

REPORT

FROM THE

CAPITAL

A BJC Magazine

Special edition:
Shifts on the Supreme Court

Justice Amy Coney Barrett's
church-state record

Remembering Justice
Ruth Bader Ginsburg

AMANDA TYLER on what
we learned in 2020

HOLLY HOLLMAN explores
Supreme Court case on
foster care regulations

Shifts on the Supreme Court

The passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in September set up a new shift on the U.S. Supreme Court. In the first two months of the term, the Court heard two cases with religious liberty implications. The U.S. Senate was considering the nomination of Justice Amy Coney Barrett during the first case (*Tanzin v. Tanvir*), and she was on the Court by the time oral arguments were heard in *Fulton v. Philadelphia*. What's next for the Court? This magazine looks at where we are now and where we could be going.

THE LEGACY OF JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG: Amanda Tyler and Holly Hollman reflect on the religious liberty impact of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg during her 27 years on the Court, including how she upheld a key religious liberty law (pages 8-9).

JUSTICE AMY CONEY BARRETT'S CHURCH-STATE RECORD AND HEARINGS: On pages 6-7, learn more about what BJC found out about Barrett's church-state jurisprudence before her hearings began, and read what we were able to glean from her interactions with senators during her confirmation hearings.

FULTON V. PHILADELPHIA: The high-profile religious liberty case of this Supreme Court term tackles foster care and religious groups' responsibility to follow government rules when using government money. Holly Hollman has more on pages 4-5.

TANZIN V. TANVIR: The other religious liberty case heard this year involves a technical question about the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. See page 5 for more, including BJC's involvement in the case.

Voicing our values together

As you review this *Report from the Capital*, see all the good you do when you donate to BJC and our work for faith freedom for all. Here are five ways to give to BJC this December:

1. Give by mail. Gifts must be postmarked by December 31 to be credited toward your 2020 charitable contributions. You can mail a check to:

Baptist Joint Committee
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

2. Give online. Go to BJC's website for our secure and easy-to-navigate giving page: BJCOnline.org/give.

3. Give monthly. Sign up to make a recurring gift each month. It is an easy and effective way to give, and you will be part of our Faith FULL Community, receiving special updates from us (see page 12 for more): BJCOnline.org/give-monthly.

4. Give stocks and bonds. Giving long-term appreciated stock may provide you tax advantages while expanding BJC's mission. For more information, contact Dan Hamil at dhamil@BJCOnline.org or call him at 202-544-4226, extension 307.

5. Give via your IRA distribution. For those who are at least 70½ years old, it is once again possible to make tax-favored charitable gifts from traditional and other eligible IRA accounts. Check with your IRA administrator or your tax adviser for more information.

Whether at the U.S. Supreme Court, in the halls of Congress or in your local community, BJC is glad to partner with you to make a difference in our world, standing together for faith freedom. Thank you for joining us in our work!



REFLECTIONS

What have we learned in 2020?

By Amanda Tyler, BJC Executive Director



We're finalizing this issue just days after the conclusion of our long presidential election season. It was an extraordinary election in a previously unthinkable year. As record numbers of Americans cast ballots, the country hit all-time highs in daily new cases of COVID-19 and unrest continued in cities across the country, including in Philadelphia, where people protested the killing of Walter Wallace Jr. by police.

What have we learned about our country, our religious communities and ourselves over the course of this tumultuous — and often heartbreaking — year?

Bridging our country's deep divisions will take time and personal commitment to healing our broken relationships. As millions celebrated President-elect Joe Biden's victory, millions mourned President Donald Trump's loss. God is with both the rejoicing and the disappointed. Jesus called us to love our neighbors as ourselves, even those — I would argue especially those — who vote differently than we do. We too often treat our brothers and sisters as our political enemies. No wonder it is difficult for us to listen and understand.

Examining Christian nationalism can help us understand our political differences. President Trump stoked the flames over the past four years, but this election has exposed what a powerful ideology it is and will remain. How much a person embraces Christian nationalism is a powerful indicator of how that individual views a number of important policy issues, as outlined by sociologists of religion Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry in their research (see p. 17). Because Christian nationalism and white supremacy are so deeply entrenched in every segment of our society, it makes it all the more important that we can have constructive conversations about them and how they polarize us. I think this is particularly true when it comes to finding common ground and understanding on religious freedom.

Freedom and human flourishing depend on our support for each other. This year revealed just how interconnected and interdependent we are. Safeguarding our health requires com-

mitment to protecting our neighbor's health as our own. Communities have pulled together to support struggling individuals, families and small businesses. Faith communities have shown resilience and creativity in adapting their ministries to serve the people around them. American individualism as an ideology won't meet this moment. In the same way, our freedom — specifically, our religious freedom — is best protected when we think less in terms of one person's absolute rights in a vacuum and more in terms of protecting everyone's freedom through respect and compromise in authentic relationships.

Change takes long-term investment in persistent, principled and brave advocacy. We are not the first generation to witness this truth, but it is at odds with the instant gratification that is valued by our culture. Over the past several months, the chant "no justice, no peace" has been repeated at protests for racial justice across the country. I stand in solidarity with the activists and their resolve to take to the streets to fight for reform of the broken system. When it comes to bridging the divides in our society, I think we should adopt a modified version of that refrain: Seek peace, work together towards justice.

Our BJC community models this inclusive approach to change. Rooted in our Baptist perspective, we bring together a diverse community of advocates committed to religious liberty for all. We are investing in our "future faithful"— the next generation of religious liberty freedom fighters. They are passionate people who will stand side by side with you and help defend our shared values.

I invite you to join our cause. Your donation is a powerful statement of your belief in our mission to defend faith freedom for all. Your financial support provides the necessary resources for BJC staff members to train the next generation of religious liberty advocates online and, when it is safe again to gather, in person.

As we close this challenging year, I approach 2021 with hope and anticipation. With your investment in our community, BJC will continue to bring diverse voices together to speak up for everyone's religious freedom.

Court should uphold nondiscrimination in government contracts

By Holly Hollman, BJC General Counsel

The latest legal clash over religious objections to same-sex marriage and nondiscrimination policies that protect the LGBTQ community is being fought in a particularly sensitive arena: the government's foster care system. In many states and in many social services contexts, government contracts with religiously affiliated organizations are common and effective. A constitutional model for such public-private partnerships has long existed that serves the public interest. But whether that model is sustainable may depend on how the Supreme Court rules on a religious organization's effort to alter the terms of a government contract that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.

On November 4, during Justice Amy Coney Barrett's first week on the job, the Court heard arguments in *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*. It is an important religious liberty case that addresses how governments partner with faith-based groups to provide services. The case was brought by Catholic Social Services (CSS) and two foster parents with whom they had worked. They sued the city of Philadelphia after the city ended and refused to renew CSS's "foster family certification" contract — a contract to recruit, screen, train and certify foster families with whom foster children could be placed. CSS and the foster parents claimed a violation of their free exercise of religion.

Philadelphia's Fair Practices Ordinance prohibits discrimination based on certain protected categories, including race, religion and sexual orientation. The city says that the ordinance applies in this case to prohibit discrimination in foster family certification without exception. To clarify the issue, the city now includes a specific nondiscrimination statement in the agreement each contracting agency must sign. While CSS is a reputable contractor that has successfully provided such family services for the city for many years, it refuses to screen same-sex couples based on its Catholic religious beliefs. In response, Philadelphia did not renew its foster family certification contract with CSS, though CSS continues to receive \$26 million under other contracts to provide other social services.

Both the district court and the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against CSS, finding that neither the city's policy nor its

enforcement discriminated against CSS in violation of the Free Exercise Clause. Instead, they found the policy was generally applicable (applied to all contractors) and applied neutrally to all contractors (no exemptions were granted). The Supreme Court granted review of the case, not only to decide whether the Free Exercise Clause is violated when a government contract requires actions that contradict the agency's religious beliefs, but also whether the Court should revisit its decision in *Employment Division v. Smith*, the Court's 1990 case interpreting the Free Exercise Clause. At the Supreme Court, the U.S. government filed a brief in support of CSS.

BJC filed a friend-of-the-court brief in support of Philadelphia. The brief recognizes that religious institutions that participate in government-administered social programs, such as foster care services, perform an immensely valuable function. Nonetheless, when a religiously affiliated organization voluntarily chooses to contract with a government agency to perform functions on behalf of the government with government money, the organization is not entitled to displace the government's criteria for performing those functions and apply their own religious criteria. We were joined by the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on our brief.

Importantly, and as BJC has argued in other specific contexts, the government's interest in prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is similar to its interest in prohibiting discrimination on the basis of religion. Here, nondiscrimination policies advance the cause of religious liberty by recognizing individual dignity and allowing faith-based organizations to participate in social services on equal footing. As our brief explains, the fact that other contractors are willing to serve someone does not remove the stigma of being denied service based on one's religion or other protected characteristic.

Allowing the views of religious groups to set public policy rather than the government may mean that public entities will decide to simply perform these services themselves. That is a perfectly constitutional decision, but it gives fewer opportunities for private agencies to perform this type of religiously meaningful work.



During oral arguments, which were held telephonically and live-streamed on C-SPAN, attorneys on both sides argued that the Supreme Court did not need to overrule *Smith* in order to decide the case in their favor. At least four justices asked questions that pointed to the difficulty of limiting the scope of a religious exemption without impacting nondiscrimination based on other characteristics, such as race, gender, disability and — most importantly for religious liberty — religion. Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Clarence Thomas tried to draw out possible distinctions between the government’s power to set contract terms for the administration of its work and the power to regulate religious organizations without regard to a government service. In addition to *Smith*, justices were concerned with the implication of its more recent decisions in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), where the Court ruled that the constitutional right to marriage extends to same-sex couples, and *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado* (2018), where the Court sidestepped the question of whether private businesses could refuse to serve customers in a legally protected category based on the business owner’s religious beliefs. At the beginning of this term, before Justice Barrett officially joined the Court, Justices Thomas and Samuel Alito publicly advocated that *Obergefell* should be revisited.

Most striking was how the arguments seemed to reflect the deep political and religious differences over same-sex marriage and the particularly intense feelings of some conservatives being out of favor with prevailing public sentiments. The attorney for the U.S. government repeatedly resisted answering Justice Elena Kagan’s question about whether the state had a compelling government interest in eradicating discrimination on the basis of

sexual orientation. Justice Alito suggested with seeming disdain that the government actors were trying to impose their beliefs about sexual orientation on religious actors, which the attorney for Philadelphia firmly denied by emphasizing the government contract context.

No doubt CSS and many who support its claim are counting on a newly constituted 6-3 conservative majority to rule in their favor, building on the successful cases brought by religious claimants last term. Cases that allow the expansion of school vouchers (*Espinoza v. Montana*) and that generously define the ministerial exception (*Our Lady of Guadalupe v. Morrissey-Berru*) may bode well for them. But those cases obscure the religious privilege being asserted in *Fulton* of a government contractor seeking to provide government services only to those who pass its religious test.

Whether it is recruiting foster care parents, running food pantries or providing emergency shelter, the primary concern of the thousands of religious and secular agencies that partner with the local, state or federal government in providing government-funded services must be to ensure that such services are provided with integrity for public purposes and without regard to religion or other protected categories. In this case, it is the government’s responsibility to care for those abused and neglected children in its custody and to expend government resources for those purposes. Philadelphia should be allowed to seek a broad pool of potential foster parents with whom a child can be placed without being required to contract with religious entities that would subvert the government’s ability and interests.

Visit [BJOnline.org/Fulton](https://bjconline.org/Fulton) for more on this case.

Supreme Court hears case on RFRA remedies

This term, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering a case focused on a statutory question about the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).

At issue in *Tanzin v. Tanvir* is what remedies are available as “appropriate relief against a government” under RFRA. BJC joined the Christian Legal Society and 14 religious liberty scholars on a friend-of-the-court brief, which says RFRA was intended to allow for monetary damages under the same principles that are followed elsewhere in federal law.

“The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, like other civil rights laws, is intended to hold government accountable for the protection of fundamental rights,” said BJC General Counsel Holly Hollman.

When a violation is proven in a court case, usually the “rem-

edy” will be for the government to reverse course and stop the action that was found to be harmful. The brief signed by BJC says monetary damages against individual government actors may be appropriate and should be available to address the harm of a violation in some cases.

“The Supreme Court should affirm that RFRA was always intended to allow for damages under the same principles that are followed elsewhere in federal law protecting important civil rights,” Hollman continued.

The brief BJC joined was written by church-state scholar Douglas Laycock, who holds endowed chairs at the University of Virginia and the University of Texas.

Oral arguments in the case were held October 6. A decision is expected by June 2021.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett's church-state jurisprudence

By Cherilyn Crowe and Don Byrd

Justice Amy Coney Barrett took the judicial oath October 27 to become the newest member of the U.S. Supreme Court. She is only the fifth woman in history to serve in the role.

President Donald J. Trump nominated Barrett to the Supreme Court on September 26, eight days after the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Republicans in the U.S. Senate granted the president's nominee a hearing, something that was not done in the last election year when a president nominated a Supreme Court justice. President Barack Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland in March 2016 never received a Senate hearing.

In the midst of partisan rancor on Capitol Hill, the nomination went forward. BJC researched and prepared a report on Barrett's church-state record in advance of her expedited Senate hearings.

A former professor at Notre Dame Law School, Barrett served as a judge on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for three years. Her record included more than 600 appeals court cases and a bevy of scholarly writings on legal topics, according to BJC's report.

During her time as a judge, Barrett only participated in nine cases that involved church-state or religious liberty issues, most of which were unremarkable unanimous opinions. While she did not write any opinions in those nine cases, two cases were notable.

She joined the majority opinion in *Illinois GOP v. Pritzker*, which challenged the COVID-related prohibition on political gatherings in light of the exemption for religious gatherings. The court in that case upheld the distinction.

In *Grussgott v. Milwaukee Jewish Day School*, Barrett joined a majority opinion that applied the ministerial exception to deny a suit brought by a teacher claiming wrongful termination because her job included religious functions. Earlier this year, the Supreme Court reached a similar conclusion in *Our Lady of Guadalupe School*.

With a slim record on church-state issues yielding little insight, BJC's report noted that Judge Barrett's alignment with the views of her former boss, Justice Antonin Scalia, provided troubling concerns about her potential approach to religious liberty questions.

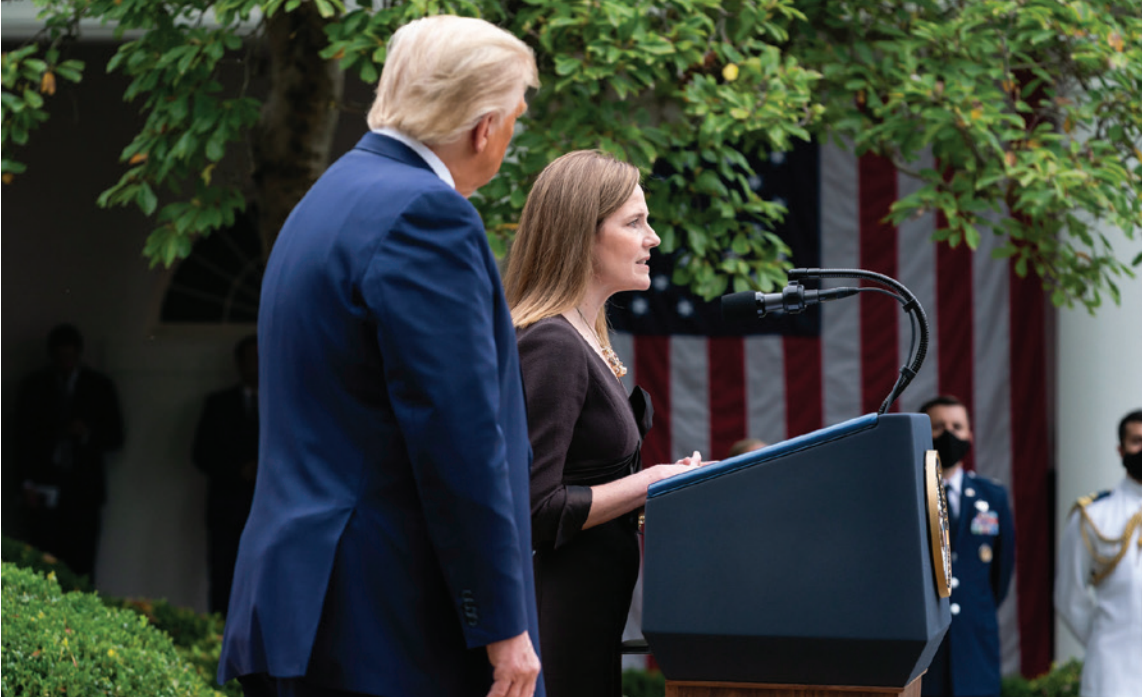
Barrett indicated previously that she would try to emulate Justice Scalia, once saying that "his judicial philosophy is mine, too." Justice Scalia wrote the notorious decision in *Employment Division v. Smith* in 1990, which is widely seen as undercutting the free exercise of religion. The *Smith* decision was the impetus for the bipartisan passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993. It is unclear whether Judge Barrett approves of *Smith*, even after the hearings.

There was plenty to question Barrett about in terms of her judicial philosophy when she sat for days of questions from members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. BJC sent its report to the committee members in advance of the hearings, and it included a list of proposed questions for Barrett.

But, as BJC pointed out, there was no reason to include inquiries into Barrett's personal religious views. Religion is mentioned only once in the original text of the U.S. Constitution: Article VI

President Donald J. Trump is joined by Amy Coney Barrett and her husband Jesse Barrett on Monday, Oct. 26, 2020, as he signs Barrett's commission certificate in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House prior to Justice Barrett's swearing-in ceremony. (Official White House Photo by Andrea Hanks)





Judge Amy Coney Barrett delivers remarks after President Donald J. Trump announced her as his nominee for Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020, in the Rose Garden of the White House. (Official White House Photo by Andrea Hanks)

says “but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.”

During the confirmation hearings, BJC staff members listened to learn more about Barrett’s views on the Free Exercise Clause and the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Both clauses are important in protecting the free exercise of religion and guarding against its establishment or promotion by the government.

“We see both clauses as equally important in supporting religious freedom for all,” said BJC Executive Director Amanda Tyler. “But, more and more, we’re seeing a less balanced approach when it comes to constitutional interpretation, and that’s what we were looking for when it came to these hearings.”

Tyler said it’s important to hear a nominee’s understanding of how religious freedom is protected by the First Amendment.

“What we saw during the hearings was a more shallow understanding of how religious freedom works,” Tyler said.

During an exchange with Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, Barrett mentioned her interview with Justice Scalia many years ago when she discussed the First Amendment. During that interview, she said she fell down a “rabbit hole” about the difficulty in balancing the two clauses, and she said that she didn’t have a better answer now.

“This is a much more consequential job interview,” Tyler said.

BJC General Counsel Holly Hollman

noted that exchange was particularly troubling because it came in response to a discussion about government-sponsored prayer in schools.

“It’s not that difficult to say that we protect free exercise, and part of how we do that is to keep the government out of religion and not let government itself advance religion,” Hollman said.

“Once most people talk more in depth about what government-sponsored prayer in public schools means — that the school would have control — they realize that doesn’t help religious freedom,” Hollman continued. “Instead, by enforcing the Establishment Clause, you protect religious freedom for all, and you ensure that no student is treated differently, giving them all equal access to the public schools without regard to religion.”

Tyler pointed out that prior Supreme Court nominees, including Justice Brett Kavanaugh, articulated a clearer understanding of how the religion clauses work during their confirmation hearings.

“That kind of statement and understanding — that the Establishment Clause supports religious freedom — is a statement we never heard from Barrett during her hearings,” Tyler said. “And I would feel a lot better about her confirmation to the Court had we heard a statement like that.”

Later in the hearings, Barrett said, as an aside, “We have to be careful about the Establishment Clause,” noting that the government can’t establish a church.

“That’s a missed opportunity for her, as far as really being able to express how

carefully our country and the First Amendment protect religious liberty,” Hollman said. “Certainly, the Establishment Clause does more than prevent the government from establishing a church — it plays a crucial role in upholding religious freedom for all.”

In response to a question from Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Missouri, about whether religious people can be singled out for disfavor, Barrett also did not express a thorough understanding of the Free Exercise Clause.

“She missed an opportunity there to simply say, ‘no,’” Hollman said, noting that there is case law that points out that you cannot single out religion for disfavor, as BJC said in response to President Trump’s iterations of the travel ban that singled out Muslims for unfavorable treatment.

“Maybe she was hesitant because she was acknowledging that sometimes people argue they are being singled out for special disfavor but they are really being treated like others,” Hollman said, giving the example that faith-based groups that use government money have to follow the same nondiscrimination rules as others using government money.

Barrett was confirmed to the Supreme Court by the U.S. Senate with a 52-48 vote, and she began hearing cases on November 2.

For more on the Barrett confirmation hearings and her church-state record, you can access BJC’s report on our website and listen to Respecting Religion on the BJC Podcast.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg's legacy in upholding a key religious freedom law



BJC looks at her notable opinion and concurrence that support the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act

By Amanda Tyler and Holly Hollman

As the country mourned the loss of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on September 18, we were inspired by the breadth of her legacy, both professional and personal. She has been rightly recognized for her landmark contributions in the fight for gender equality, both as an attorney and later as a jurist. Like many other women lawyers, we feel professionally indebted to her and count her among our heroes.

While not as prominent among her other contributions in the law, her record in support of religious liberty is strong. She rarely wrote in church-state cases, but her voice was clear and powerful in support of the separation of church and state in the opinions and dissents she authored. Her voting record is one that historic Baptists applaud. It reflects a strong appreciation of both religious liberty principles enshrined in our First Amendment: free exercise and no establishment. She consistently voted against government funding of religion and government-sponsored religious displays, while upholding the free exercise of religion.

Her majority opinion in *Cutter v. Wilkinson* (2005) epitomizes her approach. The opinion she authored for a unanimous Court upheld the constitutionality of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), a landmark piece of religious freedom legislation that turned 20 on September

22, 2020, just days after her passing. (For more, see page 10)

Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC) led the diverse coalition in support of RLUIPA's passage, which was part of a decade of back-and-forth efforts of the Supreme Court and Congress to settle on the proper legal standard for religious exemptions from generally applicable laws. RLUIPA, which passed with unanimous support in Congress in 2000, applies to all levels of government — federal, state and local — in two distinct areas: land use and government-run custodial institutions, such as prisons and immigrant detention centers. In those specific areas, RLUIPA says the government cannot impose substantial burdens on religious practice unless narrowly tailored to serve a compelling government interest.

RLUIPA's protection for prisoners was challenged as an unconstitutional establishment of religion five years after its passage. In *Cutter*, the Court rejected the challenge and explained the balance of free exercise and no establishment concerns that best protects religious liberty.

Justice Ginsburg's opinion for the Court acknowledged the precedent that held "there is room for play in the joints" between the Religion Clauses. That is, there is "some space for legislative action neither compelled by the Free Exercise Clause

nor prohibited by the Establishment Clause.” The Court held that RLUIPA, which “does not differentiate among bona fide faiths,” is an accommodation of religion that fits into that space.

Justice Ginsburg wrote that, most importantly, the accommodation in RLUIPA was designed to relieve exceptional burdens imposed by the government. The law covers “state-run institutions — mental hospitals, prisons, and the like — in which the government exerts a degree of control unparalleled in civilian society and severely disabling to private religious exercise.”

The opinion specifically noted that, when applied properly, RLUIPA should take account of the burdens a requested religious accommodation may impose on other individuals and other essential governmental interests, such as an institution’s need to maintain order and safety. As Ginsburg’s opinion stated: “Our decisions indicate that an accommodation must be measured so that it does not override other significant interests.”

A decade later, the Supreme Court again heard a case challenging RLUIPA. *Holt v. Hobbs* (2015) involved the claim of an Arkansas inmate who wanted to wear a half-inch beard in accordance with his Muslim beliefs. The Arkansas state prison denied his request, pointing to its “no-beards” policy. The Court recognized both that the prison’s refusal substantially burdened Holt’s religious exercise and that the prison had a compelling interest in maintaining order and safety by preventing inmates from hiding contraband in facial hair. But the Court found the prison’s argument that a half-inch beard would jeopardize prison safety “hard to take seriously” and unanimously ruled for Holt.

Justice Ginsburg wrote a short concurrence in that case that further underscored her views about the balancing of interests that serve to protect faith freedom for all. She also noted an increasing strain on support for the statute’s strong legal standard. Ginsburg stated: “Unlike the exemption this Court approved in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, accommodating petitioner’s religious belief in this case would not detrimentally affect others who do not share petitioner’s belief. On that understanding, I join the Court’s opinion.”

With that, Justice Ginsburg ensured continued support for RLUIPA and its landmark stature in religious liberty law. She also recognized the limits in the law that work to protect everyone’s freedom. The religious claimant will not win in every RLUIPA case. But the standard has proven to be an important protection, particularly for prisoners and other institutionalized persons who practice minority faiths.

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of this important religious freedom law and reflect on the church-state legacy of Justice Ginsburg, we remember the best of our religious liberty tradition that protects people of all religions and none. RLUIPA found unanimous support not only in Congress but also in the Supreme Court both times it was considered. In this divided time in our country, we believe that a renewed commitment to the foundational values that RLUIPA embodies has the potential to unite us as Americans across our different political and religious beliefs in support of religious freedom for all.

This was first published in The Christian Citizen, a publication of American Baptist Home Mission Societies, at christiancitizen.us.

“As I see it, when a cross is displayed on public property, the government may be presumed to endorse its religious content.”

Justice Ginsburg’s dissent in *American Legion v. American Humanist Association* (2019), which also quoted BJC’s brief

Notable religious liberty opinions, concurrences and dissents from Justice Ginsburg

“Our decisions recognize that ‘there is room for play in the joints’ between the Clauses, some space for legislative action neither compelled by the Free Exercise Clause nor prohibited by the Establishment Clause.”

Unanimous Supreme Court decision in *Cutter v. Wilkinson* (2005), written by Justice Ginsburg

“The Court, I fear, has ventured into a minefield by its immoderate reading of RFRA (Religious Freedom Restoration Act).”

Dissent in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* (2014)

“Unlike the exemption this Court approved in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, accommodating petitioner’s religious belief in this case would not detrimentally affect others who do not share petitioner’s belief. On that understanding, I join the Court’s opinion.”

Concurrence in *Holt v. Hobbs* (2015)

RLUIPA: A religious freedom success story

By Melissa Rogers and Amanda Tyler

Few religious liberty measures have passed Congress by unanimous consent, been vigorously enforced and enthusiastically lauded by administrations of both political parties, and resulted in unanimous Supreme Court rulings. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) is one of those measures, and it turned 20 years old on September 22. For two decades, it has ensured that countless religious communities — especially those that are religious, racial and ethnic minorities — can establish houses of worship, and that scores of individuals confined in governmental institutions — such as state-run nursing homes — can practice their faith.

In 2000, we worked together at Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty and helped lead a diverse coalition of religious and civil rights groups that pressed for RLUIPA's passage. We are thrilled that it continues to be vigorously enforced and enjoy widespread support. Given the toxicity of current debate over religious freedom, it's worth considering whether our experience with RLUIPA might point the way toward a better conversation. In this regard, at least five elements of the Act are notable.

First, Congress did not address every religious liberty problem with RLUIPA — just two of the most important consensus items. The Act bars governmental landmarking and zoning that discriminates against — or unjustifiably interferes with — religious exercise, and it extends protections for persons seeking to practice their faith while they are confined within governmental institutions, such as prisons, nursing homes and immigrant detention centers.

The ability of a religious community to establish a house of worship, for example, is obviously crucial, yet too often zoning and land use officials make that impossible or exceedingly difficult, especially for faith communities that are religious, racial or ethnic minorities. Years of Congressional hearings identified widespread discrimination against religious persons and organizations by state and local land use decisions. Many on the political right and the left also agreed that when individuals live — either temporarily or permanently — within government-run institutions, they may need special tools to protect their ability to practice their faith.

Second, RLUIPA addresses the problem of discrimination with specific standards. It says, for example, that land use regulations may not be imposed in ways that treat religious assemblies or institutions on less than equal terms than their nonreligious counterparts. Regulations also cannot totally exclude or unreasonably limit religious assemblies and institutions within a jurisdiction. These standards clearly articulate problems religious communities often face, and they are aimed at correcting obvious injustices.

Third, the Act employs a balancing test, not absolute exemptions. Under RLUIPA, the government cannot impose substantial burdens on religious practice unless narrowly tailored to serve a compelling government interest. As the Department of Justice



President Bill Clinton signs RLUIPA in 2000. Melissa Rogers is pictured behind him along with other advocates of the bill.

(DOJ) has noted, this test is “intended in part to prevent subtle, hard-to-prove discrimination.” Absolute exemptions are sometimes appropriate and necessary, but more often a balancing test is the best approach.

Fourth, whether one worships at a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or gurdwara, RLUIPA provides equal protection for the right to practice religion. At the same time, DOJ's enforcement has been responsive to a painful reality: minority groups continue to face “a disproportionate level of discrimination in zoning matters” When it released a report on RLUIPA's 10th anniversary, DOJ noted that “Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist land-use cases made up a disproportionate number of its investigations — 13 times their representation in the population.” RLUIPA does not favor one religion over another, but some communities have clearly had to rely on its protections more than others, and DOJ has been there to help.

Fifth, longtime career civil servants at DOJ who have religious liberty expertise and a commitment to freedom for all have played leading roles in RLUIPA enforcement. That has helped immensely to maintain continuity across administrations and ensure that enforcement hews closely to the law's terms and aims.

We believe Americans of all political stripes can still come together around some important religious freedom issues and make a difference by doing so. Targeting particular problem areas with specificity helps, as does providing balanced protections. Involving and retaining career civil servants who are experts in this area and committed to religious liberty for all people is essential. Attention to factors like these certainly won't end our debates over religious freedom. It could help us, however, drain some bitterness from those debates and find more ways to live together across our deepest differences.

Melissa Rogers is the author of Faith in American Public Life. From 2013–2017, she served as special assistant to President Barack Obama and directed the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. She is a former BJC general counsel.

Amanda Tyler is executive director of BJC.

Join BJC's Book Club

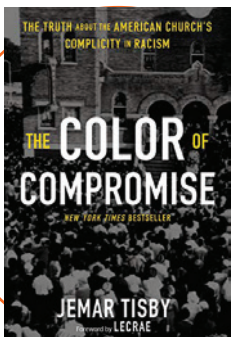
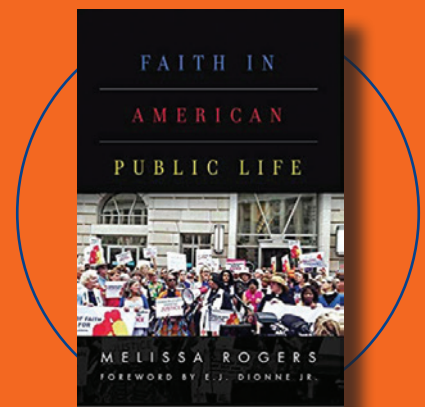
Go deeper on topics related to preserving faith freedom for all with BJC's Book Club. Launched in the fall of 2020, the book club provides an opportunity for engagement on religious liberty issues through a discussion with the BJC community. Participants read through one book at a time, and they gather weekly for online discussions in large and small groups to talk about questions based on that week's chapters.

The book club is open to all who are interested. You have to purchase the book on your own, but there are no other costs. Visit BJCOnline.org/BookClub for more information and to sign up.



Next book: *Faith in American Public Life* By Melissa Rogers

We'll be reading this book together in January 2021, and you can sign up now on our website to participate. The book was published in 2019 by Baylor University Press, and it's available from most booksellers. For more information, visit BJCOnline.org/BookClub or contact BJC Director of Education Charles Watson Jr. at cwatson@BJCOnline.org.



The Color of Compromise: *The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism* By Jemar Tisby

BJC launched the book club in the fall of 2020, and our inaugural gathering read Jemar Tisby's *The Color of Compromise*. The weekly online discussions throughout the month of September brought together people from different generations, ethnic backgrounds and career stages for provocative conversations on race, religious liberty and the American church.



Tassima Warren
Educational Liaison
Tampa, Florida

"I thoroughly enjoyed *The Color of Compromise* book club hosted by BJC. The diversity of viewpoints was very enlightening, and the discussions were engaging."

"The book club provided an opportunity to process the church's complicity in racism and to consider decisive actions we might take toward racial justice. It allowed me to engage these ideas and learn from a diverse group of new friends who provided a broader perspective."



Rev. Dr. Meredith Stone
Executive Director of Baptist Women in Ministry
Abilene, Texas



What is BJC's Faith•FULL Community? A conversation with Danielle Tyler

Danielle A. Tyler serves as the associate director of development at BJC. She focuses on expanding the base of donor support for religious liberty, and that includes working closely with BJC's Faith FULL Community of donors. We asked Danielle to talk more about why she is passionate about this newly organized group of BJC supporters.

What's the best part about being the staff liaison to the Faith FULL Community?

I enjoy interacting with our donors who are part of our Faith FULL Community because they tell so many stories of how religious liberty has influenced their lives. Just this Friday, as I was packing up to leave the office, I received a call from our newest Faith FULL Community member, Jacqueline Allen. She is 89 years old and a direct descendant of the Rev. John Waller, who was horsewhipped in 1771 and jailed for more than 100 days in Virginia for the crime of being a Baptist minister. Jacqueline's family's roots in religious liberty run deep, and she was raised with a fierce commitment to the work BJC engages in. She wanted to make a monthly commitment to BJC to uphold her family's legacy.

Our Faith FULL Community is 24 years in the making. Our monthly donor program began with donors giving each month without special benefit or recognition — they gave simply because they were dedicated to protecting faith freedom for all. I'm thrilled to wave the banner for monthly donors, giving them the recognition they deserve as faithful givers.

Who is part of the Faith FULL Community?

Anyone who gives monthly — at any amount — is part of the Faith FULL Community. Our Faith FULL Community members include BJC Fellows, former BJC interns, board members, college students, BJC staff, people who have supported BJC for decades, and people newly inspired by our work. These donors are committed to making the world a better place, creating opportunities for future generations. Our Faith FULL Community members believe in a world where religious liberty is a valued fundamental right.

Why is monthly giving important?

Monthly giving allows anyone to make a significant and lasting impact on BJC's mission. It's a great entry way for young professionals, students and individuals new to BJC to contribute financially. People give at whatever donation amount is comfortable for them, and they become an integral part of our work. Their gifts allow BJC to have consistent funding to continue the valuable work of protecting faith freedom for all.

What does it mean to you to see the dedication of the Faith FULL Community?

Working at BJC each day, I'm keenly aware of how fragile our freedoms are and the necessary work involved in protecting them. Seeing the dedication of this community motivates me on a daily basis in my work. Monthly donors are some of our greatest advocates for our educational programming, legal work and advocacy efforts. They regularly ask what else they can do to help our cause, inspiring me to work even harder on their behalf.

Is it difficult to join the Faith FULL Community?

It is simple, and there is no minimum monthly donation amount. It's a great way to make a difference instantly. You can go to our website at BJCOnline.org/give-monthly. Or, I'm glad to get this worked out with anyone — you can call me directly at 202-544-4226, extension 308, or email me at dtyler@BJCOnline.org.



BJC board gathers for annual meeting

On October 5, 2020, the BJC Board of Directors held its annual meeting, convening virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Composed of representatives of BJC's supporting bodies and led by Board Chair Jackie Baugh Moore, the BJC Board reviewed the work of the organization, passed an operating budget and discussed reports from BJC's staff on legal cases, educational initiatives, advocacy work and fundraising.

During the afternoon session of the meeting, board members, BJC staff and invited visitors considered a draft report from BJC's Special Committee on Race and Religious Liberty. Chaired by BJC Director of Education Charles Watson Jr., the special committee worked over the past year to research BJC's activities regarding racial justice between 1943 and 1968. After a presentation and small group discussion, the board passed a resolution to receive the report in draft form and to direct the special committee to continue its work, which includes completing the report for public disclosure after input from impacted parties, determining appropriate actions of reparation, and reimagining BJC's work at the intersection of religious liberty and racial justice.

Members of the special committee are Paul Baxley, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; Lynn Brinkley, Religious Liberty Council; Sabrina Dent, Religious Liberty Council; Andrew Gardner, Baptist General Association of Virginia; Dan Hamil, BJC; A. Wayne Johnson, Progressive National Baptist Convention; Amanda Tyler, BJC; and Aidsand Wright-Riggins III, who serves as special adviser to the committee.

CARES Act and charitable giving

Thank you for giving generously to BJC at the end of the year. Your donations grow the work of BJC as together we protect faith freedom for all.

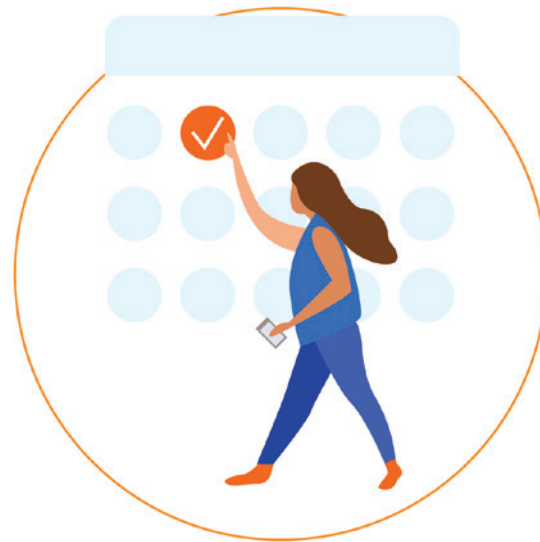
To encourage giving to charities this year, Congress included significant new tax relief and giving benefits for donors making charitable contributions in the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Securities Act), which passed in late March. These benefits are only available this year.

If you are an individual taxpayer who takes the standard deduction, a new benefit provides for a charitable deduction for cash contributions of up to \$300 (\$600 for married couples). This is an above-the-line contribution that is deducted from the individual taxpayer's income prior to the calculation of their adjusted gross income, thus reducing taxable income.

For individual taxpayers who itemize deductions and seek to reduce tax liability through charitable contributions, you can now elect to deduct up to 100% (up from 60%) of adjusted gross income for charitable cash contributions.

Corporations may deduct up to 25% of taxable income (up from 10%) for cash contributions that go to a charitable organization.

Please seek the counsel of your tax adviser for specific applications of the CARES Act's measures.



Mark your calendars in 2021

As the pandemic changes how we interact with each other, BJC is continuing to provide new and traditional opportunities for engagement.

Visit BJCOnline.org/calendar for our latest events, and don't miss these important dates in 2021:

January:

BJC's Book Club reads and discusses *Faith in American Public Life* by Melissa Rogers. Register now at BJCOnline.org/BookClub.

January 12:

BJC Director of Education Charles Watson Jr. speaks at "African Americans & Religious Freedom: New Perspectives for Congregations & Communities," sponsored by the Religious Freedom Center of the Freedom Forum.

March 1:

Deadline to apply for a BJC summer internship. Details available at BJCOnline.org/internships.

March 26:

Deadline for submissions for the 2021 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest, which are accepted online at BJCOnline.org/contest.

April:

The annual Shurden Lectures will be a virtual event. Visit our website for details at BJCOnline.org/ShurdenLectures.

To keep up with our events and opportunities, sign up for weekly email updates at BJCOnline.org/subscribe.



Season two of 'Respecting Religion' on the BJC Podcast



What did we learn about Justice Amy Coney Barrett's approach to church-state law in her confirmation hearings? What are the religious liberty issues that kept arising during the 2020 presidential campaign? What's at stake this Supreme Court term? Check out season two of Respecting Religion on the BJC Podcast, featuring conversations between BJC's Amanda Tyler and Holly Hollman. Hear their insights, questions and nuanced observations on the news that impacts religious liberty conversations across the country.

Visit BJCOnline.org/RespectingReligion for a list of the episodes from season one and season two, including show notes that go with each one providing more information and resources.

Excerpt from Season 2, Episode 1: Amy Coney Barrett hearings and the future of the Supreme Court

October 29, 2020

After discussing that religion was mentioned about 80 times during Barrett's confirmation hearings, and 75 of those times were by Barrett or Republicans:

AMANDA: So I think that raises the question in some ways: Who exactly was imposing a religious test here? Who made religion an issue in the hearings themselves?

Because the "no religious test" clause [from Article VI of the Constitution] works both ways. One, it should certainly not present a bar to serving in public office, but should also not be seen as giving you a leg up in some way, that you are more qualified in some way because of your religion.

HOLLY: Yeah, and it's especially maddening when you try to use it to your own advantage to promote someone's religious faith, to try to get some benefit of the doubt, but then show great offense if anyone asked a question that relates to that.

Excerpt from Season 2, Episode 3: Religion and politics: Decision 2020 and beyond

November 13, 2020

HOLLY: As we get to engage with so many people from different walks of life, we have to treat different things differently. We have to examine and talk about religion and all its different manifestations in our religiously diverse society and be clear what the threats are, and not lump all things into one category.

And we have to be aware of this particular threat of Christian nationalism, which is distinct. It is harmful to religious liberty. It's not the same as disagreeing with someone's religious views or political views, but it really is this set of ideologies that, together, is particularly harmful to religious liberty and the way it's protected in our constitutional tradition.

AMANDA: And I think one of the ways that it's most harmful is that Christian nationalism can sometimes masquerade as religious freedom arguments or use religious freedom arguments to try to bolster its impact, and we've seen that recently over the past year in the COVID-19 pandemic.



Chaplain (Colonel) Geoff Bailey speaks at the George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University.

Military chaplains: On the front lines of faith

In honor of Veterans Day, BJC shared stories on social media from those who have served our country. We spoke with **Chaplain (Colonel) Geoff Bailey** to find out about his service as a chaplain in the U.S. Army. Bailey enlisted in the Army in 1991 and became a chaplain in 2001. He is endorsed to serve by the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and he is currently a student at the U.S. Army War College. You can read the full conversation on BJC's Medium channel.

How do you care for those who practice a faith different from your own?

This is one of the great joys and responsibilities of serving as an Army chaplain. We are charged with coordinating or providing religious support for all service members, Department of Defense civilians, and their family members while faithfully representing our own respective religious organization.

We build networked relationships within the Chaplain Corps, local civilian religious organizations, and low-density religious leaders within the Army. We do this to appropriately refer people to their respective religious organizations/groups and encourage their faith formation and spiritual well-being. In circumstances where there are no religious organizations of that particular perspective, we seek out volunteers within the unit or local area and we coordinate facility space and material support to ensure the group has equitable conditions for the free exercise of their religious traditions and practices.

There are exigent conditions that arise where it is merely impossible to find someone of that faith group to respond to a need at the moment. This is where pastoral identity, the skills learned in Clinical Pastoral Education, and a foundation of dignity and respect focused on the needs of the one making the request

are paramount.

An example for me was supporting the Passover Seder in Afghanistan. A unit commander had reservations about letting a soldier journey for 4–5 days to observe the Seder, so I made a trip ahead of the Seder to gain the commander's support for that one soldier's attendance. My non-commissioned officer and I corresponded with each dining facility and subordinate unit commands to ensure appropriate support. We then traveled with the Jewish chaplain and attended the Seder to communicate the event's importance. As a representative of my commanding general, my presence and involvement expressed his commitment to free exercise and respect for the event.

What's a common misconception about military chaplains?

Two common misconceptions go hand-in-hand. The first is the notion that chaplains "left the ministry" to serve as chaplains. The second is that chaplains represent all faith groups, kind of like Father Mulcahy in the television show *M*A*S*H*. We haven't left ministry by any stretch of the imagination. The requirements of chaplains are the same as any other ordained ministry position. We preach, teach, counsel, baptize, officiate weddings and funerals, and visit people in

many settings. The only difference is that we wear a military uniform, meet physical fitness requirements, and stand ready to deploy and train alongside the people we are called to serve. In that setting, we still faithfully represent our respective religious organization's beliefs while operating in a pluralistic environment.

How is being a military chaplain different from other forms of chaplaincy?

Aside from wearing a uniform, we tend to build close relationships with the people in our assigned units because of the environment's intensity. A unique aspect of military chaplaincy is that there is always an awareness of the fragility of life. The intensity of the environment heightens the importance of rapidly establishing trust and relevance.

What are some ways that religious communities can support local veterans and service members?

By doing what they already do, but with an eye on intentionality: Invite and welcome service members and veterans to your faith community, just like any other community member. Although service members are only there for a brief period, we are still looking for connection and the ability to practice our faith and invest in the community.

Speaking out on Christian nationalism

**CHRISTIANS
AGAINST
CHRISTIAN
NATIONALISM**

This year, we've been encouraging signers of the Christians Against Christian Nationalism statement to talk about the dangers of Christian nationalism, and that included writing commentary and op-ed pieces in their local newspapers. Across the country, people are raising their voices and calling on others to stand against this merging of religion and citizenship, approaching the issue from a variety of angles. Here are highlights of just a few of the many pieces published.



A very basic definition of Christian Nationalism is that it is the belief that to be a good American one must be a good (conservative) Christian and that our nation will only thrive when Christianity (the right-wing kind) proliferates and dominates.



Rev. Jim Hopkins

"Beware of Creeping Christian Nationalism" in *Piedmont Post* (California)



As a Baptist minister in the church Roger Williams founded, I utterly reject the damaging ideology of Christian nationalism. I am bound to Christ by my faith, not my citizenship. Religious affiliation, or lack thereof, ought to have no bearing in one's standing in the civic community. ...

Baptists were early dissenters against the Colonial Protestant establishment, contending that faith cannot be coerced. Williams went to profound lengths to ensure religious liberty for all people, including those he utterly disagreed with theologically. He notoriously declared that "forced worship stinks in God's nostrils." All people ought to be free to make their own choices regarding belief.



Rev. Jamie Washam

"Confronting the perils of Christian nationalism" in *Providence Journal* (Rhode Island)



Christian nationalism happens when church and state are linked. Politicians use God to baptize their policies, and clergy use tax dollars to fund their churches and schools. At bottom, Christianity is favored in the policies and practices of government officials. Other religions are disfavored, as with Muslim travel bans. Or where government-funded programs are allowed to hire only Christians. Or where the Supreme Court is asked to allow tax dollars to be used for private religious education. ...

At first blush, this may appeal to you if you're a Christian. But think back to what government support ultimately does to religion. In Europe, it destroyed it. Roger Williams said that on good days it produces hypocrites. On bad days? Rivers of blood.



Rev. Oliver "Buzz" Thomas

"Christian Nationalism is not Religious Freedom" in *The Tennessean* (Tennessee)



And because our belief informs our practice, we should deconstruct any myth within us that suggests our Christian vote is tied to partisan ideals.

Otherwise, we risk entering into the dangerous territory of Christian nationalism, which seeks to merge Christian and American identities, demanding that Christianity be privileged by the state. Part of our work is to identify and reject this dangerous ideology, so that we can continue to preserve the strong foundation religious liberty provides in these uncertain times.



Rev. Aurelia Dávila Pratt

"A reminder to Christians this election season: Be political, not partisan" in *The Austin American-Statesman* (Texas)

Learn how you can make a difference! Join the BJC Advocacy Team at BJCOnline.org/subscribe, or contact Jaziah Masters, advocacy and outreach manager, at jmasters@BJCOnline.org for more information.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM?



Christian nationalism is a cultural framework that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic life. Christian nationalism contends that America has been and should always be distinctively “Christian” from top to bottom – in its self-identity, interpretations of its own history, sacred symbols, cherished values, and public policies – and it aims to keep it that way.

But the “Christian” in Christian nationalism is more about identity than religion. It carries with it assumptions about nativism, white supremacy, authoritarianism, patriarchy, and militarism.

How does Christian nationalism show up in politics and policy?

According to multiple academic studies using large, nationally representative surveys, Americans who embrace Christian nationalism are more likely to:

- Approve of authoritarian tactics like demanding people show respect for national symbols and traditions
- Fear and distrust religious minorities, including Muslims, Atheists, and Jewish people
- Condone police violence toward Black Americans and distrust accounts of racial inequality in the criminal justice system
- Believe racial inequality is due to the personal shortcomings of minority groups
- Report being “very uncomfortable” with both interracial marriage and transracial adoption
- Hold anti-immigrant views
- Fear refugees
- Oppose scientists and science education in schools
- Believe that men are better suited for all leadership roles while women are better suited to care for children and the home

Information from *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*, by Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry (Oxford University Press, 2020).



How do researchers identify Christian nationalism?

Americans who embrace Christian nationalism strongly agree with statements like:

“The federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation.”

“The success of the United States is part of God’s plan.”

“The federal government should advocate Christian values.”

Winners of the 2020 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest

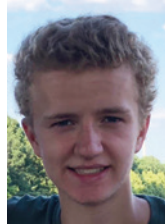
BJC asked students to write an essay in the form of a letter to their state representative about legislation mandating the posting of “In God We Trust” in public schools. We received entries from across the country. Congratulations to this year’s winners, who received scholarship prizes.



Grand prize winner:

Lorelei Loraine of Ellicott City, Maryland

“The word ‘we’ in ‘In God We Trust’ implicates all members of the school. A student’s logical conclusion when adults post such a message is that they must participate in this mutual faith in God to remain in their community, a reasonable feeling of coercion. ... If students don’t ‘shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate,’ why should they lose their freedom of religion?”



Second prize:

Evan Hofland
Charlotte, North Carolina



Third prize:

Marta Montero
Cary, North Carolina

2021 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest

Open to all high school juniors and seniors!

**Entry
deadline:
March 26,
2021**

TOPIC:

**Does a religious leader or member of the clergy
have the right to run for public office?**

Visit BJCOnline.org/contest for
the full writing prompt, online entry forms and additional details.

Grand Prize:

\$2,000 scholarship and trip to Washington, D.C.

Second Prize: \$1,000 Third Prize: \$500

Rigodon joins BJC as programs assistant

CHRISTINE RIGODON is the programs assistant at BJC. She provides support for a variety of education and advocacy efforts to expand the base of support for religious liberty.

Hailing from New Jersey, Rigodon is a 2019 graduate of the University of Hartford in Hartford, Connecticut, where she majored in history and minored in political science.

Prior to joining BJC, she interned on Capitol Hill for both the Congressional Black Caucus and in the office of U.S. Rep. Jim Himes. She also has experience working with gubernatorial campaigns and the Legislative Black and Puerto Rican Congress in the state of Connecticut.

Rigodon founded the college chapter of the NAACP at the University of Hartford and was the chapter's first president, serving as a trainer and leader and overseeing logistical and financial reconciliation.



BJC welcomes fall intern

Get to know our fall semester intern working with our staff remotely during the ongoing pandemic.

SONDOS ISSA is a senior at The Ohio State University, majoring in psychology and philosophy with a minor in policy. She previously interned for the Council for Court Excellence in Washington, D.C., and she is a member of the Muslim Student Association (MSA) at Ohio State.



Born in Nablus, Palestine, Issa grew up in Dayton, Ohio. The daughter of Maha and Abdule Rahman Issa, she is a member of the Islamic Society of Greater Dayton (ISGD) mosque. After the internship, Issa plans to take a gap year working in D.C. before enrolling in law school.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to publication delays tied to the coronavirus pandemic, this is the last issue of *Report from the Capital* for this calendar year. In 2021, we plan to resume publishing four editions each calendar year.

Follow us on social media for mythbusting and more

Make sure you are following BJC on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube for the latest news and information about our work, including breaking news out of Washington and various court decisions.

We are debunking common misconceptions about Christian nationalism on Instagram with our popular series that uses the hashtag #ChristianNationalismMythbusting. It exposes Christian nationalism from a variety of angles, correcting falsehoods and sharing truths. We've shed light on links between Christian nationalism and white supremacy, examined how Christian nationalism distorts and threatens our faith, recognized the role of public schools in protecting religious freedom, tackled the myth that the U.S. was founded as a "Christian nation," and much more!

The same Constitution
that refuses to privilege
any religion, including
Christianity, **protects all**
religions and the right
to claim no religious
beliefs at all.

Planned giving to BJC

Planned giving allows you to make a meaningful charitable gift, during your life or at death, as part of your financial and estate planning.

When making a planned gift to Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, such as naming us as a beneficiary of a will, trust or financial account, there are often ways you can use effective legal and tax strategies that financially benefit your estate while empowering BJC's mission.

Planned gift options include cash, real estate, stocks, bonds, personal property, or life insurance. Your planned giving will encourage the efforts for religious freedom for all for years to come.

If you have included BJC in your estate plans or would like more information, contact Dan Hamil, director of strategic partnerships, at dhamil@BJCOnline.org or by calling 202-544-4226, extension 307. BJC's James Dunn Legacy Circle honors those benefactors whose estate gifts ensure our mission and ministry have a future.



Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Riverdale, MD
Permit No. 5061

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

202.544.4226
BJC@BJConline.org
BJConline.org

   @BJContheHill

 Facebook.com/ReligiousLiberty  BJConline.org/blog

We are attorneys, Capitol Hill insiders, ministers, mobilizers and scholars. We file briefs in pivotal Supreme Court cases, advocate for and against legislation, testify in Congress and unite with others across faiths to ensure that every American has, and will always have, the right to follow his or her spiritual beliefs.

SUPPORTING BODIES OF BJC

Alliance of Baptists
American Baptist Churches USA
Baptist General Association of Virginia
Baptist General Convention of Missouri (Churchnet)
Baptist General Convention of Texas
Convención Bautista Hispana de Texas
(Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas)
Converge
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina
Fellowship Southwest
National Baptist Convention of America
National Baptist Convention USA Inc.
National Missionary Baptist Convention
North American Baptist Conference
Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc.
Religious Liberty Council

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

Amanda Tyler EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Cherilyn Crowe EDITOR
Chris Kearns-McCoy ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MORE FROM BJC



Voicing our values together

Your financial support of BJC makes our work possible in Washington, D.C., and across the country. See page 2 for five ways you can partner with us.



BJC Podcast is back!

Don't miss season two of Respecting Religion with Amanda Tyler and Holly Hollman. Subscribe to the BJC Podcast on your favorite service.