

# REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

Magazine of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty

Mobilizing in 2018 and beyond:  
**AMANDA TYLER** shares our goals

Shurden Lectures at Mercer will  
explore religion and public life

**HOLLY HOLLMAN** examines the  
perils of government funding



**A THREAT TO ANYONE'S RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IS A THREAT TO EVERYONE'S RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

# Updates from the nation's capital

*The Baptist Joint Committee monitors rapidly changing church-state issues in all three branches of the federal government. To get the most current news affecting these and other issues, be sure to check our website and blog at [BJCOnline.org](http://BJCOnline.org).*



## Final tax bill does not repeal Johnson Amendment; more threats expected

The tax bill passed by Congress and signed into law by President Donald Trump in December did not include any language affecting the “Johnson Amendment,” which is a name for part of the tax code that protects the nonpartisanship of houses of worship and other 501(c)(3) organizations. During final tax bill negotiations, the Senate parliamentarian ruled that language undermining it would violate the Byrd rule, so it was kept out.

“This is a big win for churches, synagogues, mosques, all other 501(c)(3) nonprofits, and the people who rely on them as a vital part of our society,” said BJC Executive Director Amanda Tyler.

The change was stuck into a version of the tax bill on the fast track, but people of faith were instrumental in reminding Congress they did not want or need to alter that part of the law. The Johnson Amendment allows all 501(c)(3) organizations to speak out on political issues, but it protects them from the division that comes with endorsing or opposing candidates.

“Fortunately, as more Americans learned of the proposal and its likely impact, they raised their voices — calling and writing their representatives and senators, sharing concerns with their neighbors through local and social media, and joining thousands of faith leaders at [Faith-Voices.org](http://Faith-Voices.org),” Tyler said.

Other attempts to change the law are expected in 2018.



## Supreme Court to hear new travel ban case

The U.S. Supreme Court announced it will hear a challenge to the latest version of President Donald Trump’s travel ban, including the specific question on whether it violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment by discriminating on the basis of religion. The ban at issue was released Sept. 24, 2017. It affects eight countries, six of which have populations with a Muslim majority.

Arguments are expected in April with a decision released by June.



Hollman speaks to reporters on Dec. 5

## Court hears cake case

The Supreme Court heard *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado* on Dec. 5, a case involving a commercial baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple, despite a state public accommodation law. The BJC’s brief says a religious liberty exemption should not be granted when the actor is operating in the commercial context and not required to participate in a religious ceremony.

“Colorado’s law ensures equal treatment in the marketplace without regard to religion and other characteristics. That protection is good for religious liberty,” said BJC General Counsel Holly Hollman.

A decision is expected by June.



## HHS announces new division within Office for Civil Rights

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the creation of a new division within its Office for Civil Rights (OCR) on Jan. 18.

The “Conscience and Religious Liberty Division” will investigate religious liberty claims in the health care context — for instance, medical professionals who object to performing certain procedures that conflict with their religious beliefs. According to the HHS press release, the move “will provide HHS with the focus it needs to more vigorously and effectively enforce existing laws protecting the rights of conscience and religious freedom ...”

The new division does not signal a change in the law. The administration has released a proposed rule on how this office will implement and enforce federal laws that protect providers’ conscience.

It remains to be seen precisely how these additional investigative and enforcement resources will be used in practice. Laws protecting conscience-based objections have been in place for years. OCR Director Roger Serevino promises “change is coming” in the way government treats conscience claims in the health care arena.

The Baptist Joint Committee is particularly interested in how this change affects the balance between protecting health care workers and the government’s duty to ensure nondiscrimination in services and whether the change threatens to adversely affect patient care.

## Together, in 2018

By Amanda Tyler, BJC Executive Director



**F**or the BJC and others who work in Washington, 2017 was a year of rapid change and an ever-shortening news cycle. It was also a year full of challenges to religious liberty mounted on multiple fronts.

As we begin the new year and continue to meet those challenges, the BJC staff is focused on two main goals: expanding our network of partners and increasing engagement among our supporters.

Our team will be looking for new partners in our work, both inside and outside the Baptist world. As it has always been at the Baptist **Joint** Committee, our “Baptist” tent is large and diverse, now with 15 different Baptist bodies represented on our Board. We know that within our supporting organizations, there are more churches, leaders and individuals with whom we will want to connect.

While our mission is inextricably linked to our Baptist roots, our message of religious freedom for all resonates with people regardless of their faith identity. We are asking ourselves this question: What intentional outreach can we do now to those who consider religious freedom for all to be a bedrock value but who do not label themselves as Baptist or even Christian? More than ever, we need to involve people from all backgrounds in our work.

The BJC remains unique: we are the only national faith-based group in Washington that is focused solely on religious liberty. Our singular focus and expertise earned through decades of work give us the credibility to lead on the most complicated — and often divisive — issues impacting religious liberty that come to Congress, the Supreme Court and the court of public opinion.

For those who already know and trust the work of the BJC, we will seek new ways to engage with you. Our vision calls us to be mobilizers, equipping you with the tools you need to be advocates and ambassadors for religious liberty in your community.

In 2017, we learned that engaging and partnering with you are crucial to our success. We had opportunities to do that

last year as we fought to protect the Johnson Amendment, working with people from a variety of religious and non-religious perspectives on a common goal. You also answered our calls to add your support to [Faith-Voices.org](http://Faith-Voices.org), to contact your representatives and senators, and to make your voice heard that you don’t want to change the law to encourage partisan campaign endorsements with tax-deductible dollars in churches. Your advocacy made a difference, and we were able to keep this harmful change out of the tax law that passed just before Christmas.

The threat continues, as do opportunities to respond. We expect similar efforts to weaken the Johnson Amendment added to “must-pass” legislation, like spending packages and bills to raise the debt ceiling. We will be calling on you to continue to raise your voice for religious liberty for all, in this context and others that appear throughout the year.

We have brought on two new team members to help us achieve our goals. In January, Katie Murray joined us as associate director for mobilization and Jaziah Masters as education and mobilization assistant. These new positions will allow us to expand our public speaking and educational offerings, led by Charles Watson Jr. The BJC team will continue to speak regularly in the Center for Religious Liberty in our Capitol Hill offices and at churches, colleges, universities, seminaries and other venues across the country.

As I traveled the country in my first year, people would ask how they could support our mission of defending and extending religious liberty for all. My answer to this: We need your involvement as we expand our activities and seek out new partnerships. Who do you know in your house of worship, your school or workplace or your neighborhood who needs to know about the work of the BJC? And will you commit to taking an even more active role in our work by being an ambassador for religious freedom in your community?

With your help, I know we can achieve remarkable things together for religious liberty in 2018.

# New FEMA funding policy problematic

Overtuning decades of precedent, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) amended its internal guidelines to permit houses of worship to apply for disaster relief grants that could go to repair — and even rebuild — houses of worship damaged by disasters. This change is problematic, as one long-standing staple of Establishment Clause law has been that the government does not fund religion. That responsibility is left to individual religious communities.

FEMA has a few avenues for disbursing emergency relief grants following a declared natural disaster. One is to reimburse organizations that provide certain essential services, such as emergency shelter, medical care or meals. Churches that provide these secular services for community residents have long been able to receive these FEMA reimbursements on the same basis as other institutions; the changed FEMA policy does not affect this form of reimbursement.

The new FEMA policy concerns FEMA grants that go to repairing and rebuilding physical structures, not reimbursements for providing emergency community services. Under the former policy, most churches were excluded from receiving grants to re-

pair or rebuild their facilities because their buildings are primarily used for religious purposes. Church-owned buildings primarily used for non-religious purposes could have potentially qualified for these grants. But, under the old policy, buildings primarily used for religious purposes, along with buildings used primarily for political, athletic, recreational, vocational or academic training, conferences or similar activities were all ineligible for FEMA's repair grants. These exclusions were based upon the use of the buildings, not the identity of the owners.

FEMA's new policy now permits houses of worship to apply for grants to repair and rebuild their buildings used primarily for religious purposes, but it still prohibits funding for buildings used for the other excluded purposes.

Despite FEMA's change in policy, using taxpayer dollars to repair and rebuild houses of worship remains constitutionally problematic under the Establishment Clause as taxpayers should not be forced to literally build sanctuaries for religious teachings with which they disagree. For more on this issue, read BJC General Counsel Holly Hollman's column on the next page.

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By Jennifer Hawks, BJC Associate General Counsel

# Brownback confirmed as international religious freedom ambassador

WASHINGTON—By the narrowest margin, the U.S. Senate voted Jan. 24 to confirm Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback as U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.

The deadlocked Senate voted 49-49, with Vice President Mike Pence casting the tie-breaking vote to allow Brownback to fill the post left vacant since David Saperstein stepped down a year ago.

Brownback will head the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom, which monitors religious freedom abuses globally.

Immediately after the Senate vote, Brownback took to Twitter to tweet: "I'm looking forward to starting my new position as ambassador and working hard for the American people and religious freedom around the world."

Sen. James Lankford, R-Oklahoma, who had made filling the ambassadorship a legislative priority, voiced his support for Brownback and his belief in the importance of the Office of International Religious Freedom.

"Confirmation of Sam Brownback as the ambassador-at-large sends a message to the world that religious freedom is a priority of the United States government," he said. "It is an important first step, but we cannot stop there. Religious freedom must be an integral part of our overall national security and we must use all tools available to condemn acts of religious persecution."

The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty — which does not take positions on appointments to office — offered a measured response to Brownback's confirmation.

"Some of Gov. Brownback's prior positions on issues of religious freedom for everyone are concerning, such as his praise for President Trump's original travel ban that differentiated among refugees fleeing religious-based persecution," said BJC Executive Director Amanda Tyler. "The prolonged nomination process and razor-thin margin on final passage reflect additional concerns that Gov. Brownback's domestic policy positions may negatively impact his ability to serve in this diplomatic post.

"We are encouraged by Gov. Brownback's testimony that he would continue the work of Ambassador David Saperstein, and we look forward to working with Ambassador Brownback in his new role," Tyler said.

Before Brownback was elected governor, he served in the U.S. Senate from 1996 to 2011, after having served in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1995-96. In the Senate, he was co-sponsor of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. He also was co-chair of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

During the Darfur crisis in 2004, Brownback led efforts for a genocide declaration, and he also introduced human rights legislation related to North Korea and Sudan.

President Donald Trump initially nominated Brownback for the ambassador's position last July. When the Senate failed to vote on his nomination before Dec. 31, the president had to renominate him.

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By Ken Camp, Baptist Standard, with BJC Staff Reports

## Natural disasters don't justify government funding

By Holly Hollman, BJC General Counsel

**W**hen hurricanes, floods, fires and other natural disasters strike, churches and other non-governmental entities are often among the quickest to respond. They work alongside and in conjunction with our government's first responders to help in various ways, such as opening their doors to provide food and temporary shelter to victims. By using their private resources and organizing their volunteers, such entities demonstrate the call to be a neighbor in ways that Christianity and other religions command.

At times, churches may provide disaster relief services as part of a larger government effort and may be eligible for government funding reimbursements, such as those provided by FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency), consistent with constitutional standards that protect religious liberty. Such funding supports non-religious functions provided by non-governmental entities without risking unconstitutional government funding of religion. That kind of government-financed engagement with nonprofit organizations fits a long-standing model of church-state cooperation and rarely causes controversy.

As announced early this year, however, new FEMA rules are aimed at an entirely different kind of church-state engagement: building churches with tax dollars. Following the devastating damage caused by hurricanes last year, this new approach was asserted as a constitutional right in litigation brought by a handful of churches and synagogues in Texas and Florida. As their pleadings and media efforts indicated, attorneys for the churches claimed that the Supreme Court's ruling last year in *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer* demanded that FEMA money be made available to rebuild houses of worship. A federal judge rejected their argument and sided with the Baptist Joint Committee and other groups concerned about maintaining church-state separation, saying "the government has a historical and justifiable interest in avoiding an establishment of religion and using public funds to support religion."

The plaintiffs in the Texas case (which has now been dismissed) and FEMA support a reading of *Trinity Lutheran Church* that will ultimately harm churches. In *Trinity Lutheran Church*, the Supreme Court held that Missouri could not exclude churches from a government grant program to resurface playgrounds with scrap tire material. While the decision marked a step away from the long-standing ban on aid to churches as an essential boundary for protecting religious liberty, it did not usher in a sea change for funding churches. Instead,

the Court's decision emphasized the secular nature of playgrounds and the religiously neutral criteria applied in the competitive program at issue. The new FEMA rule, on the other hand, attempts to advance a new constitutional scheme allowing direct government grants for the building of houses of worship.

As the *Trinity Lutheran Church* case made its way to the public's attention, the BJC's education effort emphasized that churches, by definition, are organized for religious purposes and activities. When government money goes to churches, the Constitution demands safeguards to protect our religious liberty, especially to avoid government funding of religious activities. The Court's narrowly crafted decision in *Trinity Lutheran Church* maintains the prohibition on government-funded religious activity, which would certainly be implicated if the government funds the construction of buildings dedicated to religious use.

As Baptists, we are particularly steeped in the historical reasons for avoiding government entanglement in religion, and — like all Americans — we are beneficiaries of a robust religious liberty tradition. A few years ago when arsonists destroyed several African-American churches, the Muslim community raised thousands of dollars to help them rebuild. Such was their free choice. Then and now, the government should not force Americans to build sacred spaces for others.

It is not clear that the proponents of government funding for churches appreciate the practical concerns that will arise and undercut religious liberty. With government money comes government control. That was certainly a concern in the founding era, and in this era of government it is reasonable that when the government funds churches, it will have something to say about how that money is spent. With increased demand and limited government funding, the new rule also puts FEMA in a position to decide which churches among those that have been damaged or destroyed receive government money. That will undoubtedly raise concerns about government favoritism.

In a year with an extraordinary number of natural disasters, churches were centers for providing various kinds of assistance in response to the heartbreaking suffering that accompanies natural disasters. Volunteer efforts, financial support from private sources and government efforts all play a role in recovery. Maintaining adherence to our constitutional tradition that serves religious liberty for all will ensure that churches will continue to play a valuable and trusted role in those efforts.



# A conversation with Amanda Tyler

*On January 3, 2018, Amanda Tyler marked her first anniversary as the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. She reflected on her first year and what lies ahead in an interview with Brian Kaylor, editor of Word & Way, during a speaking engagement in Missouri near the end of 2017. Their conversation first appeared in the December 2017 edition of Word & Way, and it is reprinted here with permission, edited for length and clarity.*

**Brian Kaylor: What has been the biggest challenge or surprise in your first year leading the BJC?**

Amanda Tyler: Well, one of the biggest surprises happened before I even came on board, and that was a big surprise for the country — the election of President Donald Trump. That really changed, in some ways, which issues we were going to be emphasizing or responding to in 2017. In particular, President Trump has made repealing the “Johnson Amendment” a centerpiece of his legislative agenda. That’s a huge surprise. I didn’t expect that would be the single legislative issue that we would be so focused on in my first year and beyond.

That is a challenge, but it has provided a great opportunity for people to get engaged with us, whether it be on the denominational level or on the individual level. There has been an incredible outpouring of support and interest in this issue from people in the churches. That has provided a really nice way to connect and for people to be involved in a very important public policy issue.

**BK: You’ve been involved with the Baptist Joint Committee for a long time before beginning in this role. Why did you decide to work at the BJC?**

AT: The issue of religious freedom for all is a core issue for me, personally. I’ve had a interest in this topic since I was a child because it is a great combination of my three passions: the law, public policy and religion.

I’ve long admired the work of the Baptist Joint Committee. I worked with the BJC

when I was in college — as an intern and then as my first job out of college. When I left, I really thought, “That is the best job that I will ever have.” And I was wrong, because *this* is the best job I have ever had!

I never expected the opportunity to come back and lead the organization. When that opportunity arose with the retirement of Brent Walker, I felt a strong calling that this was the next step for me in my vocation — and I have not felt wrong about that decision.

**BK: The BJC’s name includes the word “joint” to recognize the work as a joint effort of various Baptist groups. Is there something about working with 15 Baptist bodies that seems like a unique Baptist model of cooperation today when we often seem so divided in Baptist life?**

AT: I see great power in the jointness of our organization, particularly the fact that we have been a collaboration from our beginning. Different groups of Baptists came together in the 1930s to say religious freedom for all is such an important principle and distinctive for us that we want an organization to concentrate only on this.

We’ve continued that legacy over the past 80 years as Baptist life, in some ways, has grown even more fractured. But these diverse groups continue to come together to concentrate on this issue. It also shows that we are larger than just one denominational body or just one way of being Baptist.

**BK: We hear a lot about religious liberty these days, but the BJC often offers a**

**unique position on key Supreme Court cases. What is it that drives the BJC’s understanding of how to apply the principle of religious liberty today?**

AT: We draw our understanding of religious liberty from our understanding of the Bible, from our Baptist experience as religious minorities at our country’s founding, as religious dissenters in the Colonies, and then how that experience helped form our constitutional protections in the First Amendment. So, looking to that biblical understanding, to our Baptist experience and to the law, that helps us with our principles of religious liberty we can then apply as the toughest issues impacting religious liberty come up today at the Supreme Court.

I feel like our positions are very principled. Sometimes that means that our positions are not very popular. But I feel confident that we are serving that long Baptist interest in upholding religious liberty for all and providing a Baptist witness to our world today.

**BK: One thing that I think may surprise some people about the BJC is you advocate not only for non-Baptists but even for non-Christians. Can you explain why that’s such an important part of the BJC’s understanding of religious liberty?**

AT: It stems from our understanding that we only have religious freedom if we have religious freedom for *everyone*. When we see someone else’s religious freedom threatened, our religious freedom has been threatened. We only have an ability to say “yes” to God if we can also say “no” to God. So, we defend those who say “no.”

We also know that the state's support for religion harms religion. It was John Leland who said that "the fondness of magistrates to foster Christianity has done it more harm than persecutions ever did." So, we know that religion does best when government leaves it alone. That also means that government cannot preference one religious faith over another.

**BK: Are there ways we talk about religious liberty issues in our society that you find unhelpful? And are there better ways to think about promoting religious liberty for all?**

AT: I don't think it's unique just to religious liberty issues — we certainly see it arise in regards to these issues — but it's this sense of black and white, of all or nothing. Because of the way that religion is protected in our First Amendment, issues of religious freedom are inevitably gray. It's always a balancing of rights — and these are not easy issues.

So, when we hear rhetoric that tries to oversimplify how we look at and how we can protect religious freedom or when we try to pit religious liberty against other civil liberties, those are constructs that are really damaging to a robust understanding of religious freedom for all. If we can approach these positions with some sensitivity to both sides of all these issues, if we can look for nuance and not try to see things in stark all-or-nothing terms, I think religious liberty will fare better.

**BK: What key religious liberty issues do you see on the horizon in 2018?**

AT: I think that the issues that arose in 2017 — both in the courts and in Congress — will continue in 2018. I am particularly alarmed by the hate rhetoric and violence directed toward religious minorities. Not a day goes by that we don't hear of some story in our communities of vandalism or threats or other adverse actions being taken against religious minorities. We will continue to call on Baptists to cry out for the religious freedom of all.

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and additional stories online.*

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[WordandWay.org](http://WordandWay.org)*



Tyler speaks to students at Carson-Newman University in Jefferson City, Tennessee (photo provided by Carson-Newman University Relations Office).



Tyler delivers letters to Congress with representatives of the Interfaith Alliance, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Franciscan Action Network, Bend the Arc, and Muslim Public Affairs Council.



Tyler welcomes visitors from Highland Park Baptist Church in Austin, Texas — her home church — to the BJC's Center for Religious Liberty.

# Liberty, equality and the meaning of religious freedom

By Paul V.M. Flesher

**T**he Declaration of Independence placed the Enlightenment ideal of “liberty” at the heart of the American soul. It cites liberty among the reasons for creating our new country. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.”

The basic meaning of liberty is the ability to do what one wants. Of course even school children know that unbridled liberty is impossible. If one person decides they want to kill another, an extreme example, the second person’s liberty is violated, to say nothing of their life.

Liberty as a political or governing policy thus consists of balancing of each individual’s ability to behave as they wish against others’ freedom to do the same. The goal is to achieve an equality of liberty for everyone, with everyone attaining as much freedom as possible.

Another widely used definition of liberty is one of freedom from oppression; as the Merriam-Webster dictionary puts it, “freedom from arbitrary or despotic control.” This notion of liberty inspired the Puritans to leave England and come to the New World. They wanted the freedom to believe and worship as they were convinced that God wanted them to.

If America’s notion of liberty began with this bid for religious liberty, the result was initially disappointing. True, in 1620 the Puritans established a colony at Plymouth where they followed their faith freely.

But the Puritan notion of religious freedom was limited to themselves and their own beliefs and practices. It did not extend to anyone who believed different from them. In that, they were no different from the Church of England, which had developed its discriminatory policies under King James (who died in 1625).

When Roger Williams and then Anne Hutchinson developed theological positions that differed from those of the Puritans, they were banished. Roger Williams fled to Rhode Island where in 1636 he founded Providence as the first community run on the basis of religious freedom (and founded the First Baptist Church in America). Anne and her followers later settled there.

Although we often call Roger Williams the founder of religious liberty, what he really created was religious equality. The practical effect of bringing together several groups with different religious beliefs in Rhode Island set up an ironic conundrum: religious freedom had to be restricted to achieve



the highest level of religious liberty.

Each group in Rhode Island was free under the second definition of liberty, that of freedom from oppression and control. But they were not free under the first one, that of the unlimited ability to do as they wished. Where one group’s free expression of belief and practice impinged upon another’s, they had to work out a compromise to prevent that. These compromises usually limited both sides’ freedom, although ideally with as little limitation as possible.

America’s great reputation for religious freedom is therefore the reputation for religious equality. Every religion and every version of a religion is free to worship and believe as each one chooses, as long as it does not impinge upon the rights of others. The clarion call we still sound for religious liberty is a call for equal rights of all religions.

That is what makes America the standard bearer for religious freedom. Religious refugees from around the world flock to our country because they know they can worship without persecution here.

What is opposite of equal rights for all religions? Despotism.

If a country allows one religion to worship and act in accordance with its beliefs at the expense of other religions, then that country no longer has freedom of religion but the religious equivalent of political dictatorship.

This is the situation for many countries around the world. They have a political system that favors one religion or even one version of a religion. That preference permits the members of the favored religion rights and privileges others do not have.

This is true whether the religion is Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and even Christianity. The difference in rights between the religion in favor and those out of favor range from mild to extreme, from England’s support of Anglicanism with public taxes, to Israel’s allowing Judaism’s Orthodox wing of Judaism to control marriage law, to frequent persecution of Christians for blasphemy in Islamic countries.

Only equal rights for all religions and all religious people, as well as non-religious beliefs and people, ensures the most religious freedom possible. Any other position penalizes those who do not follow the privileged faith.

*Dr. Paul V.M. Flesher is a professor in the department of religious studies at the University of Wyoming. This piece originally appeared on the Religion Today blog, and is printed here with permission as we mark February 5 as the anniversary of Roger Williams’ arrival in America.*

# Shurden Lectures set for March at Mercer

Dr. Charles C. Haynes will bring his expertise on the intersection of religion and public life to the 2018 Walter B. and Kay W. Shurden Lectures on Religious Liberty and Separation of Church and State. The annual event returns to Mercer University this year, featuring presentations from Haynes on Mercer's Atlanta and Macon campuses March 20-21. All lectures are free and open to the public.

The founding director of the Religious Freedom Center of the Newseum Institute, Haynes is well-known for his work organizing and drafting consensus guidelines on religious liberty in schools, which have been endorsed by a broad range of religious and educational organizations. Widely quoted in magazines and major newspapers, Haynes is also a frequent guest on television and radio regarding First Amendment issues.

Created with a gift from Walter B. and Kay W. Shurden of Macon, Georgia, the lecture series is held at Mercer University every three years and at another seminary, college or university other years. For more information, visit [BJCOnline.org/ShurdenLectures](http://BJCOnline.org/ShurdenLectures).

## 2018 Shurden Lectures

### MARCH 20: ATLANTA

11 a.m. **Liberty of conscience and the future of American democracy**

Mercer's McAfee School of Theology

### MARCH 21: MACON

10 a.m. **Standing up for justice and freedom in an age of conflict and division**

Mercer Medical School Auditorium

3:30 p.m. **From battleground to common ground: A First Amendment vision for religious liberty in public life**

Mercer Law Building's First Floor Courtroom



Haynes



**2018**

On March 20-21, the Shurden Lectures return to Mercer University in Atlanta and Macon. Dr. Charles C. Haynes is this year's lecturer.



THE PREVIOUS SHURDEN LECTURES, CLOCKWISE: 2017, Holly Hollman at Campbell University in North Carolina; 2016, Molly Marshall at Bethel University in Minnesota; 2015, Alan Brownstein at Mercer University; 2014, Michael Meyerson at Baylor University in Texas; 2013, Brent Walker at Stetson University in Florida; 2012, Franklin T. Lambert at Mercer University; 2011, Melissa Rogers at Georgetown College in Kentucky; 2010, Martin E. Marty at Samford University in Alabama; 2009, Randall Balmer at Mercer University; 2008, Charles G. Adams spoke at Wake Forest University in North Carolina; 2007, James M. Dunn at Carson-Newman University in Tennessee; 2006, inaugural year featuring Rabbi David Saperstein at Mercer University.

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By Alyssa Aldape  
Pam Durso

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## **In memory of Sarah Beddingfield**

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By Elaine and James Johnson II

## **In memory of Quentin and Mary Alene Lockwood**

By Quentin Lockwood Jr.

## **In memory of Patrick Henry Luckett**

By Johna Hill Edwards

## **In memory of Orba Lee and Peggy Malone**

By David and Mary Malone

## **In memory of Anita Gurrola Martinez**

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## **In memory of Tom Pinner**

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## **In memory of Douglas Tonks**

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To honor someone with a gift to the BJC, send a note with your check or give at [BJCOnline.org/donate](http://BJCOnline.org/donate).

## Murray joins BJC staff in mobilization and advocacy role

**KATIE MURRAY** has joined the BJC staff as the associate director for mobilization. Her work focuses on equipping individuals to play an active role in advocacy in their communities and houses of worship.

Previously, Murray served as the Christian advocacy specialist at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, where she devised a model for congregational advocacy, created new partnerships and mobilized members into action. Her work at Wilshire was in partnership with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and she assisted CBF in creating an advocacy toolkit for congregations that will be released in the summer of 2018.

A graduate of Baylor University, Murray also earned a Master of Divinity degree from George W. Truett Theological Seminary and a Master of Social Work degree from the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work at Baylor. She was ordained into the Gospel ministry by First Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, and she was a member of the inaugural class of BJC Fellows. She resides in Dallas with her husband, Steven, and their son.

You can contact Murray at [kmurray@BJCOnline.org](mailto:kmurray@BJCOnline.org).



## Masters joins staff as education and mobilization assistant

**JAZIAH B. MASTERS** has joined the BJC staff as the education and mobilization assistant.

Masters is a 2017 graduate of Baylor University, where he majored in political science. Prior to joining the BJC, he interned on Capitol Hill in the office of U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield. He also interned in the office of Texas state Rep. Helen Giddings, where he provided legislative and administrative support.

Masters also completed internships with the Dallas Independent School District and the U.S. Small Business Administration. While in college, he served as a reading counselor and led academic instruction for a class of elementary school students in Baltimore, Maryland.

You can contact Masters at [jmasters@BJCOnline.org](mailto:jmasters@BJCOnline.org).



## Baptist Joint Committee welcomes spring interns

*The Baptist Joint Committee is pleased to have two spring semester interns working alongside our staff in Washington, D.C.*



**JAKE KARAISZ**, a native of Galloway, New Jersey, is a senior at Stockton University, majoring in political science. During his undergraduate studies, he worked on projects that contributed research and analysis to the U.S. Department of State on the voting behavior of United Nations member states. An Eagle Scout, Karaisz has served as program director at his local summer camp. He plans to pursue a career in nonprofit advocacy or political communications.

**GARRISON "LUKE" PERRIN**, a native of Hickory, North Carolina, is a junior at North Carolina State University, majoring in political science with minors in English and history. He served as the opinion editor and news editor of *Technician*, the student newspaper on campus, and was a Bible study leader with Passport Camps. The son of John and Stella Perrin, he plans to attend law school upon graduation and has an interest in immigration law.

## Hollman receives Abner V. McCall Religious Liberty Award



BJC General Counsel **HOLLY HOLLMAN** was recognized for her work defending religious freedom with the 2018 Abner V. McCall Religious Liberty Award from the Baylor Line Foundation.

The award honors alumni and friends of Baylor University who, by their lives and actions, exemplify the courage and dedication of McCall to the belief in and commitment to religious liberty.

McCall was a justice of the Texas Supreme Court in 1956, dean of the Baylor Law School from 1948 to 1959, and Baylor president from 1961 to 1981.

Upon receiving the award, Hollman commended the Foundation for maintaining Baylor's commitment to religious liberty and for the honor named for such a beloved Baylor leader. As a friend of Baylor, she noted the many connections between the university and the Baptist Joint Committee, spanning from the BJC's first executive director, J.M. Dawson, to its newest staff members.

Hollman was one of nine people recognized for achievements at the 2018 Alumni Hall of Fame awards gala, held January 20 in Waco, Texas. Previous recipients of the McCall Award include former BJC Executive Directors James M. Dunn, Brent Walker and James E. Wood; John F. Baugh; Melissa Rogers; and Rep. Chet Edwards.



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The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty defends religious liberty for all people and protects the institutional separation of church and state in the historic Baptist tradition. Based in Washington, D.C., we work through education, litigation and legislation, often combining our efforts with a wide range of groups to provide education about and advocacy for religious liberty.

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## REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

**Amanda Tyler** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**Cherilyn Crowe** EDITOR  
**Ilana Ostrin** ASSOCIATE EDITOR



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Jackie Baugh Moore (left) with honorees Skye Perryman, the Rev. Dr. Amy Butler, and Holly Hollman at Baylor's football stadium.



### Hollman honored by Baylor Line Foundation

Read about the Abner V. McCall Religious Liberty Award presented to the BJC's Holly Hollman at Baylor (page 11).



### Win money for college!

High school juniors and seniors can submit an essay by **March 9** for a chance to win scholarship money. [BJCOnline.org/contest](http://BJCOnline.org/contest)

**On the cover:** Interfaith advocates deliver a letter to Congress on April 4, 2017. Photo by Tim Pennington-Russell.