

The State of Religious Freedom Conference

The Ken Starr Institute for Faith, Law, and Public Service and the Nootbaar Institute on Law, Religion, and Ethics of Pepperdine Caruso School of Law are honored to present the 2nd Annual State of Religious Freedom Conference, convened in partnership with the Centre for Law and Religious Freedom at the Jagiellonian University and Founders' First Freedom.

Sunday | June 7, 2026

6 PM — Welcome Reception | Private Malibu Residence

31232 Broad Beach Rd
Malibu, CA 90265

Monday | June 8, 2026

8:30 AM — Breakfast and Coffee Hour | Caruso School of Law

9:15 AM — Opening and Introduction: **Jim Gash,** *President and CEO, Pepperdine University*

9:30 AM — Session I: *History and Tradition in Religious Liberty Adjudication*

Moderator:

The Honorable Matthew H. Solomson, *Chief Judge, United States Court of Federal Claims*

Presenters:

Thomas C. Berg, *James L. Oberstar Professor of Law and Public Policy, University of St. Thomas School of Law*

Noel J. Francisco, *Partner, Jones Day and former Solicitor General of the United States*

Andrew M. Koppelman, *John Paul Stevens Professor of Law, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law*

Erin E. Murphy, *Partner, Clement and Murphy, PLLC*

Lael Weinberger, *Assistant Professor of Law, George Mason University Antonin Scalia Law School*

10:45 AM — Break

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Monday | June 8, 2026 (cont.)

11 AM

Session II: *Judging Religious Freedom: Comparative Jurisprudence*

Moderator:

The Honorable Sam Brownback, *Senior Fellow, Pepperdine University*
U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom (ret.)

Presenters:

The Honorable Daphne Barak-Erez, *Justice,*
Supreme Court of Israel

The Honorable Ignacio Sancho Gargallo, *President,*
Civil Chamber of the Spanish Supreme Court

The Honorable Ioannis Ktistakis, *President,*
Third Section of the European Court of Human Rights

The Honorable Kevin Newsom, *Judge,*
United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

The Honorable Brantley Starr, *Judge,*
United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas

12:15 PM

Lunch

12:30 PM

Lunch Panel: *Ten Commandments in Schools*

Moderator:

The Honorable Kenneth K. Lee, *Judge,*
United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Presenters:

Stephanie Barclay, *Professor of Law,*
Georgetown University Law Center

Alan E. Brownstein, *Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus,*
University of California Davis School of Law

Eric Rassbach, *Vice President and Senior Counsel,*
The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and Visiting Professor,
Pepperdine Caruso School of Law

Mark Storslee, *Associate Professor and C. Boyden Gray*
Distinguished Scholar, University of North Carolina School of Law

Anna Su, *Associate Professor, Henry N.R. Jackman*
Faculty of Law, University of Toronto



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Monday | June 8, 2026 (cont.)

1:45 PM

Session III: *Parental Rights and Religious Exercise*

Moderator:

The Honorable Don R. Willett, *Judge,*
United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

Presenters:

Richard W. Garnett, *Paul J. Schierl Professor of Law,*
University of Notre Dame Law School

Jessie Hill, *Judge Ben C. Green Professor of Law,*
Case Western Reserve University School of Law

Christopher Lund, *Professor of Law,*
Wayne State University Law School

Colten Stanberry, *Managing Director, Ken Starr Institute for Faith, Law, and Public Service, Pepperdine Caruso School of Law*

3 PM

Break

3:30 PM

Session IV: *Government Funding and Religion*

Moderator:

The Honorable Jennifer Walker Elrod, *Judge,*
United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

Presenters:

Nathan S. Chapman, *A. Gus Cleveland Distinguished Chair of Law,*
University of Georgia School of Law

John Meiser, *Associate Clinical Professor and Director of the Lindsay and Matt Moroun Religious Liberty Clinic, University of Notre Dame Law School*

Rev. Patrick Reidy, *Associate Professor of Law,*
University of Notre Dame Law School

Faraz Sanei, *Associate Professor,*
American University Washington College of Law

Chagai Schlesinger, *Assistant Professor*
University of Haifa Law Faculty



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Monday | June 8, 2026 (cont.)

5:00 PM — Depart for Dinner at Duke's Malibu

Discussion: *Lessons from War and Peace in the Middle East*

Moderator:

Donald Earl Childress III, *Professor of Law, Pepperdine Caruso School of Law*

Presenters:

Johnnie Moore (Rev.), *Vice Chancellor and Managing Director of Middle East Studies, Pepperdine University School of Public Policy*

Netta Barak-Corren, *Haim H. Cohn Chair in Human Rights and Professor of Law, Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

Tuesday | June 9, 2026

8:30 AM — Breakfast and Coffee Hour | Caruso School of Law

9:30 AM — Opening and Introduction: **Paul Caron,** *Dean, Pepperdine Caruso School of Law*

9:45 AM — **Session V:** *Judging Religious Freedom Cases*

Moderator:

The Honorable Patrick J. Bumatay, *Judge, United States Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit*

Presenters:

The Honorable Josh Divine, *Judge, United States District Court for the Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri*

The Honorable Danielle Forrest, *Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit*

The Honorable Chad Readler, *Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit*

The Honorable David Stras, *Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit*

The Honorable Timothy Tymkovich, *Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit*

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Tuesday | June 9, 2026 (cont.)

11:00 AM — **Break**

11:15 AM — **Session VI:** *Issues in Comparative Religious Freedom*

Moderator:

David K. Trimble, *President, Religious Freedom Institute*

Presenters:

Sophie van Bijsterveld, *Professor of Religion, Law, and Society, Radboud University Nijmegen*

Grzegorz Blicharz, *Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for Law and Religious Freedom, Jagiellonian University in Kraków*

Frederick Gedicks, *Professor of Law Emeritus, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Bringham Young University*

Mark Hill KC, *Barrister, Inner Temple, London; Global Distinguished Professor of Law, the University of Notre Dame London Law Programme*

Michał Kowalski, *Vice Dean and Professor, Faculty of Law and Administration, Jagiellonian University in Kraków*

12:30 PM — **Lunch**

12:45 PM — **Lunch Panel:** *Evaluating Employment Division v. Smith*

Moderator:

The Honorable Marvin Quattlebaum, *Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit*

Presenters:

Paul Horwitz, *Gordon Rosen Professor of Law, The University of Alabama School of Law*

Branton Nestor, *Non-Resident Fellow, Stanford Constitutional Law Center*

Audra Savage, *Associate Professor of Law, Wake Forest University School of Law*

Gene Schaerr, *Partner, Schaerr Jaffe LLP*

Steven D. Smith, *Warren Distinguished Professor of Law (ret.), University of San Diego School of Law*