



Act Justly love mercy walk humbly with your God. *Micah 6:8*

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Christian Legal Society is a fellowship of Christians dedicated to serving Jesus Christ through 1) the practice and study of law, 2) the defense of religious freedom and life, and

3) the provision of legal aid to the needy.

It is a pleasure to publish CLS' 2023 Annual Report and share with you all the amazing things that CLS did over the past year.

Thank you for your partnership and support as CLS fulfills the calling of Micah 6:8 through our Attorney Ministries, Law Student Ministries, the Center for Law & Religious Freedom, and Christian Legal Aid. The work continues to thrive and bless others because of you—the CLS family—as we continue to "seek justice, love mercy, and walking humbly with the Lord."

Whether through religious freedom advocacy or serving the poor through the incredible work of volunteers and others in clinics across the country, CLS also remembers the weightier matters of the law "justice, mercy, and faithfulness" (Matt 23:23).

Additionally, attorneys and law students gathered at events, chapter meetings, and other venues in cities and on campuses around the country. CLS held four regional retreats—in the Midwest, Northwest, Northeast, and Southwest—and, in October, CLS was blessed to return to Boston for the CLS National Conference.

The ministry of CLS serves in ways only attorneys can serve—in and through the law —and we thank you and invite you to continue alongside CLS in this great mission.



DAVID NAMMO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

CHRISTIAN LEGAL AID

Christian Legal Aid is a critical ministry that increases access to legal aid services for the poor, the marginalized, and the victims of injustice in America with the love of Christ.

CLS' Christian Legal Aid (CLA) shows the love of Jesus Christ by increasing access to legal services for the poor, the marginalized, and victims of injustice.

CLS hired a new, full-time CLA director, Annie Becker, in 2023, to take over the reins of this growing and passionate network.

In 2023, CLA continued to facilitate a nationwide fellowship of Christians pursuing justice with the love of Christ, supporting the 65 organizations in the CLA network as they worked on the frontlines in 150 communities across the United States and Canada.

CLA looks forward to further empowering our network of Christian Legal Aid organizations through increased resources and fellowship, including our annual Christian Legal Aid Summit, along with engaging more attorneys as we seek to respond together to the scriptural call to pursue justice!

WELCOMING NEW CLINICS!

CLA is thrilled to report that one of the 2022 CLA Summit scholarship recipients officially started the Delaware Dream Center Christian Legal Aid in Delaware, Ohio, this past year!

EXPANDING THE REACH OF CLA

CLA published a Christian Legal Aid Startup Manual to assist those starting legal aid ministries. It is the culmination of a few years of drafting, but it finally gives those who don't know where to start or those considering starting a clinic a roadmap of "how to." CLA welcomes your prayers as we continue to partner with people in over 10 cities across the country, including 2023 CLA Summit scholarship recipients who are considering starting new clinics.

CLA SUMMIT

The 2023 CLA Summit, our annual and national gathering, brought together 55 CLA attorneys, volunteers, and supporters for a day of legal training, organizational support, and spiritual encouragement. Trainings covered a variety of topics, including:

- the practice of family law from a Christian perspective;
- growing the ministry side of a Christian Legal Aid clinic;
- best practices for nonprofit boards of directors;
- developing a thriving fundraising program for a CLA clinic; and
- the basics of asylum law through the lens of the Christian faith.

CLA provides crucially needed scholarship funds for both those committed to starting legal aid ministries and those who are sacrificially working or running a clinic to attend the CLA Summit, allowing them to connect with others in the CLA network and gain tangible skills needed to start or maintain a legal aid ministry.

Throughout the past year, CLA continued to see God moving in the hearts of His people to address injustice through new legal aid ministries as the CLA program equipped attorneys looking to take this brave step of faith.





Christian Legal Aid images (including those on the cover) are courtesy of Open Hands Legal Services, New York City.

The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Proverbs 29:7 (NIV)

I was so blessed and encouraged by my experience at the Christian Legal Aid Summit in Boston. Each workshop was filled with believers who truly loved God and sought to serve Him and His people with excellence. I left the conference motivated by both vision and practical ideas that I can implement in our ministry right now and in the future.

-Summit Attendee, CLA Director

CLS has been a transformative experience for me over the past year, connecting me with like-minded individuals who share a passion for integrating faith into the legal profession. Through this community, I've learned valuable insights on how to strengthen my faith and maintain a godly life while pursuing a career in law. Regardless of our diverse church affiliations, CLS provides a unique platform for learning from seasoned attorneys about bringing our faith into the workplace. This organization has not only equipped me with practical tools for navigating the legal field with integrity, but it has also blessed me with a network of prayer warriors whom I can turn to for advice and support. My journey with CLS led me to volunteer at the local Christian Legal Clinic of Philadelphia, where I dedicated years to serving the community. Through this involvement, I eventually connected with my current employer, aligning me with mentorship and opportunities that resonate with my personality and beliefs. I am grateful for the guidance, connections, and growth it has facilitated in both my professional and spiritual life.

-Summit Attendee, CLS attorney

The CLA Summit is a must attend for anyone interested in being involved with Christian Legal Aid. Just spending time with like-minded believers is worth the time, but more importantly, the sharing of information from organizations throughout the country is invaluable, [as is] the comradery that occurs when Christian lawyers get together who share a similar vision. —Summit Attendee

CHRISTIAN LEGAL AID CLINICS

ALABAMA

Montgomery Faulkner University Law School Legal Clinics

ARIZONA

Phoenix Metro Area CLA of Arizona Tucson Christian Legal Society of Tucson CLA Program

CALIFORNIA

Auburn 3R Ministries Los Angeles Pepperdine University Legal Aid Clinic Los Angeles Metro Area CLA of Los Angeles Oakland Pope Francis Legal Clinic Orange County CLA Office Orange County Sacramento Love and Wisdom (LAW) Clinic San Diego Metro Area

San Diego CLA San Jose Silicon Valley CLA Santa Ana Trinity Mobile Legal Clinic CLA of Orange County Tustin

Trinity Law Clinic at the Orange County Rescue Mission

COLORADO

Denver Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center Denver Metro CLA of Metro Denver Triage Legal Clinics • The Rising Church

- Broomfield FISH
 Samaritan House
- Salvation Army

- Providence Network
- More Life Community Center
- Life Center
- SECOR Clinic
- Dry Bones
- Greater Metro Ministerial Alliance

Fort Collins Serve 6.8 Legal Clinic Loveland House of Neighborly Service Legal Clinic

DELAWARE

Wilmington Mission Legal Aid Clinic

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CLA of the District of Columbia • Central Union Mission • DC Dream Center

FLORIDA

Jacksonville CLS Pro Bono Project Jacksonville Metro Area Jericho Road Legal Service Ministry Miami City on a Hill Legal Ministry

ILLINOIS Chicago Cabrini Green Legal Aid

INDIANA Indianapolis Metro Area Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic

KANSAS Wichita Wichita CLA

KENTUCKY

Georgetown Merciful Justice Legal Clinic Louisville Access Justice

MARYLAND

DMV

Good Samaritan Advocates

• City of Refuge (Baltimore)

• Montgomery County Correc tional Facility (Montgomery Co.)

MICHIGAN

Detroit CLA of Southeast Michigan The Joseph Project Grand Rapids Metro Area West Michigan CLA Kalamazoo CLA of Southwest Michigan Lansing CLA of Lansing

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis Park Avenue Legal Clinic Twin Cities Twin Cities CLA

MISSISSIPPI

Jackson Mission First Legal Aid Office

MISSOURI St. Louis Metro Area New Covenant Legal Services

NEW JERSEY Newark Metro Area Immigrant Hope

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque New Mexico CLA Las Cruces Catholic Charities of Southern New Mexico

NEW YORK New York City Open Hands Legal Services



NORTH CAROLINA

Durham Justice Matters Greensboro Wilberforce Center for Justice and Human Rights Raleigh Campbell Community Law Clinic

OHIO

Cleveland Scranton Road Legal Clinic Columbus Vineyard Immigration Counseling Service Delaware Dream Center Delaward CLA Clinic Richland County Richland County Legal Clinic

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma City Metro Area Trinity Legal

- Crossings Community Center
- Cross and Crown Mission
- City Rescue Mission
- Living Faith Ministry
- Salvation Army Norman

Tulsa

Tulsa University College of Law CLS Christian Legal Aid Clinic

OREGON

Portland Union Gospel Mission of Portland Christian Legal Aid Clinic

PENNSYLVANIA Philadelphia

Christian Legal Clinics of Philadelphia

- West Philadelphia Legal Clinic
- Hunting Park Legal Clinic
- South Philadelphia Legal Clinic
- Chester Legal Clinic
- Germantown Legal Clinic
- Kensington Legal Clinic
- Chosen 300 Legal Clinic
- North Philadelphia Legal Clinic

Pittsburgh CLA of Pittsburgh

TENNESSEE

Murfreesboro Murfreesboro CLA Nashville Metro Area Compassionate Counsel • Nashville Rescue Mission

- First Baptist Gallatin
- The Debb Center
- The Babb Center

TEXAS

Houston Community CLA Restoring Justice Houston Legal Aid Center

VIRGINIA

Arlington Restoration Immigration Legal

Aid

Northern Virginia

- Good Samaritan Advocates
- Columbia Baptist Church
- Cornerstone Chapel
- Reston Bible Church
- The Lamb Center

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Open Door Legal Services **Spokane** Union Gospel Mission CLA

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee JC Legal Resources Center Inc.

INTERNATIONAL -- CANADA

Toronto CCM Toronto Legal Clinic

CENTER FOR LAW & RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

CLS' Center for Law & Religious Freedom is the oldest Christian religious freedom advocacy ministry in the United States defending the rights of all Americans and religions.

The Center for Law & Religious Freedom opened a new chapter in 2023 with the hiring of a new, yet returning, Center director. We were blessed to have Steve McFarland, who was the Center director from 1992 to 1999, return to the Center as the new director. In 2023, the Center assisted CLS students on many campuses who continued to experience increased opposition to their presence as recognized student groups, filed comments on numerous proposed regulations in response to a "flood" of regulations from the Executive Branch that would diminish religious freedom, and finally had a huge victory for campus access in the Ninth Circuit.

DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE COURTS



2023 FCA gathering following victorious Ninth Circuit decision that affirmed their right to gather on campus!

DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Fellowship of Christian Athletes v. San Jose Unified School District

In 2019, school officials in the San Jose Unified School District derecognized a Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) group because the school officials did not like its religious beliefs (or its biblical stance on sexuality). FCA retained the Center in 2019 and filed suit the following year on behalf of FCA. Later, joined by attorneys with the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, CLS appealed the lower court rulings against FCA to the Ninth Circuit, which ultimately found in favor of FCA. The appeals panel issued a preliminary injunction against the school district and ruled that FCA students must be treated fairly and equally and that the school district could not discriminate against FCA's religious leadership standards under both the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the Equal Access Act. Under the injunction, school officials were ordered to recognize the FCA student group.

The school district requested a rehearing en banc, and a panel of 11 Ninth Circuit judges (rather than three) heard oral argument in March 2023. On September 13, 2023, in one of the greatest results in any case CLS has ever filed, the Ninth Circuit panel ruled 9-2 that the San Jose School District violated the religious free exercise right of FCA students when it deregistered the groups because FCA requires its leaders to believe in Christ and in biblical sexuality standards. This victory gave the 66 million Americans living in the nine westernmost states the strongest legal protection in the country for religious campus groups, from high school through law school.

SUPPORTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THROUGH AMICUS BRIEFS



U.S. SUPREME COURT

Groff v. DeJoy

The Center filed an amicus brief at the merits stage on behalf of a U.S. Postal Service worker who was denied an accommodation from working on Sunday. In addition to legal arguments about "undue hardship," the brief's distinctive feature was a tabulation of lower court accommodation cases involving summary judgment and which faiths they involved, thus showing the disproportionate importance of the accommodation provision to minority faiths. In a unanimous decision, the Court held that, under Title VII, an employer who denies an employee a religious accommodation "must show that the burden of granting an accommodation would result in substantial increased costs in relation to the conduct of its particular business." In doing so, the Court explained that it was "a mistake" for lower courts to have interpreted "undue hardship" for 46 years after Trans World Airlines, Inc. v. Hardison, 432 U.S. 63 (1977), to mean that an employer need not incur any but the most minimal cost or effort to reasonably accommodate that employee's religious conscience.

303 Creative v. Elenis

The Center filed an amicus brief on behalf of a Christian web designer who chose not to design websites for same-sex marriages because of her religious beliefs. The Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits persons from making any statement that indicates a person's patronage is unwelcome because of orientation or to "directly or indirectly" refuse services or accommodations to a person because of sexual orientation. In a 6-3 decision, the Court held that the "First Amendment prohibits Colorado from forcing a website designer to create expressive designs speaking messages with which the designer disagrees."

Tucker v. Faith Bible Chapel International

The Center joined an amicus brief in favor of Faith Bible Chapel's petition for review by the Supreme Court after the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals denied Faith Bible's petition for rehearing en banc. The brief argued that denial of Faith Bible's assertion of the ministerial exception harms the right of Faith Bible—and other religious entities—to be free from intrusive merits discovery and trial. Unfortunately, the Court declined to review the Tenth Circuit's decision, and the case is continuing in district court where a jury will be allowed to decide whether a chaplain such as Tucker was a minister under the First Amendment.

Vitagliano v. County of Westchester

The Center filed an amicus brief urging the U.S. Supreme Court to hear a challenge to a Westchester County, New York, ordinance that bars pro-life "sidewalk counselors" from talking with women and offering them alternatives to abortion within 100 feet of an abortion center, including public sidewalks, unless the intended recipient expresses consent to a discussion. The brief asks the Court to overrule its 2000 decision in *Hill v. Colorado*, which upheld a similar law against a free speech challenge. The Court denied the cert. petition.

UNITED STATES COURTS OF APPEALS

Apache Stronghold v. United States (Ninth Circuit)

In 2014, Congress passed a rider in a defense bill transferring the central site of Apache worship, Oak Flat, to a copper mining company. Mining under Oak Flat will permanently destroy the sacred sanctuary. A federal appeals court held that destruction of the sacred site is not a substantial burden on Apache religious beliefs. The court later voted to rehear the case en banc, and the Center joined an amicus brief that rebutted the Administration's argument that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) cannot bind future Congresses. The panel did not issue its decision before 2023 ended.

Cedar Park Assembly of God v. Myron "Mike" Kreidler et al. (Ninth Circuit)

Washington state law requires a church's health insurer to cover abortion for the church's employees, despite the church's longstanding conscientious objection to such coverage. Cedar Park Assembly of God is a church near Seattle that is seeking protection from that law. The Center joined a brief by the Pepperdine Religious Liberty Clinic, the Jones Day law firm, and the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty that argued that the district court in this case erred in holding that the Washington law does not violate Cedar Park Assembly of God's Free Exercise Clause rights. If these shocking facts do not trigger the protection of the First Amendment, then the brief asks the court to reconsider existing Free Exercise precedent (*Employment Division v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990)).

Tennessee v. Department of Education (Sixth Circuit)

The Center joined an amicus brief filed in a case in which 20 states sued to stop the unlawful actions of the U.S. Department of Education and the EEOC after they tried to rewrite federal antidiscrimination law and regulations to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation beyond their legal authority and without using proper rulemaking procedures.

STATE COURTS

Hensley v. State Commission on Judicial Conduct (Texas Supreme Court)

The Center, in an amicus brief to the Texas Supreme Court, urged the court to protect the religious conscience of a justice of the peace who was disciplined for declining to officiate same sex marriages, arguing that marriages are not part of the official duties for a justice of the peace, and this justice referred such couples to other officiants.

DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ON CAMPUS



COMMENTS ON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROPOSAL

The Department of Education proposed rescinding two regulations that protect the ability of religious student organizations to remain on public college campuses. The Center's Of Counsel, Kim Colby, was personally involved in writing the existing regulation that provides strong protections for religious student groups on campus. The Center submitted a comment letter opposing the proposed regulations and urged others to submit comments opposing the proposals. Over 58,000 comments were submitted in 30 days. The Department of Education has yet to issue the final rule.

FIGHTING FOR RECOGNITION OF CLS LAW STUDENT CHAPTERS AROUND THE NATION

University of Tulsa College of Law

The Student Bar Association (SBA) at Tulsa voted not to recognize the CLS law student chapter. The Center sent a letter to the administration explaining why it would be prudent to have the CLS law student chapter on campus as a recognized student organization. The administration agreed and formally recognized the chapter. Unfortunately, the SBA voted to censor the dean and reject the dean's recognition of CLS. Law students and others harassed the CLS students, including with death threats. Thankfully, the CLS students persevered, and the chapter is doing well.

University of Wisconsin

The University of Wisconsin Law School in 2022 refused to recognize the CLS law student chapter there because CLS requires that its leaders (though not attendees) be Christians and live aligned with biblical standards of conduct. Correspondence from the Center resulted in provisional recognition for 2022-2023. Additional correspondence from the Center over this past summer bore fruit: the CLS law student chapter was accepted without substantive change to its leadership qualifications for 2023-2024.

Recognition at other Law Schools

Other CLS law student chapters that faced recognition or re-recognition issues included chapters at the University of Montana, Rutgers, the University of Texas, the University of South Carolina, the University of Washington, and The Ohio State University. The Center assisted the students at these schools in the recognition process and, for some, issued letters to the universities explaining how their failure to recognize the CLS law student chapters violates federal regulations and federal case law and outlining potential legal consequences for university officials if the schools did not recognize the CLS chapters. All CLS chapters on these campuses were eventually recognized, which provides protection not only for CLS groups, but also other religious groups on the larger undergraduate campuses.

ADVOCATING FOR EQUAL CAMPUS ACCESS



ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL

Senators James Lankford of Oklahoma and Tim Scott of South Carolina and Representative Tim Walberg of Michigan introduced the Equal Campus Access Act in the Senate and House, respectively. This act, if passed, would ensure that any public college or university that discriminates against student organizations because of those groups' "religious beliefs, practices, speech, leadership standards, or standards of conduct" will not be allowed to receive taxpayer dollars. The Center joined a letter supporting this important campus access legislation.

IN THE STATES

Education Committees in both the Missouri House and New Hampshire House held hearings on proposed campus access bills that would provide protection for religious student groups on publics campuses in those states. Seventeen states already have similar laws. The Center submitted written testimony to both the House Higher Education Committee in Missouri and the House Education Committee in New Hampshire and had CLS members testify in person as well.

Once the Missouri House passed HB 136, the bill moved to the Missouri Senate. The Center submitted written testimony to the Senate Committee on General Laws in support for the bill explaining that HB 136 is an essential piece of legislation, particularly given that the federal government—under the Administration—proposed rescinding the existing federal regulation that protects religious student groups on public college campuses (88 Fed. Reg. 10857). The bill was never taken from the Senate calendar for floor debate and vote.

DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FROM GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS



The Executive Branch and its agencies actively—and with great frequency—issued proposed regulations that often obscured or failed to respect religious rights and misrepresented applicable law. In response, the Center filed numerous comments on its own or jointly with other allied groups. In addition to the comments opposing the recission of regulations protecting the ability of religious student organizations to remain on public college campuses, the Center submitted the following comments for the purpose of protecting religious freedom in the situations and regulations: • Early in 2023, the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published for comment a proposed rule entitled "Safeguarding the Rights of Conscience as Protected by Federal Statutes." The Center authored a comment letter, which was joined by the Thomas More Society, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance, and the Center for Public Justice, urging HHS to keep in place regulations protecting the conscience of health care workers and providers who cannot deliver certain services because of their religious beliefs.

• In March, the Center authored a comment letter joined by the National Association of Evangelicals, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Thomas More Society regarding a new, nine-agency proposed rule that would alter regulations for faith-based organizations partnering with federally funded social service programs across the nine agencies.

 In July, HHS proposed to amend the rules governing its grants to private service organizations. The Center authored a comment letter on behalf of CLS, the Thomas More Society, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance arguing that the proposed rules overstepped the department's authority in declaring it would be guided by "public policy" and would extend sexual orientation and gender identity to federal statutes that Congress never extended to sex discrimination.

In September, the Center pushed back on regulations the Administration proposed that would extend LGBTQ rights to 13 different agencies' federal grants, even though the Supreme Court's 2020 Bostock decision was expressly limited to one federal statute (Title VII of the 1965 Civil Rights Act).

 In October, the Center authored comments to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) opposing the EEOC's proposed interpretation of Congress' Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA). The PWFA requires a covered entity to provide reasonable accommodations to a qualified employee's or applicant's known limitation related to, affected by, or arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless the accommodation will cause an undue hardship on the operation of the business of the covered entity. The EEOC proposal seeks to add abortion as a "related medical condition." The Center's letter specifically addressed the unjustifiable inclusion of elective abortion as a "related medical condition" that covered employers must accommodate, as well as the importance of clarifying in the final regulations the Title VII religious organization exemption as it applies in the context of the PWFA.

• In November, the Center authored comments, again to the EEOC, advocating that religious employers are not liable for sexual harassment when they decline to use preferred pronouns if they have a sincere religious belief against transgenderism.

• Also in November, the Center and the National Association of Evangelicals joined comments authored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops calling for, among other things, correction of the preamble's statement that "gender dysphoria may violate section 504 [federal disability law]."

 In December, the Center, the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, and the Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance submitted joint comments objecting to proposed amendments from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to the model guidelines for all federal grants across every department. The comments urged OMB to not drop from the current guidelines references to the free exercise of religion and free speech rights of faith-based grantees and to not misrepresent the law regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. The comments argued that doing so would repel otherwise qualified religious organizations from applying for federal grants and would misdirect the public servants who evaluate applicants and implement the grant programs.

DEFENDING ATTORNEYS' RIGHT TO PRACTICE LAW



ABA ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT

The Center continued to lead the national opposition to the American Bar Association's Model Rule 8.4(g), which was passed in 2016. The rule threatens the loss of any attorney's license to practice if they "engage in conduct that the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or socioeconomic status in conduct related to the practice of law." Numerous scholars have condemned ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) as a "speech code" for attorneys that poses an existential threat to attorneys who value independent thinking, freedom of speech, and free exercise of religion. ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) goes into effect only if it adopted by a state supreme court because all states are responsible for establishing their own professional conduct rules and the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct only serves as a guide to the individual states.

IDAHO

The Idaho Supreme Court issued an order rejecting the bar's recommendation to add anti-discrimination and anti-harassment provisions to Idaho's misconduct rule. While commending "the Bar's . . . attempts to address unlawful discrimination and harassment in the legal profession, the court explained it could not adopt the resolution because the resolution violates the First Amendment and is also unconstitutionally overbroad and vague." The Center submitted comments opposing adoption of the bar's recommendation and engaged CLS members throughout the state to also urge the court to reject the resolution.

ILLINOIS

After six years, the Illinois State Bar Association reversed course and approved a version of ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) for consideration by the Illinois Supreme Court. The proposed rule hews closely to ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) by changing the standard from one of knowledge to one of negligence ("reasonably should know") and making the rule applicable to "conduct in the practice of law," including bar activities and social events. The Center submitted a comment letter opposing adoption of the proposed rule. The Illinois Supreme Court Rules Committee also held a public hearing on the proposed rule change, and several CLS members (including the current and past CLS board chairs) spoke at the hearing, urging the court not to adopt the proposed rule.

PENNSYLVANIA

In the spring, the Center filed an amicus brief with the Third Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of a challenge to Pennsylvania's adoption of an ABA Model Rule 8.4(g)-like rule for attorneys that threatened their license to practice if, in words or conduct "related to the practice of law," they manifested bias or discriminated based on sexual orientation, among other protected characteristics. Later in 2023, the court ducked the issue, ruling that the attorney "lacks standing to bring his challenge because Rule 8.4(g) does not generally prohibit him from . . . expressing controversial ideas, nor will the Bar impose discipline for his planned speech."

WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin Supreme Court issued an order denying a petition from the State Bar Standing Committee on Professional Ethics asking the court to replace existing Supreme Court Rule 20:8.4(i) with ABA Model Rule 8.4(g). The concurring opinion prominently featured the comment letter submitted by the Center.

WORKING WITH CLS MEMBERS AND OTHER CONCERNED ATTORNEYS

Even though only a few states acted on ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) in 2023, the Center continued its work to oppose adoption of ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) where it was at issue and to raise awareness with both CLS' own members and other concerned attorneys, including continuing legal education workshops on ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) at both the 2023 Northwest Regional Retreat and the 2023 CLS National Conference.

ABA MODEL RULE 8.4(G) WEBSITE

The CLS ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) website is the only publicly available resource covering the model rule. In 2023, the Center updated the CLS website on ABA Model Rule 8.4(g), adding new features such as a state status map. These webpages provide background information and a litany of resources on the model rule, including video presentations, educational webinars, written publications, and comment letters. The website also includes individual state pages to make it easier for interested parties to see what is happening in a particular state.

(William Bentley Ball LIFE AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY DEFENSE Award

2023 RECIPIENT: CLARKE FORSYTHE



The Center awarded its annual Ball Award, which recognizes the tireless and obedient work of faithful followers of Christ and defenders of religious freedom and life, to Clarke Forsythe for his life of long obedience in one direction to protect the sanctity of human life. For decades, Clarke's legal practice has focused on defending the sanctity of human life. Clarke has just released his latest book, "Pushing Roe v. Wade Over the Brink: The Battle for America's Heart, the Human Right to Life and a Future Full of Hope" (Americans United for Life, 2023).



LAW STUDENT MINISTRIES

Learning to do justice with the love of God in the classroom, on campus, and in the legal profession.

Law Student Ministries (LSM) had many milestones and successes in 2023, including growth of law school chapters, events, new initiatives, a great Fellows program, and the innumerable work by our volunteer leaders on law school campuses.

LSM launched a number of new law student chapters, including ones at the University of Tulsa, the University of Washington, and, most recently, the University of Montana. And during the school year, LSM Director Anton Sorkin visited campuses by taking over a dozen trips in order to strengthen local Christian communities across the nation. He visited CLS law student chapters at a number of law schools, including the University of Iowa, the University of Nebraska, Creighton University, Lewis & Clark College, the University of Florida, Stetson University, the University of Pennsylvania, and many more.

LSM Program Coordinator Michelle Williams worked closely with the LSM director to organize several events, including the 2023 Fellows program.

EVENTS

The biggest event of the year was the National Law Student Convention (NLSC) in Boston. As part of the 2023 CLS National Conference, NLSC brought together over 100 students for three days to learn together, to grow together, and to return to their campus reenergized and encouraged to be salt and light to their classmates and professors. This year, NLSC hosted Kevin Lee (North Carolina Central University) who spoke about "Artificial Intelligence and Legal Practice;" hosted a mentor lunch where the students spent two hours over a meal with practicing attorneys and professionals; and featured the student main session at which students engaged with CLS Law School Fellows Director Mike Schutt and discussed various topics connected to the integration of faith and law and how to best serve their campuses when they return.

In 2023, LSM hosted two other major, live events one in Washington, D.C., called "Reframing Agency" (featuring Christine Emba and Erika Bachiochi) and the other at the University of Tennessee called "Protecting the Sacred?" (featuring Rachael Denhollander). The first event was held at the National Press Club, and a 2022 Fellow, Claire Temple, was instrumental in setting up the event at UT by working with the Veritas Forum and Intervarsity, as well as serving as moderator.

LSM continued its Namárië Forum—a national forum for cultivating the Christian imagination—this year focusing on C.S. Lewis, with conversations on *The Abolition of Man* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* with our friends at the C.S. Lewis Institute. During the summer, LSM hosted an exciting conversation series discussing the collected essays in a volume entitled *Christianity & Constitutionalism* with many of the authors themselves, including John Witte, Jr., Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, R.H. Helmholz, Carlos Bernal, David VanDrunen, Li-ann Thio, and others.

INITIATIVES

LSM also launched two brand new initiatives. One was the *Cross & Gavel Substack* to provide our members a forum for discussing the integration of law and religion. We also launched the Wellness Program in order to focus on the mental health needs of law students and attorneys. Our first guest for this online program was author and speaker Ruth Haley Barton, who spoke on pursuing wellness through established rhythms and an abiding relationship with God.

PARTNERSHIPS

LSM also expanded its partnership with various groups working on common causes, most importantly the one mentioned earlier with the Veritas Forum and Intervarsity; and two others including sponsoring the inaugural conference from The Center for Christianity and Public Life and attending a peace conference in Montana hosted by Relational Wisdom 360.

While LSM developed a number of relationships along the year, LSM also spent time growing internally. Staff participated in the Relational Wisdom 360 peace conference and two training fellowships thanks to our friends at Baylor in Washington and the Institute for Religion & Democracy.









Top: LSM gathering with students at Suffolk University.

Middle Left: LSM gathering with students at Creighton University.

Middle Right: CLS' LSM director, Anton Sorkin, hanging out with past CLS Fellows from Thurgood Marshall School of Law (Houston).

Bottom: Gathering of members from the 2023 CLS Law School Fellows class.





Top: LSM gathering with students at the University of Pennsylvania.

Middle: CLS' 2023 Fellows class enjoying a Washington Nationals baseball game.

Bottom: LSM gathering with students at the University of Tulsa.



CAMPUSES SERVED

The University of Alabama American University Appalachian School of Law Arizona State University University of Arizona University of Arkansas-Fayetteville University of Arkansas-Little Rock Ave Maria Law School University of Baltimore Barry-University of Orlando **Baylor Law School** Belmont University Boston College University of Boston CA-Berkley School of Law University of California-Davis University of California-Irvine CA-Hastings, University of California Western CA-Los Angeles, Univ. of (UCLA) Campbell University Capital University Case Western Reserve University Catholic University Columbus (Law) Chapman University Charleston (SC) School of Law City University of New York University Chicago Law Chicago-Kent College of Law Cincinnati, University of Cleveland State University University of Colorado Columbia University **Cornell University** Creighton University Dallas Baptist University (Pre-Law) University of Dayton University of Denver University of Detroit Mercy University of District of Columbia Drake University Duke University Lincoln Memorial University (Law) **Duquesne University** Elon University School of Law Emory University Faulkner University Jones (Law) University of Florida Florida A&M University Florida State University Fordham University George Mason University (Law) The George Washington Uni. Georgetown University University of Georgia Georgia State University Harvard University

Hawaii, University of (Law) Hofstra University University of Houston Howard University University of Idaho University of Illinois (UIC-Chicago) Illinois-Urbana, University of Indiana University-Bloomington Indiana University-Indianapolis Inter American University (PR) University of Iowa John Marshall Law School (GA) University of Kansas University of Kentucky Liberty University Lincoln Memorial University (Law) Louisiana State University Louisville, University of (Law) Loyola Marymount University (CA) Loyola University Chicago Lewis and Clark Law School Marquette University Mass-Dartmouth, University of University of Maryland University of the Pacific (Law) University of Memphis Mercer University University of Miami Michigan State University Mitchell Hamline School of Law University of Michigan University of Minnesota Mississippi College The University of Mississippi University of Missouri-Columbia University of Missouri-Kansas City University of Montana Nashville School of Law University of Nebraska University of New Hampshire New York Law School New York University North Carolina Central University University of North Carolina University of North Texas-Dallas Northeastern University Northern Illinois University Northwestern University Notre Dame Nova Southeastern University (Law) The Ohio State University Oklahoma City University University of Oklahoma Pace University Penn State Dickinson (Law) Pennsylvania, University of (Law) Pepperdine University

University of Pittsburgh Quinnipiac University (Law) Regent University University of Richmond Roger Williams University **Rutgers Law School** Saint Mary's University University of St. Thomas (MN) University of San Diego University of San Francisco San Joaquin College of Law Samford University (Law) Santa Clara University Seton Hall University of Southern California University of South Carolina University of South Dakota South Texas College of Law Southern Illinois University Southern Methodist University Southern University Law Center Southwestern University St. John's University St. Thomas University (Miami) Stanford University Stetson University Suffolk University School of Law Syracuse University Temple University University of St. Thomas (MN) University of Tennessee Texas A&M University The University of Texas Texas Southern (Law) Texas Tech University University of Toledo Touro College Trinity Law School Tulane University Tulsa, University of (Law) Vanderbilt University Vermont Law School Villanova University University of Virginia Wake Forest School of Law Washburn University Washington and Lee University Western New England University Western Michigan Uni. (Tampa) West Virginia, University (Law) Wheaton College (Pre-Law) College of William and Mary Willamette University (Law) Wisconsin, University of Yale University

CLS LAW SCHOOL FELLOWS PROGRAM

The CLS Law School Fellows program is a unique program designed to encourage, train, and provide law students with the theological and philosophical tools for a mission-minded approach to legal study and law practice.



Since its establishment in 2018, the CLS Law School Fellows program has trained six classes for a total of 236 students from over 85 campuses around the nation. Through the Fellows program, students are "equipped to think theologically about the study and practice of law and to help others to do the same," in the words of a 2019 Fellow.

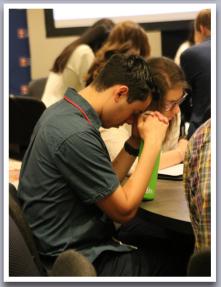
This year, the Fellows spent a week together in Washington, D.C., talking Christian jurisprudence, public integrity, and vocational ministry—learning from an array of scholars and practitioners from across the nation. More than that, they spent time exploring our nation's capital, cheering on the Washington Nationals, learning to line dance, and dining at some of the best restaurants in the city. And, oh yeah, they got to visit the Supreme Court!

After a curtailed 2022 Fellows program, the 2023 Fellows program was an absolute success, and the images and their return for the second Fellows Reunion bears that out, with nearly 70% of the 2023 Fellows coming to Boston for the National Law Student Convention at the 2023 CLS National Conference. There, they got to not only reunite with their own classmates, but also meet the Fellows from the last five years. This year, we had over 50 Fellows attend the 2023 Fellows Reunion!















ATTORNEY MINISTRIES

Attorney Ministries encourages and trains legal professionals how to integrate the Word of God and their faith in Jesus Christ with their professional calling.

Attorney Ministries consists of all the amazing CLS members. This year, Attorney Ministries really experienced God's grace and mercy as we witnessed expansion in many areas!

Attorney Ministries saw another increase in overall membership as we reached back through the years with a targeted mailing to former CLS members. Attorney Ministries also strengthened membership by expanding group membership opportunities for law firms, public ministries, and law schools.

CLS ATTORNEY CHAPTERS & ENGAGEMENT

Our 51, current attorney chapters steadily impacted their surrounding communities by hosting continuing legal education speakers' series events, mentoring law students, and serving with their local Christin Legal Aid clinics. Events such as elevator pitches, CLE opportunities, and summer clerkship coffee mixers were among the many gatherings that happened across the nation in 2023.

Attorney Ministries added two "new" chapters in 2023 as we relaunched both the Boston and Atlanta attorney chapters.

To top it all off, God continues to move in the hearts of His people as CLS members explore starting chapters in Puerto Rico, Tampa (FL), Louisville (KY), Lexington (KY), Richmond (VA), and many other cities.

PARTNERSHIPS

Attorney Ministries continued to develop partnerships with other organizations and ministries to advance God's kingdom. One recent partnership is with OvercomersTV as CLS ventures into the world of television broadcast. CLS episodes are broadcast weekly on Saturdays at 2:30 p.m. on https://overcomerstv.live/ christian-legal-society/. The audio of each episode is also available through all podcast channels.

JOINING THE TEAM

With members across the nation, Attorney Ministries is spreading our bandwidth, finances, and resources to serve the CLS membership. Attorney Ministries is grateful that God added two additional team members—Joe Ruta (Northeast regional coordinator) and Ariana Finley (Attorney Ministries coordinator). Both will help Attorney Ministries better serve the needs of CLS members and attorney chapters nationwide.

GATHERING TOGETHER

CLS hosted several online gatherings in 2023 to serve as an additional resource for attorneys, law students, and others, allowing them to gather virtually and hear from engaging speakers such as Heather Rice-Minus of Prison Fellowship.

In addition, in 2023, Attorney Ministries increased the number of CLS Regional Retreats from three to four. Attorneys and law students gathered in the Northeast, Northwest, Southwest, and Midwest for fellowship and learning. Regional retreats kicked off with the Midwest Regional Retreat where attorneys and law students gathered at a conference center on the beautiful Geneva Lake in Wisconsin to hear from several speakers on the topic of "Equipping the Saints." The theme "Growing to be Attorneys after God's Own Heart like David" was the focal point for over 60 California law students and attorneys at the Southwest Regional Retreat, which was held in San Diego. For the first time in over a decade, CLS held a Northwest Regional Retreat where attorneys and law students gathered to discuss a theme based on Colossians 3:17-"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father and through him." It was an eventful, yet refreshing weekend at Cascade Springs in Yelm, Washington, as attendees heard from featured speakers on the theme, "Law: Calling AND Vocation." Finally, the Northeast Regional Retreat wrapped up the 2023 retreats in Southbury, Connecticut, as dozens of attorneys and

law students came from as far as Washington, D.C., to discuss "Legalism v. Grace." All those who attended the CLS Regional Retreats enjoyed wholesome fellowship and fun with others in their local attorney and law student chapters. We look forward to continuously expanding as we plan to host five regional retreats in 2024.

The 2023 CLS National Conference in October provided an enriched experience for CLS members and others. Over 500 attorneys, law students, and guests traveled nationwide to gather and hear speakers, attend workshops, and enjoy other featured events. In two firsts for CLS, Attorney Ministries put together a swearing-in ceremony at the U.S. Supreme Court, where 23 CLS members became members of the Supreme Court Bar in June and hosted a special prayer time dedicated to recent law school graduates who were about to sit for the July bar exam. Attorney Ministries hopes to hold these events annually moving forward.



ATTORNEY CHAPTERS

ALABAMA Birmingham

ARIZONA Phoenix Tucson

CALIFORNIA

Inland Empire Los Angeles Orange County Sacramento San Diego San Fernando Valley San Francisco

COLORADO Colorado Springs Denver

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FLORIDA Jacksonville Central (Orlando) Palm Beach (West)

GEORGIA Atlanta HAWAII Honolulu

ILLINOIS Chicago

INDIANA Indianapolis

KANSAS Topeka Wichita

MARYLAND Baltimore

MASSACHUSETTS Boston

MINNESOTA Minneapolis

MISSISSIPPI Central (Jackson)

MISSOURI Kansas City St. Louis Springfield NEBRASKA Lincoln

NEW ENGLAND

NEW YORK New York City Upstate (Albany)

NORTH CAROLINA Wake County

OHIO Central Ohio (Columbus)

OKLAHOMA Oklahoma City

OREGON Salem

PENNSYLVANIA Western PA (Pittsburgh) SOUTH CAROLINA Greenville

TENNESSEE Chattanooga Memphis Nashville

TEXAS

Austin Dallas Houston San Antonio Williamson County

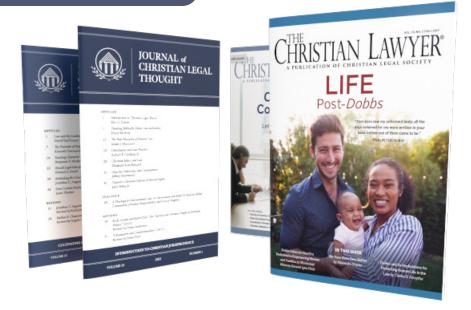
VIRGINIA Northern VA Virginia Beach

WASHINGTON Seattle

WISCONSIN Madison



RESOURCES



JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN LEGAL THOUGHT

CLS' Journal of Christian Legal Thought exists to equip legal professionals to seek and study biblical truth as it relates to law, the practice of law, and legal institutions. The Journal seeks to bring together a wide cast of thought leaders and legal practitioners to advance the interaction of law, religion, and vocation.

In 2023, the *Journal* first published an introduction to Christian jurisprudence to provide a resource and/ or teaching aid for engaging Christian legal thought. In the fall issue, the *Journal* topic was on developing character in law school and society, with contributions that focused on areas such as virtue ethics, social media, and law school curriculum.

THE CHRISTIAN LAWYER MAGAZINE

In 2023, CLS tackled the topics of Christian Conciliation and Life Post-*Dobbs* in *The Christian Lawyer* magazine. These are important topics that sought to address the need and desire of attorneys to engage more fully.



CROSS & GAVEL PODCAST

CLS' Cross & Gavel podcast posts bimonthly episodes that tackle the interaction between law, religion, and public policy. In 2023, CLS continued producing quality content by engaging national scholars and thought leaders on a broad array of issues. Podcast guests included Christian B. Miller, Allen Calhoun, Vincent Lloyd, Sigal R. Ben-Porath, Tom Berg, and Nathan Chapman. We also began a summer tradition with a series on an anthology entitled *Christianity & Constitutionalism*, with essay authors like John Witte, Jr., Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, Carlos Bernal, and R.H. Helmholz dropping by. Check it out at ChristianLegalSociety.org/ podcast.

CONNECTED IN 2023

CLS members and friends returned to Boston this past fall for the 2023 CLS National Conference for a great time of fellowship, learning, and fun.

It was an incredible event at a beautiful location. Conference participants enjoyed important moments of reconnecting and heard amazing messages from Jade Mathis, Florida Supreme Court Justice Jamie Grosshans, Ed Stetzer, and Charles Galda. There were incredible workshops covering topics such as artificial intelligence, religious freedom, nonprofit law, torts, block chain technology, legal ethics, estate planning, and so much more. In addition to the plethora of workshops, CLS held a job fair and a singles' mingle for the second year and continued the perennial favorites like the Christian Legal Aid Summit, the Christian Legal Scholars' Symposium, the CLS Chapter Leader Luncheon, the National Law Student Convention, the General Counsel Forum, and the Baptist Breakfast.

CLS invites you to join us for the 2024 CLS National Conference in Washington, D.C., from October 31 to November 3 at the Capital Hilton for another wonderful weekend of fellowship, learning, and fun.













CLS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 3, 2024



OTHER WAYS CONNECT: PARTNERING WITH CLS

PRAY

Please pray for CLS' ministries as CLS continues to impact our nation for Christ. CLS' work is possible because of God's provision and your faithful support. CLS firmly believes in the importance of bringing the needs of CLS' ministries to the Lord in prayer.

GIVE

CLS' work is supported entirely by faithful partners who believe in CLS' mission. Please consider supporting CLS financially in the coming year. You can designate your gift to your favorite CLS ministry if you would like. Please also consider incorporating CLS into your will today. CLS' ability to reach more people for Christ is heavily dependent on the financial support CLS receives.

SHARE

Please tell your friends, family, and colleagues about CLS. Share the CLS publications with everyone you know. CLS is always thankful for your positive words of its critical ministries.

VOLUNTEER

If you are interested in getting involved in CLS in a volunteer capacity, CLS has many opportunites available including, but not limited to:

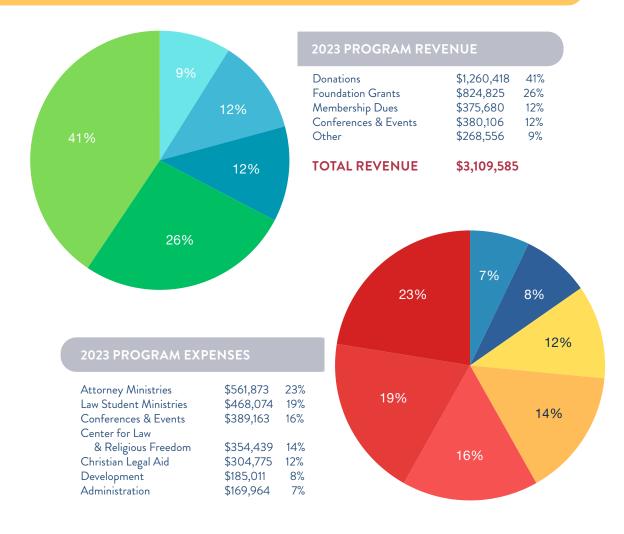
- attorneys and administrative staff working at Christian Legal Aid clinics;
- coordination with state lawmakers to protect religious freedom in states nationwide;
- planning and on-site assistance at the CLS Regional Retreats;
- mentoring law students;
- mentoring young attorneys; and
- leadership and coordination of CLS attorney and law student chapters.

GET CONNECTED

Show up and get involved with a local attorney or law student chapter. Stay connected by following Christian Legal Society on Facebook or Twitter. Read through the CLS magazine and journal. Sign up for devotionals, monthly emails, and other CLS communications.

FINANCES

IN 2023, CLS INVESTED 85 CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR DIRECTLY INTO MINISTRY PROGRAMS.



Note: These financial reports for 2023 are pending completion of our annual audit. All information on these pages reflects data from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. CLS' Annual Report, IRS form 990, and audited financial statements are available upon request.

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