

Contact: Tonya Fischio  
801-368-0506  
[fischiot@law.byu.edu](mailto:fischiot@law.byu.edu)

Writer: Heidi Carmack  
408-218-6323  
[publications@law.byu.edu](mailto:publications@law.byu.edu)

**Annual Symposium Addresses Religious Freedom**  
***Experts and Government Officials from around the World to Attend***

The International Center for Law and Religion studies announces the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual International Law and Religion Symposium, "Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic Age: Trends, Challenges, and Practices," to be held October 2-4, 2011 at the J. Reuben Clark Law School of Brigham Young University. This year's keynote speaker is Justice Zakeria Mohammed Yacoob, a member of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. Justice Yacoob will speak at the opening session of the Symposium, held in the Law School's Moot Court Room, 303 JRCB, at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 2.

Since the first Annual International Symposium, more than 850 scholars, educators, government officials, human rights workers, and religious leaders, representing 115 countries, have come together in Provo to explore principles of religious freedom.

This year's Symposium occurs a few weeks before the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the issuance of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. This year's 75 participants from 37 countries will come together to reflect upon accomplishments of three decades of systematic efforts to increase freedom of conscience, religion, and belief for all peoples of the world, and to share plans for future endeavors.

"Substantial progress has been made over the past thirty years," noted ICLRS Director W. Cole Durham, Jr. "However, acute challenges remain. Recent studies by the Pew Research Center indicate that restrictions on religion are increasing in many nations, and in fact seventy percent of the people on earth live in countries with high or very restrictions on religion. Obviously, much remains to be done. The Annual Symposium has a record of bringing together academic experts and government officials in a unique blend of discussion which has had many positive effects over the years."

The Center is recognized internationally for its mission to help to secure religious freedom for all people through dissemination of knowledge, facilitating networks of those in the field of religious freedom, and contributing to law reform processes. Formally established in January 2000, the Center has emerged as a world leader in the field of religious rights. The Center's directors have lectured and published nationally and internationally. In 2011 alone, they have organized or otherwise participated in more than 25 international events, including conferences in Australia, Chile, China, Dominican Republic, India, Indonesia, Italy, Nepal, Norway, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, United Kingdom, Ukraine, and Vietnam.

Five sessions of this year's Symposium, including the opening session, will be available via live Internet streaming in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Visit the Annual Symposium link at [www.iclrs.org](http://www.iclrs.org) to see the schedule or access the live streams.