

# As an LDS Legal Professional, What Can I Do to Promote Religious Freedom?

## 1. Educate yourself

- a. Learn why religious freedom matters and is threatened today.
- b. Learn about potential threats to religious freedom in your area of practice.
- c. Learn the perspectives of others to enable respectful, civil dialogue.
- d. Stay abreast of what is happening in your area of practice and community.

## 2. Engage in your profession and community

- a. Pursue excellence and enhance your credibility in your chosen practice area, whatever it may be.
- b. Cultivate social and professional networks.
- c. Participate actively in legal and governmental institutions.
- d. Become involved in your community: run for office, volunteer, be neighborly.
- e. Put yourself in a position so that when you say something on an important matter it will make a difference.

## 3. Watch for developments

- a. When you learn of a substantial development affecting religious freedom, alert Kirton McConkie [801-350-7634; [religiousfreedom@kmclaw.com](mailto:religiousfreedom@kmclaw.com)]
- b. Very occasionally, a national organization, such as the Church, may become involved, contact you, or seek your help. (Be patient; decisions take time!)

## 4. Stand up for religious freedom in your individual capacity

- a. Regardless of whether the matter attracts a national organization's attention, raise your own voice on issues that affect religious freedom. You need not wait for permission or instructions to speak up or take action, on your own, to promote religious freedom.
- b. Inform others.
- c. Connect with like-minded people.
- d. **CAUTION:** Whether on your own or informally with others, never imply that you represent an organization unless you are specifically authorized to do so; avoid even the appearance of a representation. This includes the Law Society itself, which does not take positions on specific issues. Authorization to speak on behalf of the Law Society would require approval from the Law Society Board of Directors.

## 5. Support organizations that promote religious freedom

- a. Give of your time or resources to credible organizations that promote religious freedom. There are many organizations across the political spectrum that advocate for or defend religious freedom through litigation, political activism, or educational outreach. Virtually all organizations heavily depend on donations and volunteers.

## 6. Be an example of the believers

- a. Live your faith so that others—inside and outside your professional circles—will see your good works, experience your genuine love and friendship, and feel the Spirit working through you.
- b. Show respect for the beliefs of others and act with dignity as disciples of Jesus Christ.

## **Resources:**

- Introductory videos, speeches by General Authorities, and other Church resources on the topic of religious freedom: <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/official-statement/religious-freedom> Examples of recently added resources include:
  - Elder Oaks, Sacramento Court/Clergy Conference, “The Boundary Between Church and State” (Oct. 20, 2015).
  - Elder Rasband, BYU address, “Religious Freedom and Fairness for All” (Sept. 15, 2015).
  - Elder Cook, University of Notre Dame Australia School of Law (May 27, 2015).
  - Elder Christofferson, address to Brazilian interfaith group, “A Celebration of Religious Freedom” (April 29, 2015).
  - Elder Oaks, Argentine Council for International Relations, “Challenges to Religious Freedom” (April 23, 2015).
  - Elder Oaks, Elder Holland, Elder Christofferson and Sister Marriott, News Conference on Religious Freedom and Nondiscrimination (Jan. 27, 2015).
- Daily headlines on law and religion, collected by BYU’s International Center for Law and Religion Studies (subscribe for a daily email): <http://www.iclrs.org/common/headline.php>
- Religious Freedom Annual Review conference hosted by International Center for Law and Religion Studies (July 2016)
- BYU Education Week (August 2016)
- <http://www.jrcls.org/> — Religious Freedom Subcommittee & LDS Perspectives lesson plans (found under the “Publications” tab)

## **Other Organizations:**

- <http://faithcounts.com/>
- <http://www.becketfund.org/>
- <http://religiousfreedomandbusiness.org/>
- <http://www.pewforum.org/> (research on religion in public life)
- <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/rfp>
- <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/>
- <http://www.adventistliberty.org/>
- <http://www.churchstate.org/>