

WHY ATHEISTS (AND EVERYONE ELSE) SHOULD SUPPORT FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

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It is an honor for me to be with you and participate in this roundtable today. I express appreciation to our chair, Jim Shannon, MP; and the co-chairs, Baroness Elizabeth Berridge and Gavin Shuker, MP; as well as each one who assisted in any way to make our gathering possible. It was my privilege to welcome Baroness Berridge to an event in Washington, D.C., last October, a dinner sponsored by the J. Reuben Clark Law Society and the BYU Law School's International Center for Law and Religion Studies, at which she was recognized with the Society's annual Religious Liberty Award for her extensive work in support of freedom of religion and belief—I must say, a well-deserved recognition.

Although I have visited the United Kingdom a number of times, my last two visits, and now this one, have been “firsts” for me. I was at the University of Oxford for the first time last June to present a lecture sponsored by the Faculty of Law's Programme for the Foundations of Law and Constitutional Government and the Rothermere American Institute. My subject there was integrity and public service, drawing upon my experiences from 1972 to 1974 as law clerk to U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica while he presided over the Watergate trials and related proceedings. Then I returned to England last August—that time to Cambridge, another first in my experience—to speak about religious liberty as a foundational freedom that sustains other critical freedoms and human rights. That is a subject I would like to touch on with you today.

Now I have passed through the doors of Parliament for the first time. I am grateful to meet with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief, particularly in company with my esteemed friend, Dr. Daniel Mark, chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Again, I am honored by your invitation.

On August 14, 2017, I represented The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in receiving the World Peace Prize from the World Peace Centre at the Maharashtra Institute of Technology in Pune, India. Our Church has been established in India for some time although we have no presence in Pune, the sixth largest city in the country. Still this Hindu-oriented institution which in the past has honored only Hindu or Asian individuals with its World Peace Prize, wanted to recognize the humanitarian efforts of our Church in India and across the world.



We are, of course, far from alone in these efforts, and our major humanitarian work is almost always done in partnership with such organizations as Catholic Relief Services, Islamic Relief Services, Red Cross and Red Crescent, and others as well as with the United Nations and various government entities, local and national. Religious institutions are at their best working with one another and in collaboration with secular and governmental organizations to relieve suffering and to act preventatively in strengthening families, communities, and society in general.

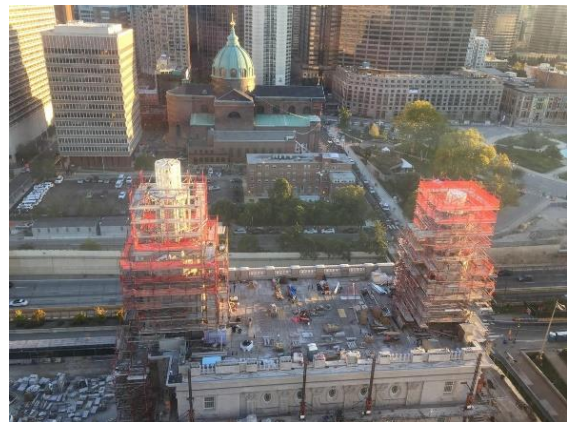
Often political leaders such as yourselves will try to encourage all nations to live up to their highest ideals, to respect human rights, and the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and all living in a society to work together for the common good. One area where religious organizations can help you in your effort is to be better examples of interfaith efforts ourselves so that you can more often speak drawing upon experience.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is everywhere a minority faith, and at times an unpopular one at that, with one exception—the state of Utah in the United States. We feel it behooves us, then, in the one place we constitute a majority to be particularly forthcoming in support of those people and religious organizations who are the minority there. I don't suppose we have always been perfect in doing so, but we strive to practice what we preach in this regard. A couple of examples: In the early days of the Mormon pioneer settlements in the Great Basin of the American West, the then-small Jewish community in Salt Lake City, about 40 families, needed a cemetery. Brigham Young saw to it that an appropriate piece of land was donated, and offered further to “assist them in the most tangible way” if they determined to organize a congregation.¹ More recently when the Catholic Cathedral of the Madeleine, the seat of the Catholic Bishop of Utah in Salt Lake City, needed major repairs and seismic upgrading in 1989-90, we were pleased to be able to contribute funds to the project. We prize our relationships and collaborative efforts with Baptists, Catholics, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, and people of all faiths. With them we seek to build better communities and serve those in need. Again, if we as religious

institutions more often laid aside rivalry and past offences and helped each other more in ways both great and small, these kinds of examples would assist you as you seek to encourage those parts of the world where there is mistrust and violence between those of different faiths.

I do not mean to minimize how difficult it can be to engender trust and cooperation amongst faiths in different parts of the world, nor to suggest that only through material means may mutual trust be established. Indeed, trust must be based in mutual respect. One of the Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints states, “We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.”² Religious organizations and people of faith must be at the forefront in urging and showing tolerance toward those of other faiths, especially those who might be unpopular minorities.

May I relate one further example from my Church’s experience? Recently construction was completed on our new temple in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and it was dedicated in 2016. There are two temples in the United Kingdom, one in London (Surrey) and one in Preston (Chorley). They differ from our normal meetinghouses where we meet each week. Temples are the most sacred spaces of our faith. We perform holy ordinances in temples that we believe show God’s mercy and love to all of His children through all generations. The Philadelphia temple is directly across from the offices of the Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. Philadelphia was settled by the Quaker William Penn and soon became a center of religious diversity. Catholics have been an integral part of the warp and woof of the city for many years. Our Catholic neighbors not only did not oppose our temple in its location, they were genuinely warm in welcoming us. During construction of the temple, Archbishop Charles Chaput, with a smile, told me that his office window looked out over the construction site and that he was watching to be sure that things were done right. As a gesture of respect, we felt it appropriate to ensure that the top of the temple’s highest spire should be a few feet lower than the dome of the Basilica. I know that this might seem a very small and symbolic gesture, but it is through a multiplicity of such gestures and actions that we create the foundation for trust, respect, and future cooperation in America’s City of Brotherly Love, as it is known, and everywhere else.



These efforts in “applied religion,” sometimes at the level of individuals, one-by-one, and sometimes on a grander scale help to justify the right of believers to act on their beliefs. I use the word “justify” purposefully. We feel religions ought to justify themselves before God and their

fellow citizens by contributing to the concord and welfare of the societies that they inhabit. Religions are voluntary associations and must be reasonable and law-abiding, and lead out in tolerance and love, but also serve as a check on injustices and abuses of power, even as religions must be vigilant against hypocrisy and abuse from within.

Professor Douglas Laycock of the University of Virginia, one of the premier authorities on religion and law in the United States, has stated, “For the first time in nearly 300 years, important forces in American society are questioning the free exercise of religion *in principle*—suggesting that free exercise of religion may be a bad idea, or at least, a right to be minimized.”³ These increasingly influential voices suggest that religion is purely personal and often irrational and therefore deserves no place in the public square—in essence, that religious voices are not entitled to be heard.

My argument is that, on the contrary, religion or belief is fundamental to societal well-being. Freedom of religion benefits not only believers but all of society, whether they know it or not. Therefore, all have an interest in protecting this freedom, whether they are believers or not. Thus, with a bit of tongue-in-cheek, but still seriously, I have entitled my remarks “Why Atheists (and Everyone Else) Should Support Freedom of Religion or Belief.” I see three major benefits to supporting freedom of religion or belief. First, religious freedom supports and strengthens the rule of law. Second, freedom of religion or belief is foundational to other fundamental and cherished freedoms. And third, religion or belief, freely exercised, promotes civic virtue and is vital to strong, flourishing communities.

I. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND THE RULE OF LAW

Let me begin with what I see as the role of religious liberty in establishing and sustaining the rule of law. In December 1170, four knights entered Canterbury Cathedral and stabbed to death the archbishop, Thomas Becket, as he was climbing the stairs to the high altar.⁴ A more violent act of desecration would be difficult to imagine. Those knights, acting on a rash complaint of King Henry II, took the life of England’s archbishop during a worship service at one of Christendom’s great cathedrals. Henry’s complaint arose from numerous clashes with his old friend Becket over various issues that together raised a monumental question: Who would control the Christian church in England?

Centuries of conflict in Great Britain and elsewhere in the West have divided the powerful forces of government and religion, thereby limiting the powers that both government and religious institutions can exert. One scholar has written that “this separation is deeply imprinted in the Western historical experience, with such episodes as the martyrdoms of Becket and [Sir Thomas] More [imparting] the lesson to succeeding generations.”⁵

Dividing the authority of church and state had the powerful effect of establishing limits to the authority of both—even in countries like the United Kingdom with a state church. Government came to be understood as inherently limited—its legitimate authority not including matters of religious belief or practice, for those are matters of the spirit. By the same token, while churches have legitimate authority over matters of religious belief and practice, they lack civil power over property or life. Governments do not rule churches, and churches do not rule governments; each has a limited sphere of competence, power, and legitimacy.

That is a profound notion that we often take for granted. It means that secular government is not divinely omnipotent and, conversely, that religious authority cannot act as an all-powerful government. There are inherent limits to both governmental and religious authority over society, and in the tensions and spaces created by those limits we find many of our freedoms.

I believe this fundamental limitation on the power of government to control the realm of the spirit undergirds the rule of law. For if the power of the king is limited, then surely the power of the king's magistrates must be limited too. It follows that there must be rules to guide and constrain the exercise of governmental power. I do not claim that the separation of church and state is the only source of the rule of law in modern Western civilization; no doubt there are others. But the deeply embedded separation of religious authority from state authority undoubtedly played an important role in establishing and fortifying the rule of law, which in turn has further protected and secured religious freedom from arbitrary governmental authority and persecution. Continued governmental recognition of the independent estate of religious institutions and individual belief is crucial to the continued vitality of the rule of law.

II. FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF AND OTHER ESSENTIAL FREEDOMS

Freedom of religion or belief also erects an effective shield for other freedoms and sustains those freedoms. Dr. Mark has kindly provided copies of the 2017 Annual Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. I noted this statement in the report's introduction:

The right to the freedom of religion or belief is an encompassing right that can be taken away directly or indirectly, and thus: You cannot have religious freedom without the freedom of worship; the freedom of association; the freedom of expression and opinion; the freedom of assembly; protection from arbitrary arrest and detention; protection from interference in home and family; and you cannot have religious freedom without equal protection under the law.

I agree, and I submit that the opposite is also true: you cannot have (or long enjoy) these other vital freedoms and rights without freedom of religion or belief. All of these rights and

liberties are mutually supportive, but the root freedom giving life to all the others is the freedom of religion.

Why? Because a government that cannot compel religious belief or exercise will be hard pressed to compel “orthodoxy” in other areas of life. Religious freedom protects the freedom of individual belief and expression in all areas of human activity. This enables people to develop and express their own opinions in matters of philosophy, politics, business, literature, art, science, and other areas, which naturally leads to social and political diversity.

Let me highlight a few ways that religious freedom is both foundational to other basic freedoms and also in turn supported by those freedoms.

Freedom of religion and the underpinnings of human rights.

A legal regime that respects freedom of religion or belief also affirms the moral basis for all human rights and thereby makes all rights more secure. The very idea of human rights rests on a religious conception of human nature. Former American president Calvin Coolidge explained that freedom of religion and other fundamental rights arise from “the recognition of the dignity and worth of the individual, because of his possession of those qualities which are revealed to us by religion.”⁶

The Bible teaches that each person has an innate dignity because God created human beings in His image—“male and female created he them.”⁷ Modern Latter-day Saint revelation supplements that truth by declaring that “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”⁸ Coolidge was right, then, in saying that “equality, liberty, popular sovereignty, [and] the rights of man ... have their source and their roots in the religious convictions.”⁹ Beyond compelling non-religious arguments that may be made for the inherent dignity of the human person, we affirm that our essential rights are inalienable because they are the gifts of God. No state could grant them. Accepting that fundamental truth lays the foundation for all other freedoms. And the first recognition of that truth—historically and morally—has come from acknowledging that the state must respect religious conscience.

Church autonomy, freedom of association, and mediating institutions.

The right to assemble freely with friends and associates and to form voluntary, self-governing associations centered on shared values is basic to any free and just society. It is also a direct offshoot of important religious freedoms.

Among the most significant aspects of religious freedom is what some scholars call “church autonomy.” By this I mean the autonomy of a church or other religious organization to

determine its own theology and criteria for priesthood; to establish standards for membership, discipline, and removal; and to own and manage sacred properties.

Safeguarding the autonomy of churches and other religious organizations enhances freedom for everyone by establishing a right to associate freely in voluntary associations. For if that right is recognized for nonprofit *religious* organizations, then equality and fairness dictate that a substantially similar right must be recognized to protect the associational freedom of nonprofit *secular* organizations.

More subtly but equally important, protecting church autonomy also enhances freedom by dispersing power. Religious organizations are bulwarks of freedom standing between the state and the unprotected individual. Churches, like families, schools, and other voluntary associations, are often called “mediating institutions.” This means, as one scholar once said, that they “[mediate] between the individual and the megastructures of contemporary government.”¹⁰ In their relationships with individual members, churches act as competing institutions of authority. By asserting their institutional prerogatives, churches ensure that the state does not exercise a monopoly on legitimate authority over the lives of individual citizens. In this respect, churches buffer and shield the individual from the power of the state and from complete dependency on its assistance.¹¹

In short, the hard-won right of churches to have autonomy in their ecclesiastical affairs has helped lay the groundwork for the right of all people—religious or not—freely to form and govern numerous social and cultural institutions that enrich our societies in so many ways.

Freedom of religion and the rights of free speech, free expression, freedom of the press, and freedom to assemble peaceably.

Religious freedom also supports other critical rights, such as free speech and expression, freedom of the press, and freedom to assemble peaceably. Why? Because guaranteeing meaningful religious freedom requires not only express protections for religious exercise within religious organizations but also robust protections for the right of believers to live openly and with dignity as equal citizens and participants in the life of the community. So while targeted legal protections for religious freedom are vital, in its fullest sense freedom of religion or belief requires legal protections for a range of rights. I have previously spoken about the interconnectedness of religious rights with a host of other vital rights:

We use our freedom of religion and belief to establish our core convictions, without which all other human rights would be meaningless. How can we claim the freedom of speech without being able to say what we truly believe? How can we claim the freedom

of assembly unless we can gather with others who share our ideals? How can we enjoy freedom of the press unless we can publicly print or post who we really are?¹²

These “mutually supporting liberties,”¹³ as Michael Oakeshott called them, mean that religious freedom is not just a benefit for religious people and institutions alone. Protections for religious freedom coincide with protections for other rights. Courts have implicitly recognized that rights must protect both religious believers and nonbelievers. The freedom of speech, for instance, embraces the right to speak about God but also to speak about one’s personal opinions on matters of politics, morality, and virtually any other topic.

This is all to say that our basic freedoms tend to rise and fall together. Courts that protect religious freedom tend to protect the freedom of speech and press, while courts that allow the government to infringe religious freedom sooner or later tend to allow the infringement of other basic rights. Conflicts over freedom of religion or belief are the focal point where the state either safeguards or invades the space necessary for liberty. If the state can be convinced (or compelled) to leave space for religious expression, it will almost surely leave space for other forms of expression. If the state does not respect religious freedom, it will not likely respect other core freedoms.¹⁴

Sometimes societies with traditional moral values fear what may happen if they allow religious freedom precisely because other freedoms are then ignited and views opposed to the prevailing moral values will grow. In our societies we ought to do all we can to show that even great differences of opinion need not lead to permanent discord, but that communities and individuals of faith can work well with each other as well as those of no faith. Once again, the basis for us to foster social harmony is mutual respect and fairness for all.

III. FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF AND CIVIC VIRTUE

Freedom of religion or belief is also critical because it allows religion to inculcate the virtues and habits necessary for a free society, and it promotes healthy civic engagement.

Research has shown that protecting religious freedom promotes societal harmony. Religious freedom and the other freedoms it supports have significant correlations with positive social and economic outcomes “ranging from better health care to higher incomes for women.”¹⁵ Hard experience powerfully establishes, by contrast, that abridging religious freedom leads to conflict. Studies have shown that societal restrictions on religion increase intra-state conflict,¹⁶ religiously motivated violence,¹⁷ political corruption,¹⁸ and overall levels of strife and national unrest.¹⁹ Indeed, studies show that government restrictions on religious freedom are the strongest predictor of religious violence and conflict, even when other factors are eliminated.²⁰

Countries with strong traditions of religious freedom tend to be not only more stable and safe, but more prosperous. A recent study reached the remarkable conclusion that *the presence of religious freedom in a country is one of only three factors significantly associated with global economic growth.*²¹ Imagine what changes would happen if more officials and policymakers recognized that protecting religious freedom is one of the three most significant things they could do to promote the economic growth and well-being of their country.

While visiting America during the 1830s to better understand what was then still a precarious experiment in democracy, French political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville reported that Americans considered religion indispensable to freedom. “I stop the first American whom I meet,” Tocqueville wrote, “and ask him if he thinks religion is useful for the stability and the good order of society; he immediately responds that a civilized society, but above all a free society, cannot subsist without religion. Respect for religion, in his eyes, is the greatest guarantee of the stability of the state and the security of individuals.”²²

That is a profound insight. Freedom requires a people capable of living freely and in peace with each other. Without virtuous citizens, the coercive powers of government must be exercised to keep the peace. Edmund Burke famously stated:

Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains on their own appetites. ... Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.²³

As Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, the famous German jurist and Federal Constitutional Court judge put it, “The liberal secular state is sustained by conditions it cannot itself guarantee. That is the great gamble it has made for the sake of liberty.”²⁴

Religious conscience encourages the virtues and habits of good citizenship that are necessary for a free society. Honesty. Duty. Moral self-discipline. Sacrifice for family and country. Compassion and service toward others. Civic engagement.

A society where these civic virtues prevail has a robust version of what Lord Moulton called the realm of “the Unenforceable.”²⁵ By this is meant those areas of life governed by a self-enforced code of conduct that “signifies the doing [of] that which you should do although you are not obliged to do it.”²⁶ Harvard business professor Clayton Christensen expressed the point this way:

The ethic of obedience to the unenforceable was established by vibrant religions, and some of these teachings have become a part of our culture. As a result, today there are many . . . who are not religious, who still voluntarily obey the law, comply with contracts, value honesty and integrity and respect other people's rights and property. This is because certain religious teachings have become embedded in our culture.²⁷

Setting aside the aberration of an extremely small number that seek to use religion to justify violence and criminal behavior, religion inspires individuals to develop praiseworthy character traits, and such people become more engaged and responsible citizens and more effective contributors to the welfare of their own communities and the nation. Religiously involved individuals are less likely than others to carry or use weapons, fight, or commit violence.²⁸ Communities with more religious populations tend to have fewer homicides and suicides.²⁹ Attendance at religious services is associated with direct decreases in rates of both minor and major crimes that are unrivaled by the effect of any secular or government welfare program.³⁰

Not only are the religious more likely to be law-abiding; they are more likely to be active, engaged, contributing members of the community. Studies show that religious citizens are more likely than nonreligious citizens to belong to community organizations, serve as an officer or committee member of an organization, and take part in local civic and political life by attending town meetings, voting in local elections, and pressing for social and political reform.³¹ Leading scholars have declared that “religiosity is, by far, the strongest and most consistent predictor of a wide range of measures of civic involvement.”³² I am not for a moment suggesting that religion is the only source of virtue within society, or that secular people cannot be highly moral. My point is simply that very often religion does the hard work of inculcating the habits and mores necessary for free and democratic societies to exist.

Religious people and institutions are also a powerful source of humanitarian assistance. Where they are free to worship and to exercise their faith, religious people give volunteer community service at much higher rates than those without religion. By one estimate, people of faith are 40 percent more likely than nonreligious people to give money to charities and more than twice as likely to volunteer their service to community organizations.³³ Highly religious people are more likely to volunteer not only for religious causes but also for secular ones.³⁴

The willingness of religious believers to give and to serve arises from the sense of compassion that religion teaches us to have for our neighbors—especially those who are poor or otherwise in need. Inspired by such compassion, religious volunteers provide vital services for the most vulnerable: food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, schools for the uneducated, and medical care for the sick. More than 90 percent of those who regularly attend worship

services donate to charity, and nearly 70 percent of them volunteer for charitable causes.³⁵ Such generosity happens at both the institutional and general levels.

Religion also has profound effects within families. Marriages are more stable and families are more self-sufficient because of the influence of religion. Numerous international studies have shown that valuing and regularly practicing religion is “associated with greater marital stability, higher levels of marital satisfaction, and an increased likelihood that an individual will be inclined to marry.”³⁶ In fact, sociological studies and literature reviews going back more than half a century indicate that attending religious services is the single most important predictor of marital stability.³⁷

When husbands attend religious services more frequently, their wives report greater happiness with the level of affection and understanding in their relationship and with the amount of time their husbands spent with them.³⁸ Among couples whose marriages lasted 30 years or more, a significant number reported that their faith was a source of moral guidance in times of conflict, that their faith helped them to deal with relationship difficulties, and that their faith encouraged them to maintain their commitment to their marriages.³⁹ By sharp contrast, married couples who stopped religious activity divorced 2.5 times more frequently than those who continued to attend religious services.⁴⁰

Children are safer and thrive better in families led by a religious mother and father whose faith inspires them to make personal sacrifices for the strength and happiness of their marriage and children. Children raised in religious homes are less likely to experience anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, and sadness.⁴¹ Religious practice correlates with reduced rates of youth depression⁴² and suicide,⁴³ while a lack of religious affiliation bears a tragic correlation with a higher risk of youth suicide.⁴⁴ A strong family coupled with regular religious practice is the most effective defense against the pernicious evils of pornography,⁴⁵ drug and alcohol abuse,⁴⁶ and other addictive behaviors.⁴⁷ And adolescents who regularly participate in religious services are significantly less likely to engage in delinquent or illegal behavior.⁴⁸

The influence of religious parents doesn't end at home. Parents who attend religious services are more likely to be involved with their children's education.⁴⁹ The greater a parent's religious involvement, the more likely they are to have high educational expectations for their children and the more likely they are to regularly communicate with their children regarding school.⁵⁰ Children of religious parents are more likely to pursue advanced courses, spend time doing homework, make friends with academically oriented peers, avoid skipping classes, and complete university degrees.⁵¹

STANDING UP FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

Given religion's essential contributions to healthy, flourishing societies, and yet recognizing the growing religious persecutions around the world documented by you, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and others, as well as challenges to the exercise of religious freedom and conscience in our midst, we may ask ourselves, "Therefore, what?"

Although far from being the ultimate authority in responding to this question, I mention again the thoughts put forth at the beginning of these remarks. First, as religious organizations are better models of interfaith respect and cooperation their example benefits your global work in promoting and preserving religious liberty. Speaking for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are committed to helping provide such an example. At the same time, others watch how our governments and societies treat religious communities and people of faith. As we hear and respect religious viewpoints and allow people of faith to live out their beliefs under the law, we may inspire governments and influential entities elsewhere to help reverse suppression of and restrictions upon religious liberty. Let me close with a couple of further suggestions:

1. Support Agencies and Research that Foster Religious Understanding and Freedom

Happily, there are multiple groups that value the contribution of religion and appreciate the overarching importance of belief in the lives of the vast majority of the earth's population. This very group, the All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, is an excellent example, as is also the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom that Dr. Mark has had such an important role in directing. It was under his leadership that an important report was commissioned on the topic of Women and Religious Freedom.⁵² We can support such entities in shining a bright light on abuses and persecutions and bring pressure to bear for respect of basic human rights. In the United States, my Church has endeavored to support the crucial work of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty that focuses on the judicial side of the equation, defending religious freedom in the courts.

We are happy to see academic programs surfacing that promote serious study and deeper understanding of religious freedom and its role in society. The Stanford University Law School in California established a successful Religious Liberty Clinic about three years ago. The Brigham Young University Law School has long sponsored an International Symposium on Law and Religion, and now with the International Consortium of Law and Religion Scholars (ICLARS) has organized an Advanced Certificate Program on Religion and the Rule of Law at Oxford. The Religious Freedom Research Project in the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs at Georgetown University is another major program that focuses on international religious freedom. In this country there are strong research projects, interfaith initiatives, and organizations that support religious understanding. Here are a few, in no particular order: the Church of England, Aid to the Church in Need, Interfaith Scotland and Interfaith Wales, the

Centre for the Study of Law and Religion at the University of Bristol Law School, the Woolf Institute in Cambridge, the *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*, the Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion and Belief based in the Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion in the Department of Theology and Religion at Birmingham University. These are but a few examples of what is fortunately a growing level of serious attention in academia.

Such groups and efforts merit our support.

2. Contribute to Discussions about the Common Good

Public discussions about the common good are enriched by men and women who routinely put duty above convenience and conscience above personal advantage. And those who advocate from a religiously informed standpoint should not be intimidated by those who claim they are imposing their religious beliefs on others. In a pluralistic society, to promote one's values for the good of society is not imposing them on others—it is putting them forward for consideration along with all others. Everyone promotes what they feel is best based on the values they hold, be they religious or non-religious. To argue, to persuade, to promote, or to defend is not to impose. In the end, someone's values prevail, and all of us have the right—even the duty—to argue for what we believe will best serve the needs of the people and most benefit the common good. Without religious voices, our political and social debates will lack the richness and insights needed to make wise decisions, and our nations and communities will suffer.

Religious voices are at least as deserving of being heard as any others. In fact, religious organizations bring unique experiences and perspectives to public policy debates. They recognize corrosive social forces that threaten faith, family, and freedom. They know personally about the hardships of family breakdown, unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, and numerous other social ills. Why? Because they are on the front lines helping individuals and families work through these wrenching problems. When they speak out they do so not for selfish reasons, but out of concern for the people they minister to, their families, and society itself. They bring a moral—often cautionary—voice to matters of social and public policy and often take a long-term view that takes into account generations and a belief in life hereafter and divine laws that sustain accountability, stewardship, and service to others. This often makes religious people sound cautious, but that can be a welcome balance to rapid change, materialism, and egocentrism. The perspectives of churches and religious leaders make an irreplaceable contribution to our on-going democratic conversation about how we should live together.

In all of this, let us remember the critical need for civility. Whatever others may do, however they may choose to act or speak, faith impels us to defend faith with civility out of deep regard for the worth of each human soul, whether aligned with us or not.

These are our times—these are remarkable times—complex and filled with global challenges though they are. This is our moment to share resources and support religious freedom and belief around the world. With courage, conviction, and civility, I believe we can, individually and collectively make a profound difference, in our own communities and internationally. As Winston Churchill said on the eve of the world’s greatest conflict, let us “arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time.” Thank you, and may God bless you, this remarkable nation, and the important work in which this All Party Parliamentary Group is engaged.

¹ Ava Fran Kahn, ed., *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History, 1849-1880* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 2002), 143.

² Articles of Faith 1:11.

³ Douglas Laycock, “Sex, Atheism, and the Free Exercise of Religion,” *University of Detroit Mercy Law Review*, vol. 88, no. 407 (Spring 2011), 407.

⁴ See W.R.W. Stephens, *The English Church from the Norman Conquest to the Accession of Edward I (1066–1272)* (1901), 182–83.

⁵ Michael W. McConnell, “The Problem of Singling Out Religion,” *DePaul Law Review*, vol. 50, no. 1, Fall 2000, 17.

⁶ Calvin Coolidge, “Education: The Cornerstone of Self-Government,” (address to the Convention of the National Education Association, July 4, 1924), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=24188>.

⁷ Genesis 1:27.

⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 18:10.

⁹ Calvin Coolidge, address at the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia (July 5, 1926), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=408>.

¹⁰ Bruce C. Hafen, “*Hazelwood School District* and the Role of First Amendment Institutions,” *Duke Law Journal* (1988), 701.

¹¹ Long before there was a welfare state, there were churches and voluntary associations. In fact, it was a voluntary association—the Society for Effecting the Abolition of Slavery—through which William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson worked to outlaw the slave trade in the British Empire. (See Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire’s Slaves* (2005) (describing how slavery came to be outlawed in the British Empire). Today a substantial amount of the social welfare delivered to vulnerable communities comes from the freewill offerings of religious entities and religious people. They give food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, and jobs to the unemployed.

¹² D. Todd Christofferson, “A Celebration of Religious Freedom” (address given at an interfaith conference in São Paulo, Brazil, Apr. 29, 2015), mormonnewsroom.org.

¹³ Michael Oakeshott, *The Political Economy of Freedom* (paper for the Centre for Independent Studies, 1994), 4.

¹⁴ As the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized in the 1993 “Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, “All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated.”

¹⁵ Luigi Guiso, Paola Sapienza, and Luigi Zingales, “People’s Opium? Religion and Economic Attitudes,” *Journal of Monetary Economics* (2003), 227.

¹⁶ See Roger Finke, “Origins and Consequences of Religious Restrictions: A Global Overview,” *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 74, no. 3 (2013), 1.

¹⁷ See Roger Finke and Jaime Dean Harris, “Wars and Rumors of Wars: Explaining Religiously Motivated Violence,” in *Religion, Politics, Society, and the State* (2011), 53.

¹⁸ See Seymour Martin Lipset and Gabriel Salman Lenz, “Corruption, Culture, and Markets,” in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (2000), 112.

¹⁹ See Brian J. Grim, Vegard Skirbekk, and Jesus C. Cuaresma, “Deregulation and Demographic Change: A Key to Understanding Whether Religious Plurality Leads to Strife,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, vol. 9 (2013), article 13, 1.

²⁰ See Grim, Skirbekk, and Cuaresma, “Deregulation and Demographic Change,” 1; see also notes 9 and 10.

²¹ See Brian J. Grim, Greg Clark, and Robert Edward Snyder, “Is Religious Freedom Good for Business? A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, vol. 10 (2014), article 4, 1.

²² Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, ed. François Furet and Françoise Mélonio, trans. Alan S. Kahan (1998), 206.

²³ Edmund Burke, “Letter to a Member of the National Assembly,” in *Reflections on the Revolution in France and Other Writings*, ed. Jesse Norman (2015), 680.

²⁴ Böckenförde, E. W. (2018). The rise of the state as a process of secularization. In M. Künkler & T. Stein (Eds.), E. W. Böckenförde, *Religion, law and democracy. Selected writings* (forthcoming). Oxford: Oxford University Press (Original work published in 1967).

²⁵ John Fletcher Moulton (Baron Moulton), “Law and Manners,” *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1924, 1.

²⁶ Moulton, “Law and Manners,” 1.

²⁷ Clayton Christensen, “Religion Is the Foundation of Democracy and Prosperity,” Feb. 8, 2011, <http://www.mormonperspectives.com/?p=115>.

²⁸ See David Lester, “Religiosity and Personal Violence: A Regional Analysis of Suicide and Homicide Rates,” *Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 127 (Dec. 1987), 685, 686.

²⁹ See David Lester, “Religiosity and Personal Violence,” 685, 686.

³⁰ See Byron R. Johnson, David B. Larson, Spencer De Li, and Sung Joon Jang, “Escaping from the Crime of Inner Cities: Church Attendance and Religious Salience among Disadvantaged Youth,” *Justice Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 2 (June 2000), 377.

³¹ See Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace*, 454–55; see also Pippa Norris, “Does Praying Together Mean Staying Together? Religion and Civic Engagement in Europe and the United States,” in Joep de Hart, Paul Dekker, and Loek Halman, eds., *Religion and Civil Society in Europe* (2013), 285 (demonstrating a positive correlation between religious observance and civic engagement in Western Europe).

³² Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, 454–55.

³³ See Arthur C. Brooks, “Compassion, Religion, and Politics,” *The Public Interest*, Fall 2004, 61.

³⁴ See Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapter 13. See also, René Bekkers and Pamala Wiepking, “Who Gives? A Literature Review of Predictors of Charitable Giving,” *Voluntary Sector Review*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Nov. 2011), http://pamala.nl/papers/BekkersWiepking_VSR_2011.pdf.

³⁵ See Arthur C. Brooks, “Religious Faith and Charitable Giving,” *Policy Review*, Oct–Nov. 2003, <http://www.hoover.org/research/religious-faith-and-charitable-giving>; see also Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*.

³⁶ Patrick Fagan, “Why Religion Matters Even More: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability,” Dec. 18, 2006, www.heritagefoundation.org.

³⁷ See David B. Larson, Susan S. Larson, and John Gartner, “Families, Relationships and Health,” *Behavior and Medicine* (1990), 135.

³⁸ See W. Bradford Wilcox, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands* (2004), 186.

³⁹ See Linda C. Robinson and Priscilla W. Blanton, “Marital Strengths in Enduring Marriages,” *Family Relations*, vol. 42, no. 1 (Jan. 1993), 41–42.

⁴⁰ See Timothy T. Clydesdale, “Family Behaviors among Early U.S. Baby Boomers: Exploring the Effects of Religion and Income Change, 1965–1982,” *Social Forces*, vol. 76, no. 2 (Dec. 1997), 605.

⁴¹ See Byron R. Johnson, Ralph Brett Tompkins, and Derek Webb, “Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations: A Review of the Literature,” Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society (2002), http://www.manhattaninstitute.org/pdf/crrucs_objective_hope.pdf.

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⁴³ See Johnson, Tompkins, and Webb, “Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations.”

⁴⁴ See Frank Tovato, “Domestic/Religious Individualism and Youth Suicide in Canada,” *Family Perspectives*, vol. 24 (1990), 69.

⁴⁵ See Nicholas Zill, “Quality of Parent-Child Relationship, Religious Attendance, and Family Structure,” *Mapping America* (2009), 48, <http://www.frc.org/mappingamerica/mapping-america-48-quality-of-parent-child-relationship-religiousattendance-and-family-structure>; see also *Mapping America* publications on U.S. patterns of viewing X-rated movies (*Mapping America*, 37–39) and adultery (*Mapping America*, 73–75), <http://www.mappingamericaproject.org>.

⁴⁶ See Marvin D. Free Jr., “Religiosity, Religious Conservatism, Bonds to School, and Juvenile Delinquency Among Three Categories of Drug Users,” *Deviant Behavior*, vol. 15 (1994), 151.

⁴⁷ See William J. Strawbridge, Sarah J. Shema, Richard D. Cohen, and George A. Kaplan, “Religious Attendance Increases Survival by Improving and Maintaining Good Health Behaviors, Mental Health, and Social Relationships,” *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2001), 68; Johnson, Tompkins, and Webb, “Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations.”

⁴⁸ See Johnson, Larson, De Li, and Jang, “Escaping from the Crime of Inner Cities.” (Disadvantaged black youths in the inner city who attend religious services regularly are 57 percent less likely to deal drugs and 39 percent less likely to commit crime generally.)

⁴⁹ See W. Bradford Wilcox, “Religion, Convention, and Paternal Involvement,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 64, no. 3 (Aug. 2002), 780–91.

⁵⁰ See Chandra Muller and Christopher G. Ellison, “Religious Involvement, Social Capital, and Adolescents’ Academic Progress: Evidence from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988,” *Sociological Focus*, vol. 34 (May 2001), 155.

⁵¹ See Muller and Ellison, “Religious Involvement, Social Capital, and Adolescents’ Academic Progress,” 155.

⁵² <http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/WomenandReligiousFreedom.pdf>