



International Conference and Publishing Project

sponsored by BYU Law School's International Center for Law and Religion Studies

Human Dignity and Human Rights – Christian Perspectives and Practices:

A Focus on Constitutional and International Law

The Project

Christians, along with other religious groups, have played a strong role in the transnational legal discourse around dignity. Leaders, thinkers, and groups of virtually every Christian denomination have utilized this concept to draw attention to the value of human life, defend human rights, stress the importance of welfare nets and safe environment, strengthen the moral imperative to help people in need, and issue a call for a more civilized world.

While most Christians converge on the plain of ideals, they diverge in how to pursue them and what type of society to work toward. They disagree about the role that legal systems should play in securing fundamental values. Intra- and inter-group debates on constitutional and international norms, on optimal institutional frameworks, on how to balance competing rights and interests, are legion among Christians.

Within the frameworks of constitutional and international law, we will aim to track down and analyze Christian approaches to human dignity, human rights, and other social and legal values, and how Christian denominations, groups, and think tanks translate them into political, legal, and judicial agendas. Particularly salient are Christian conceptualizations of ideal legal frameworks, Christians' involvement in the legislative and judicial process, and the mutual influences between Christian doctrines and secular legal systems in the fields of human dignity and rights.

The Call

The organizers invite scholars at any level of their careers to submit an abstract of no more than 300-words and one-page CV by December 10, 2019 to andrea.pin@unipd.it (Andrea Pin) AND dmtr.vovk@gmail.com (Dmytro Vovk). The abstract should address at least one of the following topics:

- Christian views on human dignity and human rights, also vis-à-vis other competing ideals;
- Secular translations of Christian values;
- The participation of Christians in the public discourse, in the political process, and in judicial litigation;
- Christian views on pluralism and reconciliation of disagreement;
- Christianity, rights and social welfare;
- The relationship between individual and group rights and duties according to Christian doctrines;
- Human dignity, people's dignity, and state sovereignty in the light of Christian thinking;
- Inter-Christian dialogue and cooperation in promoting Christian legal doctrines;

Abstract proposals should develop themes against the backdrop of constitutional and international law. Normative, comparative, and descriptive approaches are equally welcome.

Selections will be made by January 10, 2020. The authors of the accepted proposals will be invited to present at a workshop in Christ Church (Oxford, UK) during the last week of July 2020 (exact dates will be announced later), with the view of seeking later publication of the presented papers.

The International Center for Law and Religion Studies will cover travel and accommodation costs of presenters.

Project leaders:

Brett G. Scharffs, Director of International Center for Law and Religion Studies, and Rex E. Lee Chair and Professor of Law at Brigham Young University Law School (USA).

Andrea Pin, Associate Professor for Comparative Public Law at the Department of Public, International and Community Law of the University of Padua (Italy), and Senior Fellow of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion (USA).

Dmytro Vovk, Director of the Center for Rule of Law and Religion at the Yaroslav the Wise National Law University (Ukraine).