institute for Global Engagement, and Rising Generation Initiative, online

14 July–1 August Oxford Young Scholars Fellowship on Religion and the Rule of Law, Christ Church, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

15 Testimony of Elizabeth Clark and Dmytro Vovk before the UK Parliament, hearing organized by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom for Religion or Belief (APPG FORB), London, United Kingdom

16–17 Oxford Workshop: “Religion-State Relations and Freedom of Religion: Exploring Durham’s Religious Identification Loop,” workshop for a book on the

religion-state model set forth by W. Cole Durham, Jr., Christ Church, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

19–30 International Advisory Council Study Tour, Oxford, United Kingdom

23–24 Oxford Workshop: “Religious Freedom and Social Polarization: A Comparative Perspective,” sponsored by ICLRS; University of St. Thomas School of Law; Georgetown Center for the Constitution, Georgetown University; and Christ Church, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

28–29 Oxford Workshop: “Polarization and the Pursuit of Peace: Multi-Faith Appeals to Human Dignity,” sponsored by ICLRS; Baylor Ethics Initiative, Baylor University; the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, Gadjah Mada University; and Christ Church, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

AUGUST

10–14 G20 Interfaith Forum, “Ubuntu in Action: Focus on Vulnerable Communities,” Cape Town, South Africa

12–13 Latin America Regional Conference III: International Congress, “Pathways to Peace: Religions and Cultures in Dialogue,” sponsored by Universidad Católica de Temuco, Oficina Nacional de Asuntos Religiosos de Chile (ONAR), ICLRS, KAICIID, FIDELA, Arigatou International, Asociación Chilena de Diálogo Interreligioso, Embassy of Morocco in Chile, Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Chile, Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, and various other civil society institutions, Temuco, Chile

18–22 BYU Education Week, Provo, Utah, USA

21 “Non-Violent Resistance and Pathways to Peace in Afghanistan,” sponsored by the Afghan Policy Lab at Princeton School of Public and International Affairs and the Central Asia Institute, Washington, DC, USA

SEPTEMBER

10 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 3rd Annual Interfaith Symposium, “Sacred Spaces for Challenging Times,” Chicago, Illinois, USA

10–13 2nd International Forum, “Dialogue of Declarations,” sponsored by the Uzbek Government, Templeton Foundation, and Love Your Neighbor Community (LYNC), Tashkent, Uzbekistan

12 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn, “Religious Freedom in America: Developments in Indiana and the Midwest,” sponsored by JRCLS, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

16 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn: “Religious Freedom in America: Developments in Idaho and the Rocky Mountain West,” sponsored by JRCLS, Boise, Idaho, USA

18 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn: “Stronger Together: Faith, Law, and Community Dialogue,” Denver, Colorado, USA

20 Jubilee of Justice at St. Peter’s Square, Rome, Italy

23–25 “Infinite Dignity, Human Freedom, and the Place of Law,” sponsored by ICLRS, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, and University of Padua, Rome, Italy

24 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn: “Religious Freedom and Human Dignity: How Multifaith Partnerships Strengthen Communities,” Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA

24–25 Legislative Workshop on Religious Freedom, Life, and Family, sponsored by Red Política por los Valores, Asociación la Familia Importa, Office of Guatemalan Congressman Ronald Portillo, ICLRS, ADF International, Foro Permanente de Libertad Religiosa, Guatemala City, Guatemala

25 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Religious Freedom Lunch and Learn, “Religious Freedom in America: Developments in Tennessee and the Southeast,” sponsored by JRCLS, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

25–26 BYU Conference on the 30th Anniversary of The Family: A Proclamation to the World, “Experiencing Jesus Christ Through the Family Proclamation,” sponsored by BYU Religious Education, Wheatley Institute, BYU School of Family Life, and ICLRS, Provo, Utah, USA

OCTOBER

5–7 32nd Annual International Law and Religion Symposium, “Building Paths to Flourishing: Regional, National, and International Protections of Religious Freedom,” Provo, Utah, USA

6–17 ODIHR Warsaw Human Dimension Conference and Meeting of Advisory Board for FORB and Security, Warsaw, Poland

13–15 Nigerian Law and Religion Studies Curriculum Development Colloquium: “Advanced Legal Education Through Religion, Literacy, and Pluralism,” sponsored by ICLRS, the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Sa’adu Zungur University, Al-Muhibbah Open University, the Institute for Global Engagement, the West African Regional Center for Law and Religion Studies, and the African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, Abuja, Nigeria

14–16 International Congress, “One Hundred Years Since the Separation of Church and State in Chile: The Value of Beliefs in Latin American Democracies,” sponsored by Centro UC Derecho y Religión, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

23 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Kansas Summit for Religious Freedom, “Religious Freedom and Human Flourishing,” sponsored by LDS Coordinating Council, Wichita, Kansas, USA

23 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 8th Annual DFW Summit for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity, sponsored by DFW Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity, Dallas, Texas, USA

24 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 2025 Law and Religion Symposium, Seattle, Washington, USA

29 Diálogo Interreligioso de Paraguay, Asuncion, Paraguay

30 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Alabama Religious Freedom Summit, Huntsville, Alabama, USA

30 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 2025 Las Vegas Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity Symposium, “Building Bridges,” sponsored by Las Vegas Alliance for Religious Freedom and Human Dignity, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

30 Law Reform Workshop, Cambodia Ministry of Cult and Religion, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

NOVEMBER

3 COP30 and Faith Pavilion-Related Meeting and Global Religious Leaders Environment Summit, G20 Interfaith Forum, Manaus, Brazil

6 Keynote delivered by Gary Doxey “The Guarantee of Religious Freedom: State Treatment of Religion in Its Diverse Manifestations,” Lima, Peru

6–7 Vietnam Religion and Rule of Law Certificate Training Program, sponsored by ICLRS, Institute for Global Engagement, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, and Vietnam-USA Society, Hanoi, Vietnam

6–7 COP30 Leader Summit, Belém, Brazil

7–8 “Education, Religious Freedom, and Neutrality,” sponsored by St. John’s Law Mattone Center for Law and Religion, New York, New York, USA

11–12 International Conference on Cross Cultural Religious Literacy, “Education and Social Trust in Multifaith and Multicultural Societies,” sponsored by Indonesia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Law and Human Rights and the Leimena Institute, Jakarta, Indonesia

12–13 High-Level International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance Conference, held on the 5th anniversary of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance under the auspices of the President of the Czech Republic, sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Institute of International Relations Prague, Article 18 Alliance, IRF Secretariat, Templeton Religion Trust, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Love Your Neighbor Community, Renovabis, and Anna Lindh Foundation, Prague, Czech Republic

14 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 2025 Louisiana Religious Freedom Summit, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

18 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: Rising Generation Seminar, Orlando, Florida, USA

21 7th International Forum on Law and Religion: “Charting the Future of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda,” sponsored by University of the Philippines College of Law, Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy, Religions for Peace Philippines, and ICLRS, Taguig City, Philippines

21–22 Religious Freedom Alliance Council: 2nd Annual Interfaith Open House, sponsored by JRCLS and Cache Community Connections, Cache Valley, Utah, USA

24–26 Latin America Regional Conference IV: 24th Annual Colloquium of the Latin American Consortium for Religious Freedom, “State Cooperation with Religion: Experiences and Challenges,” sponsored by ICLRS, Consorcio Latinoamericano de Libertad Religiosa, Conciencia Nacional por la Libertad Religiosa, Cancun, Mexico

25 Open Forum of the Argentine Council for Religious Liberty (CALIR), sponsored by ICLRS, CALIR, and Universidad Adventista del Plata, Entre Ríos, Argentina

DECEMBER

4 Oxford Young Scholars Alumni Zoom Reunion, online

10 Order of Malta Rome Conference Against Human Trafficking, “24 Years of the Palermo Protocol: A Call to Action,” attended by G20 Interfaith Forum, Rome, Italy

13–19 Retreat: Religious Freedom for the Rising Generation, sponsored by ICLRS and the Coptic Orthodox Church of London, Stevenage, United Kingdom

15–16 International Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Conflict, “From War Zones to Post-War Transition,” sponsored by ICLRS and the Centre for Law and Religion at Regent’s Park College, Oxford, United Kingdom



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