



CHRISTIAN
LEGAL SOCIETY



ACT JUSTLY,
LOVE MERCY,
WALK HUMBLY
WITH YOUR GOD.
MICAH 6:8

CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

ABOUT CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1961, Christian Legal Society is a nonprofit ministry dedicated to serving Jesus Christ in and through the law. CLS accomplishes its work through four unique ministries:

- **Attorney Ministries** (*established 1961*)
- **Law Student Ministries** (*established 1962*)
- **Center for Law & Religious Freedom** (*established 1975*)
- **Christian Legal Aid** (*established 1997*)

CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY
IS DEDICATED TO THE FULFILLMENT OF MICAH 6:8
BY REFLECTING JESUS CHRIST IN AND THROUGH THE LAW.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

A meeting. A prayer. A legal action engaged. God moves through small, faithful acts and is the reason CLS so often punches above its weight class. Our small steps; His great power.

God is often setting the table in amazing ways and sometimes through the everyday things at CLS. Such was the case at a meeting of Christian attorneys with my friend Nyung Hurst, who was the new general counsel of Bethany Christian Services. Attending a meeting of Christian attorneys is an everyday occurrence at CLS, but the Lord had more in mind.

A month later, Nyung called CLS to ask for our help in defending Bethany from a crippling action brought by the Michigan attorney general. CLS' Center staff met with Bethany executives and prayed for them and the litigation. CLS later heard from one Bethany executive who was deeply moved, observing that, in his 26 years, the ministry had never experienced outside counsel praying for the organization and staff.

Whether advocating for religious freedom, providing community and professional development for attorneys and law students, or serving the poor through the critical work of volunteers in clinics across the country, CLS continues to prioritize the weightier matters of the law.

The ministry of CLS serves people in ways only attorneys can serve. Thank you for making 2024 impactful for Christ in the law!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D.N.", written over a white background.

DAVID NAMMO

CHRISTIAN LEGAL AID

CLS' Christian Legal Aid (CLA) ministry helps Christian attorneys love their neighbors in the unique way only attorneys can—through the provision of legal services.

SERVICE, COMMUNITY, TRAINING

In 2024, more than 143,000 individuals, or more than 35,800 families, benefited from CLA's legal service network. This includes the sacrificial work of more than 3,500 volunteers. CLA clinics ministered to clients through prayer and spiritual encouragement, offering both legal solutions and the hope of the gospel.

The CLA ministry supported this growing network through legal trainings, spiritual encouragement, and community gatherings for prayer and fellowship. CLA met every month in 2024 to pray as a community, gathering as a family across the nation (and sometimes the globe!) to seek God and to ask for His provision and sustenance. Additionally, CLA continued virtual and in-person trainings, covering a wide variety of topics such as:

- Self-Care for Legal Aid Attorneys
- Fundraising Readiness for Your CLA Clinic
- Legal Protections for Faith-Based Nonprofits
- Building and Empowering Effective Teams
- Faith-Based Asylum Claims
- Trauma-Informed Advocacy for Legal Aid Attorneys
- Christian Legal Aid: One Mission, Many Models

CLA hosted the inaugural Christian Legal Aid Student Summit on Monday, February 12, 2024, at Washington Community Fellowship Church in D.C. The Summit is designed to help students set a vision for a life-long commitment to pursuing justice for all through the legal vocation.

CHRISTIAN LEGAL AID IS A CRITICAL MINISTRY THAT INCREASES ACCESS TO LEGAL AID SERVICES FOR THE POOR, THE MARGINALIZED, AND THE VICTIMS OF INJUSTICE WITH THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

NEW PARTNERSHIP PILOT

In 2024, CLA also sought out new ways to empower CLA organizations and extend their client impact. CLA is excited to have partnered with Houston Legal Aid Center to pilot the first Christian Legal Aid Fellowship. By providing funding for CLA organizations to employ and train recent law school graduates, CLA can equip the next generation of CLA leaders with the legal, nonprofit management, and ministry skills needed to start and lead strong, sustainable organizations.

WELCOMING NEW CLINICS

But the CLA ministry extends beyond support to existing CLA organizations—this year, the network added 3 clinics! Believing that all Christians have a role to play in God's work of justice, CLA addressed audiences across the country and encouraged them to discern how God would have them be a

part of CLA. God continues to bless the seeds planted. After connecting with an attorney at the CLS Northwest Regional Retreat, CLS attorneys went on to form a new CLA clinic in Salem, Oregon, and met with clients for the first time this fall!

The CLA network hopes to unite a variety of service models, practice areas, and jurisdictions under a shared mission of serving the Lord through pursuing justice. CLA partners with individuals to discern what model fits their particular situation. The network encompasses a variety of organizational structures and entities—from church-based legal clinics formed this year in Miami, Florida, and Concord, New Hampshire, to legal representation of wrongly accused pretrial detainees in Nairobi, Kenya. CLA recognizes that this mission is global and is thrilled to have welcomed Africa Justice and Restoration Kenya.



Image credit: Open Hands Legal Services, NYC

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
Redeemer Christian Legal Aid,
Inc. (ReCLAiM)

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
Correctional Facility

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 Delaware
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
Salem
Christian Legal Aid of Marion and
Polk Counties

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 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

Toronto
CCM Toronto Legal Clinic
Kenya
Africa Justice and Restoration



Image credit: Trinity Legal, OKC

CENTER FOR LAW & RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Under the helm of Center Director Steve McFarland, the Center for Law & Religious Freedom once again worked

tirelessly to defend religious freedom and the sanctity of human life for all Americans.

DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THROUGH DIRECT REPRESENTATION



Pastor Eric Dressel preaching.

THE NOISY GOSPEL CASE

Eric Dressel is a campus minister who for the past dozen years has been a full-time evangelist, mostly at college campuses. The Center, along with local counsel, represented Mr. Dressel against the city of Miami Beach after a

city official cited him for preaching on a noisy downtown sidewalk using an amplifier. Together, the Center and local counsel wrote the city attorney arguing that the city's noise ordinance violated Mr. Dressel's free speech rights on a quintessential public forum. The deputy city attorney recently withdrew the citation and promised not to interfere with Mr. Dressel's religious speech on public sidewalks. This is an example of how the Center—for almost 50 years—has overcome or resolved unlawful infringements on religious freedom with a non-threatening letter educating officials on the law.

SUBPOENA FOR NJ PRO-LIFE GROUP

Gateway Pregnancy Center shares the gospel with abortion-minded women in northern New Jersey. It clearly represents itself as providing Christian counseling, not medical services. The Center is defending Gateway and its

founder, Rev. Dean Gavaris, from an onerous subpoena that is part of the attorney general's statewide campaign that seems intended to intimidate crisis pregnancy centers after the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the federal Constitution did not guarantee a right to abort the unborn. CLS staff met with an assistant NJ AG and other state officials in an effort to convince them that their efforts to target Gateway and issue an onerous subpoena for unsubstantiated reasons were unlawful. No word yet from the state AG.

REFUGEE CONTRACT DISCRIMINATION

The Center, along with a Grand Rapids firm, is co-counsel representing Bethany Christian Services in a federal lawsuit filed against the state of Michigan (*Bethany Christian Services v. Corbin* (W.D. Mich.)). Along with its work in foster care and adoption, Bethany is a significant provider of resettlement services for legally admitted refugees. Despite excellent reviews of Bethany's refugee work, the state decided to cut off federal grant money to Bethany for much of its refugee work because Bethany continues to hire only Christian employees. To fulfill its mission of sharing the love and compassion of Jesus Christ with refugees, Bethany's staff needs to have personally experienced the love of Jesus. The issue in this case is whether a state can force a religious nonprofit grantee of federal funds to surrender its constitutional right to hire fellow believers as employ-

Bethany Christian Services helping a refugee.



ees or else be disqualified from future federal grants. There is no question legally that Bethany has a clear right to hire only Christians under the religious organization exemption in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, but the question here is whether a state can punish and defund a religious organization if it exercises that right. That is what Michigan is doing to Bethany, but Bethany is standing up to the state because its religious mission is dependent on the creed and conduct of its employees—its personnel determine the mission. The Center is heavily invested in ensuring Bethany remains free to require its employees be Christian.

SUPPORTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THROUGH AMICUS BRIEFS

The Center continued supporting religious freedom cases on appeal. In 2024, the Center filed or joined amicus briefs—also known as “friend of the court” briefs—in 15 cases with 6 courts, including 8 with the U.S. Supreme Court. These cases have spanned religious freedom issues from whether churches must cover abortions for their employees to whether a Christian organization can limit who it hires to those who abide by biblical sexuality to whether parents have a right to be informed before their child in kindergarten is subjected to pro-gay lesson plans without notice or the right to opt out.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Bethesda University v. Cho

Bethesda University was founded on Pentecostal theology, which shapes the mission and educational goals of the school. An internal dispute arose among the school’s board of directors when the university’s president wanted several board positions to be filled by non-Pentecostal members and deceived the board into appointing them. The rest of the board later objected, concerned that Bethesda’s very identity as a Pentecostal institution was at stake because its board retains ultimate power to determine the religious principles and policies governing every aspect of its operations and instruction. Ultimately, the board dismissed the president, who then filed a lawsuit.

California courts held that the governing board of Bethesda had to allow non-Pentecostal board members to lead their institution. In doing so, the courts waded into the forbidden waters of adjudicating on religious doctrine and improperly entangled themselves in religious controversy in violation of the First Amendment, which prohibits secular courts from evaluating the religious character of religious schools. Just before the end of 2024, the Center filed an amicus brief asking the Supreme Court, which has long held that courts are barred from adjudicating church leadership disputes, to hear the case.

Bethesda Christian University.



Landor v. Louisiana Department of Corrections

State prison guards handcuffed a Rastafarian prisoner and held him down while shaving his lifelong growth of hair. In doing so, they willfully ignored a court order protecting the inmate. The Fifth Circuit condemned the guards’ act but followed circuit precedent, saying that damages are not available. The en banc Fifth Circuit court denied review, but 15 of the 17 active judges (in concurrences and dissents) noted that *Tanzin v. Tanvir* had or might have undercut the circuit precedent and that the U.S. Supreme Court should address the question. The Center, joined by a diverse group of co-amici, filed a brief asking the Court to review the case because the circuit court failed to follow precedent set by the U.S. Supreme Court. This case is important because government actors will think twice about intentionally violating prisoners’ religious rights if they no longer can do it with impunity and know they can be held individually liable for damages.

Mahmoud v. Montgomery County Board of Education

In fall 2022, the Montgomery County Board of Education (“Board”) announced over 20 new “inclusivity” books for its pre-K through eighth grade classrooms—books that champion pride parades, gender transitioning, and pronoun preferences for children. At the same time, the Board assured concerned parents they would be notified when the books were read



“Opt-out” parent in Montgomery County.

and could opt out for their children. This meant parents troubled by the books’ blatant disregard for widely held religious beliefs would be respected. Everything changed in March 2023, when the Board issued a statement saying it would no longer notify parents or honor opt-out requests. A diverse coalition of religious parents including Muslims, Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox Christians, and others fought back alleging the Board had violated the parents’ inalienable and constitutionally protected right to control the religious upbringing of their children, especially on sensitive issues concerning family life and human sexuality. On May 15, 2024, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the parents with children enrolled at Montgomery County Public Schools have no right to be notified or opt their children out of

storybooks that push one-sided ideology regarding gender and human sexuality. The parents appealed the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court. CLS, joined by First Liberty, Focus on the Family, and the National Association of Evangelicals, submitted an amicus brief in support of the parents' appeal. The Court granted the appeal and will hear the case in 2025.

National Religious Broadcasters Noncommercial Music Licensing Committee v. Copyright Royalty Board

The Center filed an amicus brief urging the Court to review the anemic application of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act by the D.C. Circuit Court in a case where religious broadcasters challenged discrimination by government officials against their speech by charging them exponentially higher rates (18 times higher to be exact) to stream music online than secular National Public Radio broadcasters. The amicus brief, which the National Association of Evangelicals joined, argued that the circuit court gave improper deference to the Copyright Royalty Board's rejection of the religious broadcasters' First Amendment claims, resulting in a conflict with U.S. Supreme Court decisions and threatening to eviscerate religious freedom protections. Unfortunately, the Court chose not to review the case.

Lackey v. Stinnie

On rare occasions, the Center advocates in a case that will make a difference for religious freedom, even though the case does not directly involve that right. The Center filed an amicus brief at the merits stage in one such case where the Court will decide when a state must pay the legal costs incurred by victims of a civil rights violation who ultimately prevail in their suit without going all the way through a trial and final judgment. The government should not be able to violate our constitutional rights, force its victims to sue the government, and then avoid having to reimburse the victims just because the government folds up its tent before the end of the case. The Court heard oral arguments last fall but has not yet issued a decision.

UNITED STATES COURTS OF APPEALS

McMahon v. World Vision (Ninth Cir.)

A religious ministry stays faithful to its mission only if its staff does too. That's why many religious nonprofits require their employees to affirm the Christian faith and agree to abide by Christian standards of conduct. World Vision is one such ministry. The Center filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit supporting World Vision's right to enforce Christian conduct standards for its employees. No less than 15 other ministries joined the CLS brief. No decision has been made yet.

Schmitt v. Rebertus (Eighth Cir.)

Anthony Schmitt taught a prison ministry class, Quest, at the Minnesota Correctional Facility—St. Cloud from 2012 to 2023. Quest teaches men how to live lives of authentic manhood as modeled by Jesus Christ and directed by the Word of God. Schmitt was forced to stop, however, because the Acting Commissioner of the Department of Corrections stated that “[t]he program directly conflicts with the diversity, equity, and inclusivity values of the department by defining manhood, or the study of masculinity, through a biblical lens of what a ‘real man looks like.’” The district court agreed with the correctional facility, and Schmitt appealed to the Eighth Circuit. The Center, joined by a diverse group of six co-amici, filed a brief in support of Schmitt's free exercise rights arguing that the district court mistakenly applied to this nonincarcerated pastor the anemic free exercise standard applicable to prisoners and the vast (and appropriate) discretion wielded by a warden must be subject to strict scrutiny, with appropriate deference given to their asserted government interests in safety and “rehabilitation.”

Smith v. City of Atlantic City (Third Cir.)

Alexander Smith, an air mask technician with the Atlantic City Fire Department in Atlantic City, New Jersey, asked the Court of Appeals for Third Circuit to uphold a religious accommodation allowing him to grow a beard consistent with his faith. Fire department

policy prohibits beards of any length purportedly to ensure all service members can wear protective face masks as required by their role, but Mr. Smith's role is entirely administrative—he is not required to fight fires or wear an air mask. After Mr. Smith's formal request for a religious accommodation to wear a beard was denied, he sued the City of Atlantic City in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey, but the court granted summary judgment for the city, mutating *Groff v. DeJoy*'s “substantial increased cost” standard into a “substantial non-economic cost” standard and applying rational basis rather than strict scrutiny. The Center, joined by the National Association of Evangelicals, filed an amicus brief in support of Mr. Smith's appeal urging the Third Circuit to reverse the district court's decision and remand so that the court can apply the correct standard of law.

STATE COURTS

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

In June, the Texas Supreme Court issued an opinion in a case in which the Center filed an amicus brief in 2022. The case was brought by a local judge who politely declined to officiate same-sex weddings (a discretionary function, not an official duty) but then was publicly disciplined by the state judicial commission. The state supreme court held that the lower court must consider the judge's defense under Texas' Religious Freedom Restoration Act (a bill CLS was active in lobbying for in 1999).

DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ON CAMPUS

Fighting for Recognition of CLS Law Student Chapters around the Nation

The Center continued to partner with Law Student Ministries in 2024 to support CLS law student chapters seeking to register as student organizations and to relate well to their universities and law schools. The Center encouraged a number of law students as they sought to launch law student chapters on their campuses and also served as a resource for them. The Center assisted these students 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 of-

ficials 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. Additionally, the Center developed training videos to help student leaders know their rights, seek to live out authentic faith in their campus communities, and think about how to preserve the Christian identity of the chapter while passing on leadership well each year. Center staff also helped train law students in First Amendment rights at the CLS Law School Fellows program.

ADVOCATING FOR EQUAL CAMPUS ACCESS LEGISLATION

ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL

Last September, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the End Woke Higher Education Act (H.R. 3724). This two-bill package included the Accreditation for College Excellence Act, which prohibits accreditors from requiring that colleges and universities commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) or a specific political ideology to receive accreditation or funding. Part two, the Respecting the First Amendment on Campus Act, which requires colleges and universities to disclose their pol-

icies relating to speech to participate in any program under Title IV. Included in H.R. 3724 is language from the Equal Campus Access Act, which was introduced in the Senate and House in 2023, which ensures 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. Center attorneys worked with congressional leaders in getting H.R. 3724 passed.

IN THE STATES

Missouri

The Special Committee on Government Authority in the Missouri House held a hearing in February 2024 on HB 1518. This bill would provide protection for religious student groups on public campuses in those states. Seventeen states already have a similar law in place. The Center submitted written testimony to the committee, and a CLS Law School Fellow testified in person at the hearing. While the bill passed in the Missouri House, it was never taken from the Senate calendar for floor debate and vote.

New Hampshire

In March 2024, the New Hampshire House of Representatives approved a bill that would protect religious student associations at New Hampshire's public institutions of higher education. The Center submitted written testimony supporting the bill to the House Education Committee. Once the bill moved to the New Hampshire Senate. The Center submitted written testimony to the Senate Committee on Education in support of the legislation. The bill also passed the Senate, the state campus access bill was signed by the governor in July 2024.

West Virginia

Both the West Virginia Senate and House approved a bill to protect belief-based student organizations against certain types of discrimination by a state institution of higher education. The bill made a needed adjustment to a prior bill by clarifying that any benefit generally available should be made available to groups and not excluded based on requirements about leadership, affirmation of beliefs, pursuit of mission, or a code of conduct. The Center submitted testimony to members of both the Senate Judiciary Committee and the House Education Committee urging committee members to support the bill and advance the bill out of committee and to the floor for votes by the full Senate and House, which is exactly what happened. The governor signed the bill, which went into effect May 1, 2024.

DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FROM GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

Opposing Proposed Foreign Assistance Regulations

The U.S. Department of State issued two notices of proposed rulemaking that would establish nondiscrimination requirements in foreign assistance—the first for award recipients and subrecipients (Nondiscrimination in Foreign Assistance) and the second for contractors and subcontractors (Acquisition Regulation: Nondiscrimination in Foreign Assistance). The Center, joined by several other organizations, submitted comments expressing concern that these proposed rules could result in the disqualification of religious international relief and development organizations from receiving federal foreign assistance grants. The comments included specific recommendations for amending the proposed rules that would help alleviate some of the religious freedom concerns expressed in the comments. At the end of the year, the State Department withdrew the proposed regulations.

Department of Education's Withdrawal of Campus Access Regulations

The Center has engaged with the Department of Education for years seeking to establish and preserve regulatory language that protects religious stu-



dent organizations' ability to be treated fairly on public college campuses. The campus access language CLS advocated and helped draft was finalized in 2020 but was then threatened when the Department of Education sought to rescind it through proposed rulemaking in early 2023. CLS wrote a comprehensive comment letter objecting to the rescission and helped mobilize thousands of comments. The Center was extremely pleased when the proposed rule was withdrawn at the end of 2024, meaning the 2020 regulatory language protecting religious student groups will remain.

Protecting a Vital Religious Freedom Law

In June, the Center urged U.S. senators to vote against cloture on S. 4381, the Right to Contraceptives Act, because it contained a carveout of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) in its section 5 (a)(3). RFRA is the primary federal safeguard of Americans'

religious freedom, and it protects all Americans' religious freedom. Since its almost unanimous passage three decades ago, Congress has wisely never enacted a carveout to RFRA's protections. That must remain true if religious freedom is to have the legal protection it deserves. Thankfully, the vote on cloture failed.

DEFENDING ATTORNEYS' RIGHT TO PRACTICE LAW

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 based on 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. It 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 is 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.

Illinois

In 2023, 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 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. Despite CLS' efforts, the Supreme Court of Illinois amended its rules of professional conduct in 2024 to add Rule 8.4(j), which makes it misconduct for an attorney to "engage in conduct in the practice of law that the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is harassment or discrimination based on 15 protected classes, including sexual orientation and gender identity. The new rule mirrors ABA Model Rule 8.4(g), which, according to many legal com-

mentators and authorities, violates the free speech and free exercise rights of attorneys. The Center is disappointed that the Supreme Court of Illinois modified its professional conduct rules in a manner that will chill the constitutional rights of Illinois attorneys.

Working with CLS members and other concerned attorneys

Even though only one state acted on ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) in 2024, the Center continued its work to oppose adoption of ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) 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) for a CLS attorney chapter and at the 2024 Christian Legal Aid Summit.

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. These webpages provide background information and a litany of resources on the model rule, including video presentations, educational webinars, written publications, comment letters, and an interactive state status map. 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 AWARD FOR LIFE AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY DEFENSE

The Center awarded its annual Ball Award to Kim Colby for her lifetime of work protecting and fighting for religious freedom. The award recognizes the tireless and obedient work of faithful followers of Christ and defenders of religious freedom

and life. Kim has devoted her entire legal career to preserving religious freedom—four decades and counting—and she has done it all at CLS, including as the former director of the Center for Law & Religious Freedom.

KIM COLBY, 2024 BALL AWARD RECIPIENT



LAW STUDENT MINISTRIES

Law Student Ministries is in full bloom. We did more than ever, including enhancing access to educational resources via the podcast and social media, an invigorated focus on the wellness program, and a renewed commitment to community development among law students and attorneys.

On campuses, we helped students host a number of prominent speakers, including Matthew T. Martens, Gavin Ortlund, and Judge Timothy Tymkovich (10th Circuit). One of our favorites was hosting Jordan Furlong at the University of Chicago, where he spoke on the future of Artificial Intelligence in legal practice. Local chapters also hosted several community projects to help meet the needs of their cities. One of the most active chapters was in Orlando, where the CLS chapter at Barry University hosted several projects focused on collecting toys for underprivileged kids over Christmas, cleaning up a community garden as part of a beautification project, and planning an outreach among the homeless to help them with various professional and physical needs.

During the year, LSM was busy visiting campuses as part of the renewed fo-

cus on community development. From spring to fall, the LSM team hit nearly 50 schools, including schools in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, New York, Rhode Island, Indiana, Ohio, and more. The team also hosted one of the first DMV-area dinners to introduce the leaders of local chapters to one another and cast vision for cross-campus partnerships. During this time, LSM also launched several new chapters, including at Rutgers University, Widener Commonwealth, University of Baltimore, and University of New Mexico.

Aside from being on the road, LSM also invested a lot of time in the wellness program—a forum dedicated to helping law students improve their mental health and discuss their struggles in a constructive way. The latest conversations were with Dr. Barbara L. Peacock on soul care and law professor Amy Levin on what law schools can do to help students.

Additionally, in 2024, CLS was able to take part in Baylor’s Political Theology Workshop and present a paper on cultivating civility on campus at the ICLARS Conference at the University of Notre Dame.



The CLS Memphis law student chapter gathered to pray on their first day of classes. The students served coffee and donuts and used this time to focus on praying over their law school, city, and community.

Photo Credit: Merry Ashlyn Gatewood



Meeting with students throughout 2024:
2nd L: Wisconsin Law
3rd L: Martens at Cornell
B-L: Meeting with students in the DMV
B-R (2): Students enjoying the CLS National Conference gatherings.





Meeting with students throughout 2024.
 T-L: Indiana Law-Maurer
 T-R: Ohio State
 2nd L Memphis:
 3rd L: Notre Dame
 B-L: Manhattan chapter leaders including
 Brooklyn, Columbia, and Hofstra.
 B-R: Tulane Law



CAMPUSES SERVED IN 2024

- 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
- Concord University (Purdue University Global)
- University of Connecticut
- Cornell University
- Creighton University
- 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
- Gonzaga School of Law
- Harvard University
- University of Hawaii Law
- High Point University 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
- 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 University Chicago
- Loyola University New Orleans
- 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
- University of New Mexico
- 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
- Ohio Northern University
- The Ohio State University
- Oklahoma City University
- University of Oklahoma
- University of Oregon
- 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)
- Seattle University
- Stanford University
- Stetson University
- Suffolk University School of Law
- 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
- 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
- University of Washington
- Washington and Lee University
- Wayne State University
- Western New England University
- Western Michigan Uni. (Lansing)
- Western Michigan Uni. (Tampa)
- West Virginia, University (Law)
- Widener University
- College of William and Mary
- Willamette University (Law)
- University of Wisconsin
- University of Wyoming
- Yale University



CLS LAW SCHOOL FELLOWS PROGRAM

Since its establishment in 2018, the CLS Law School Fellows program has trained 7 classes of 270 students from over 90 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.

In 2024, the Fellows spent a week together talking Christian jurisprudence, public integrity, and vocational ministry and 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, hosting a sing along, playing board games, and dining at some of the best restaurants in the city. And, oh yeah, they got to visit the Supreme Court and hear from former Solicitor General Paul Clement during the Celebration Banquet!

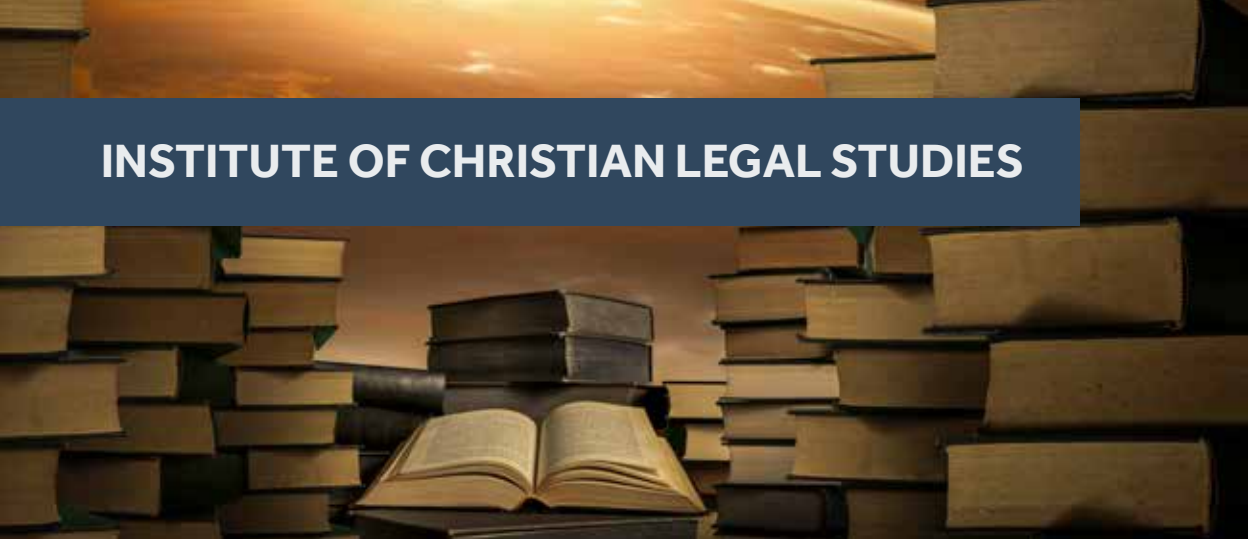
The 2024 Fellows continues the tradition of excellence and community that embodies this program, including meeting students from a diverse

array of demographics, experiences, and schools. The 2024 Fellows program was an absolute success and the images and their return for our third Fellows Reunion bear that out, with 23 of the 2024 Fellows returning to D.C. for the National Conference. There, they joined more than 40 other Fellows from previous years!

THE CLS LAW SCHOOL FELLOWS PROGRAM IS A UNIQUE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE, TRAIN, AND EQUIP LAW STUDENTS WITH THE THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL TOOLS FOR A MISSION-MINDED APPROACH TO THE LAW.



INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN LEGAL STUDIES



JOHN WITTE, JR. LECTURE SERIES on CHRISTIANITY & LAW

In 2024, CLS hosted its inaugural John Witte, Jr. Lecture Series on Christianity & Law in Washington, D.C., which included John Witte, Jr. as the keynote speaker and John Inazu as the moderator. The focus of this program is to advance the conversation on Christianity and law for the coming decade.



CROSS & GAVEL PODCAST AND SUBSTACK

During the summer, we rebranded the *Cross & Gavel* podcast toward a new look and a renewed emphasis on advancing the conversation surrounding Christianity and law. As part of that new approach, in just the fall, we recorded 16 new episodes on topics ranging from contract theory, access to justice, the meaning of calling, bankruptcy and debt, worker's rights, church



autonomy, international rule of law, and more. The *Cross & Gavel* Substack also published several new articles and interviews to help students integrate their faith with the study of law, including on themes such as religiously affiliated law schools, international religious freedom, legal education, good citizenship, full-time calling, and much more.



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 2024, the *Journal* tackled constitutionalism and the common good in the spring issue, which included topics like limited government, integralism, principled pluralism, and value judgments. It also included the paper that John Witte, Jr. presented at CLS' inaugural John Witte, Jr. Lecture Series on Christianity and Law.



Subsequently, the fall issue of the *Journal* tackled the topic of law, faith, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and explored ways that AI will challenge our own conception of humanity, change the structure of the legal profession, impact workplace justice, be used in armed conflict, and relate to the "end of all things."

THE CHRISTIAN LAWYER

In 2024, CLS tackled the topics of Christian apologetics and serving and defending the church in *The Christian Lawyer* magazine. Each issue of the magazine is mailed to current members and made available online for public consumption.



ATTORNEY MINISTRIES

ENCOURAGING & EDIFYING

In the spirit of encouraging and edifying the next generation of attorneys, in July, attorneys from all over the nation gathered online to pray for more than three dozen recent grads who were preparing to take the bar exam. The participating attorneys were grateful to be pouring into others who would soon join them in the legal profession.

NETWORKING & COLLABORATION

For the third year in a row, Attorney Ministries hosted a job fair at the CLS National Conference. This is an important event for networking and collaboration amongst Christian attorneys and brought together hundreds of Christian legal professionals to engage with potential employers and future colleagues.

PROVIDING CRITICAL RESOURCES

CLS continued to offer critical CLE resources for members at CLS events and local chapter gatherings. CLS national and regional events alone offered over 25 hours of CLE credits for members in 2024.

EDUCATION COHORT

Also in 2024, CLS launched a Master's in Apologetics cohort with Talbot School of Theology. This unique partnership provides the opportunity for Christian attorneys to study God's Word together and learn to defend the faith.

NEW CHAPTER IN PUERTO RICO

After many years of cultivation, Attorney Ministries, with the local leadership of a former CLS Law School Fellow, launched a new chapter in Puerto Rico!



SPREADING THE WORD

In 2024, Attorney Ministries hosted a weekly tv show in partnership with OvercomersTV live. This provided the opportunity to spread good news and discuss the work of its four ministries. Over 20 episodes were recorded and released to highlight CLS' impactful work.

CLS MEMBERS' SUPREME COURT SWEARING-IN

For the second year in row, CLS organized the swearing in of CLS members to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 2024, 12 CLS members were admitted to practice before the Supreme Court.

T-R: 2024 CLS swearing in at SCOTUS.
B: Gathering at the 2024 CLS National Conference.
Left page B: A group of Colorado CLS attorneys gathered for a CLE session led by Telios Law founder Theresa Sidebotham. Photo Credit: Rebecca Sidebotham.



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)

PUERTO RICO

SOUTH CAROLINA
Greenville

TENNESSEE
Chattanooga
Memphis
Nashville

TEXAS
Austin
Dallas
Houston
San Antonio
Williamson County

VIRGINIA
Northern VA
Virginia Beach

WASHINGTON
Seattle

WISCONSIN
Madison

Members of the CLS Chicago attorney chapter gathered at a local chapter leaders' home for some fun in the sun. Photo Credit: Mike Wang.





CONNECTED IN 2024

There were so many opportunities to engage with CLS attorneys in 2024!

On the national level, CLS hosted its 2024 CLS National Conference in Washington, D.C., in October and added a fifth regional retreat to its collection of winter offerings.

CLS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

CLS members and friends returned to Washington, D.C., this past fall for a great time of fellowship, learning, and fun at the CLS National Conference. It was a great event with record attendance—more than 700 gathering to collaborate in this journey—that was blessed with beautiful weather.

Conference participants enjoyed important moments of reconnecting and heard amazing messages from Ugandan Supreme Court Justice Michael Chibita, author and speaker Rebecca McLaughlin, and Bishop Garland Hunt. CLS was also pleased to welcome, in person, Os Guinness who was originally scheduled to speak at the 2020 CLS National Conference that ended up taking place online because of COVID

restrictions.

CLE topics at the conference included artificial intelligence, religious freedom, nonprofit law, torts, legal ethics, estate planning, and so much more.

CLS hosted various networking events at the conference, including the third annual job fair, and continued perennial favorites like the Christian Legal Aid Summit, the Christian Legal Scholars' Symposium, the CLS Chapter Leader Luncheon, the National Law Student Convention, and the Church and General Counsel Forum.

CLS REGIONAL RETREATS

CLS kicked off 2024 by expanding to five regional retreats, including hosting a regional retreat in the Southeast for the first time in many years. All of the regional retreats were successful and ministered to hundreds of legal professionals and law students from across the nation. The retreats covered themes such as being a servant lawyer and integrating faith into the practice of law.



SAVE THE DATE
FOR THE 2025
CLS NATIONAL CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 9-12
NEW ORLEANS

T: 2024 CLS National Conference.
B: 2024 CLS Southeast Regional Retreat



WAYS TO PARTNER

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

Interested in getting involved in CLS? CLS has many opportunities 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
- leadership and coordination of CLS attorney and law student chapters

GET CONNECTED

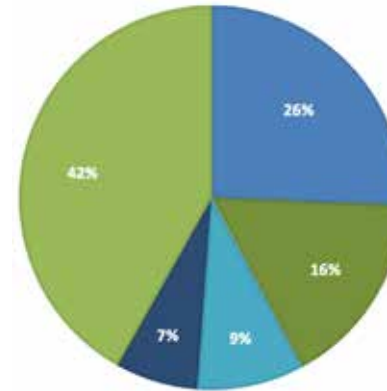
Show up and get involved with a local attorney or law student chapter. Stay connected by following Christian Legal Society on Facebook or Twitter. Read through the CLS magazine and journal. Sign up for devotionals, monthly emails, and other CLS communications.

REACH OUT TO CLS AT
CLSHQ@CLSNET.ORG
 FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
 ANY OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES.

2024 FINANCES

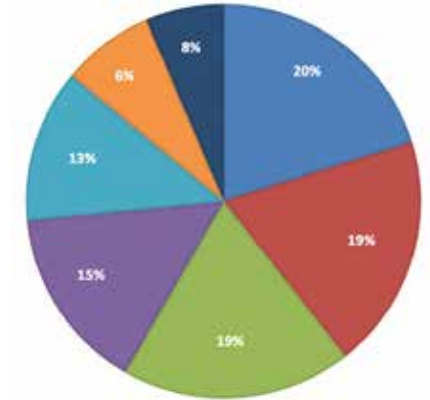
IN 2024, CLS INVESTED 86 CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR DIRECTLY INTO MINISTRY PROGRAMS.

PROGRAM REVENUE



Donations	\$1,290,595	26%
Foundation Grants	\$831,050	17%
Conferences & Events	\$453,992	9%
Membership Dues	\$351,387	7%
Other*	\$2,106,885	42%

PROGRAM EXPENSES



Attorney Ministries	\$590,824	20%
Law Student Ministries	\$564,217	19%
Conferences & Events	\$555,530	19%
Center for Law & Religious Freedom	\$444,236	15%
Christian Legal Aid	\$367,376	13%
Development	\$223,013	8%
Administration	\$187,878	6%

Note: These financial reports for 2024 are pending completion of our annual audit. All information on these pages reflects data from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. CLS' Annual Report, IRS form 990, and audited financial statements are available upon request.

*includes one-time case fees

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Lauren Rushak*

Ken Sande*

Bruce Sidebotham

Morse Tan

Lori Young

*Joined the board during 2024

**Left the board during 2024

To learn more about CLS' Board of Directors, visit ChristianLegalSociety.org.



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ChristianLegalSociety.org

