HOW to Promote Religious Freedom Where I Live

Matthew K. Richards
Kirton | McConkie
“The assault on moral principles and religious freedom has never been stronger. As Latter-day Saints, we need to do our best to preserve light and protect our families and communities from this assault on morality and religious freedom.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook
General Conference
October 2010
“The assault on moral principles and religious freedom has never been stronger. As Latter-day Saints, we need to do our best to preserve light and protect our families and communities from this assault on morality and religious freedom.”

“In many countries, including the United States, religious freedom is slowly and dangerously eroding.”

- Elder L. Tom Perry
For Individuals…

- **FREE EXPRESSION:** Will religious viewpoints be suppressed in the public square and other places where people live out their lives?

- **PARENTS TEACHING CHILDREN:** Will parents of school children be able to ensure that their religious values aren’t undermined through classroom instruction or intimidation?

- **THE WORKPLACE:** Will employees be able to maintain their religious identity in the workplace and be reasonably accommodated when work and religious duties conflict?
For Individuals...

- **PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS:** Will professionals lose or be denied licensing for expressing religious views or declining to provide services that are available elsewhere but that are at odds with their beliefs?

- **SMALL BUSINESSES:** Will family and religiously oriented businesses be able to maintain their values in the face of anti-discrimination laws?

- **COLLEGE CAMPUSES:** Will campus student groups be able to select their own leaders or express a religious message?

- **FREEDOM FROM RETALIATION:** Will those who voice beliefs be retaliated against?
For Churches ...

• **TAX EXEMPT STATUS:** Will churches and schools that affirm the traditional definition of marriage lose their tax-exempt status? Will donors’ contributions be tax deductible?

• **RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS:** Will religious schools be able to maintain their religious values and standards while also retaining their accreditation and the ability to participate in federal educational and research programs?

• **RELIGIOUS EMPLOYMENT:** Will churches continue to have the right to employ people that affirm and live the church’s beliefs? Will they be forced to provide employment benefits that contradict their beliefs?
For Churches ...

- **PRIVATE PROPERTY:** Will churches be able to build and maintain houses of worship and other facilities? Will they be able to preserve their religiously important properties for activities that are consistent with their religious beliefs?

- **ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT RESOURCES:** Will religious organizations be able to participate on equal terms with other non-profit organizations in government programs and the use of government facilities and properties?
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Elder Quentin L. Cook
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“I would like to challenge you to contemplate how you can improve the society in which you live. Participating in government and asserting righteous principles in the public square would be a commendable and much needed goal. Many times your particular talents are needed to defend our faith.”
“[T]he Church and society need you to be examples of the believers, in word and deed. Elder Quentin L. Cook has said, ‘One of the reasons the attack on moral and religious principles has been so successful is the reluctance of people of faith to express their views.’ We need you to speak up—to express your views and defend the faith. And we need you to do so with respect for the beliefs of others and with dignity and decency as disciples of Jesus Christ.”
“You are among the finest and best trained we have to defend, to advocate, to plead, and to appeal for the great faith, the strong families, and the religious freedom for which and upon which this republic was founded. God bless you in the powerful and virtuous practice of the law.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
J. Reuben Clark Law Society
February 2013
“Brothers and sisters, we are responsible to safeguard these sacred freedoms and rights for ourselves and our posterity.”

“Don’t walk! Run! Run to receive the blessings of agency by following the Holy Ghost and exercising the freedoms God has given us to do His will.”

- “become informed,”
- “join with others,”
- “work side by side to protect religious freedom,” and
- be examples.
“Religious freedom ... is so vitally important for your future and for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.... Apostles and Prophets, under the inspiration of heaven, have given significant consideration to this issue.”

Elder Ronald A. Rasband
BYU Devotional
Sept. 2015
We need “active involvement from your generation on this topic”:

- “Let fairness guide your treatment of others.”
- “Disagree without being disagreeable.”
- “Respect the ability of others to make choices and ask that they extend to us the same courtesy.”
- “Stand up for fairness if you see another’s rights being impeded.”

“We need your **optimism** and your **determination** to work through these complex social issues.”
“Most importantly we need you to engage in dialogue regarding the complexities of this issue and find solutions for how to best extend fairness to everyone, including people of faith. These conversations need to be occurring in our schools, homes and relationships with friends and coworkers.”

“Please do not shy away from a dialogue regarding these important issues simply because you are worried that it might be difficult or uncomfortable.”
Learn

• Learn why religious freedom matters and is threatened today
• Learn about potential threats to religious freedom in your area of practice
• Learn the perspectives of others to enable respectful, civil dialogue
• Stay abreast of what is happening in your area of practice and community
Engage

• Pursue excellence and enhance your credibility in your chosen practice area
• Cultivate social and professional networks
• Participate actively in legal and governmental institutions
• Become involved in your community
• Put yourself in a position so that when you say something on an important matter it will make a difference
Watch

• If you see important developments, contact Kirton|McConkie’s tip line:
  
  religiousfreedom@kmclaw.com
  (801) 350-7634
Stand Up

• Raise your own individual voice on issues that affect religious freedom
• Inform others
• Connect with like-minded people
• Never imply that you represent a specific organization like the Church or JRCLS
Support

- Join or donate to organizations that promote religious freedom.
Be an Example

• Live your faith so that others will see your good works
• Show respect for the beliefs of others
“I wonder if you who are now lawyers or you who are students of the law know how much you are needed as defenders of the faith. Be willing to give of your time and of your means and your expertise to the building up of the Church and the kingdom of God and the establishment of Zion, which we are under covenant to do—not just to the Church as an institution, but to members and ordinary people who need your professional protection.”
“I am not sure you can fully comprehend how significant you are and what you collectively accomplish in blessing mankind and building the Kingdom of God here on earth.”

Elder
Quentin L. Cook
J. Reuben Clark
Law Society
March 13, 2009
“Don’t walk! Run!”
“Become informed”
“Engage ... and find solutions”
“Join with others”
“Speak up ... with respect for the beliefs of others and with dignity and decency as disciples of Jesus Christ.
“Seek fairness for all”
“Be examples”
“I expect to see the day when the elders in Israel will protect and sustain civil and religious liberty and every constitutional right bequeathéd to us by our fathers, and spread these rights abroad in connection with the gospel for the salvation of all nations. I shall see this whether I live or die.”

— President Brigham Young

“There is a battle over the meaning of [religious] freedom. The contest is of eternal importance, and it is your generation that must understand the issues and make the efforts to prevail.”

— Elder Dallin H. Oaks (Oct. 2009, BYU Idaho)