

Call for proposals for participation in Blog Webinar on October 2, 2020
Law, Religion, and Coronavirus in the United States: A Six-Month Assessment

Co-organized by:

International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University Law School
Center for the Study of Law and Religion, Emory University Law School
Notre Dame Program on Church, State & Society, Notre Dame Law School
Center for Law and Religion, St. Johns University School of Law
Eleanor H. McCullen Center for Law, Religion and Public Policy, Villanova University Charles Widger
School of Law

Proposals for participation in a blog conference on **Law, Religion, and Coronavirus in the United States: A Six-Month Assessment**, are being accepted until August 31st, 2020. An online webinar open to the public will be held on Friday October 2, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. EDT where brief 3-5 minute summaries of blog posts of approximately 1500 words will be presented. The blog posts will then be simultaneously published on the blogs of the five co-organizing institutions.

The purpose of the blog conference and webinar is to provide an opportunity for thoughtful reflection on the implications for law and religion in the United States of the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the economic and racial justice crises, from our current perspectives approximately six months into the crisis. The content and format of the webinar will in part be determined by the proposals for participation, but we anticipate grouping presentations under several topical areas:

- Public Health and Free Exercise: What is the scope of legitimate limitations on religious activities based on public health, including discriminatory or differential treatment of religious gatherings versus other types of gatherings? What can we learn from cases that have already been decided, including in the Federal Courts of Appeals, and in the emergency Supreme Court rulings in cases involving religious organizations challenging state regulation? Are there important differences between what religious organizations should be permitted to do and what they should do? Do legal developments during the coronavirus pandemic make it more or less likely that the Supreme Court will revisit the compelling state interest in its Free Exercise Clause jurisprudence?
- Church Finances and State Funding of Religion: What have been the financial implications of coronavirus for religious institutions, religious schools, and faith-based charities, including participation in government bailout and aid programs? Will the pandemic and its aftermath have lasting effects on how state funding of religion is viewed in the United States and by the Supreme Court?
- Law and Society: How will the pandemic affect religious practice? Will it act as an accelerant for social trends including the “rise of the nones?” Will it result in a religious recession, renaissance, or something else? Will there be different implications for institutions and individuals?
- Church Liability and Clergy Malpractice: Will religious organizations, or religious leaders, face personal liability for harm to parishioners who attend services, or follow advice and counsel of religious leaders, and later contract coronavirus? Will we see an increase in liability in tort or based on theories such as clergy malpractice?

- Science and vaccines: What can we expect from the role of religious organizations and religious people in the debates that will emerge about vaccines and exemptions from vaccines? Are there other implications for religious freedom that will arise from a scientific consensus on public health matters?
- Long-term implications: From our limited vantage point, what will be the long-term implications of the coronavirus and related crises for law and religion in the United States?

Please submit brief proposals for your participation of approximately 100 words (not completed blog posts) through the “Submissions” page on the Emory’s Canopy Forum by August 31st, 2020, (<https://canopyforum.org/submit/>). Please indicate in your submission that you are responding to this call for proposals, either in the subject line of the submission form, or in the document you submit. We anticipate informing participants during the first week of September whether their proposal has been accepted for inclusion. Blog posts will be due one week before the webinar so they can be edited and ready for posting upon completion of the webinar. We are pleased to offer an honorarium of \$200 for the blog post of each participant in the webinar.

If you have any questions, please contact Brett G. Scharffs, scharffsb@law.byu.edu or Jane Wise, wisej@law.byu.edu, at BYU; John Bernau, john.bernau@emory.edu, Shlomo Pill, shlomo.pill@emory.edu, or Justin Latterell, jlatter@emory.edu, at Emory; Stephanie Barclay, sbarcla2@nd.edu or Rich Garnett, Rick.Garnett.4@nd.edu, at Notre Dame; Mark Movsesian, movsesim@stjohns.edu, or Marc DeGirolami, Marc.DeGirolami@st.johns.edu; or Michael Moreland, mpmoreland@gmail.com, at Villanova.