

Introduction of Elder David A. Bednar

Introduced by Prof. W. Cole Durham, Jr.
Founding Director
International Center for Law and Religion Studies

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the keynote speaker for this year's Annual Review of Religious Freedom in America. Elder Bednar was born in Oakland, California. He served a full-time mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in southern Germany. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Brigham Young University, followed by a doctoral degree in organizational behavior from Purdue University. He subsequently served as a professor of business management at Texas Tech University and at the University of Arkansas, and then became the president of Brigham Young University-Idaho (previously Ricks College) from 1997-2004. Along the way, he served as a bishop, twice as a stake president, a Regional Representative, and an Area Seventy. On October 7, 2004 he was ordained and set apart as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder Bednar thus has broad experience with the ways that freedom of religion blesses the lives of religious individuals and organizations, and the ways this in turn benefits society at large. He is acutely sensitive to the challenges that have come with making adaptations in recent weeks and months to the COVID-19 virus, and is in an excellent position to address the topic of this year's Annual Review: "Religion and Religious Freedom in the COVID-19 Era: Finding Community and Hope."

Elder Bednar will be our concluding speaker. Following his remarks, information will be displayed about how to access subsequent sessions of the Annual Review on Facebook, YouTube and the Annual Review's website.