

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Living Together in Diversity: Strategies from Law and Religion

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 12–14 September 2018

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The International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ICLARS) chose Rio de Janeiro and the sun-kissed beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana for its fifth conference and, unsurprisingly, the event was heavily over-subscribed. ICLARS was founded in 2007 with the aim of providing a forum where information, data and opinions could be readily exchanged among members and made available to the broader scientific community. Its first conference was held in Milan in 2009, followed by meetings in Chile in 2011, the USA in 2013 and Oxford in 2016. The proceedings from all these conferences have been published, giving permanence and a wider readership to the innovative scholarship which these gatherings have consistently produced.

Demographic projections suggest that cultural and religious diversity will increase dramatically in the coming decades in many parts of the world. This conference took as its theme the contributions that law and religion studies can make in response to the challenges posed by increasing religious and cultural diversity. What political, legal and sociological strategies can enable citizens to live together with religious and cultural difference?

Granting freedom of religion or belief to everyone is obvious. But what theological and philosophical conceptions are most helpful in addressing cultural and religious diversification? Historically, various different practices have been dominant in particular regions of the world. Today, freedom of religion or belief is granted on a continuum between promoting equality and encouraging diversity. Both systems have their weak and strong points and neither can be understood without taking into consideration the history, culture and social conditions of different parts of the world.

This broad theme spawned a fascinating range of both plenary and parallel sessions at the faculty of law at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, which hosted this year's conference under the energetic leadership of

Professor Ana-Maria Celis Brunet, President of ICLARS. But equal prominence was given to her two predecessors as president, each of whom celebrated their 70th birthday during 2018. The lifetime achievement of Professor Silvio Ferrari of the University of Milan and of Professor W Cole Durham Jr of Brigham Young was feted by Professors Gerhard Robbers and Brett Scharffs in a session dedicated to a retrospective of the work of Ferrari and Durham and an evaluation of the direction of travel for law and religion scholarship in the years to come.

I was privileged to be invited to pay tribute to Cole and Silvio, as they are universally known, who each received a statuette of Christ the Redeemer on the Corcovado mountaintop. Not only is it an iconic image of Rio de Janeiro, but it represents international collaboration, the presence of the spiritual in a secular world and open-armed inclusion, each of which have been features of their towering academic lives.

As issues of law and religion become more pressing, more expansive and more controversial, ICLARS has planned for its 2020 conference to be in Spain and that of 2022 in Canada.

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G20 Interfaith Forum

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 26–28 September 2018

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The 2018 G20 Interfaith Forum took place 26–28 September 2018 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This was the fifth annual event in a series of G20 interfaith fora held to coincide with the meetings of the international Group of Twenty Economic Summit. This year's G20 Summit will take place in Buenos Aires, from 30 November to 1 December. Previous interfaith fora have been held in Gold Coast, Australia (2014), Istanbul, Turkey (2015), Beijing, China (2016) and Potsdam, Germany (2017).

The Interfaith Forum aims to build a 'network of networks' of faith and interfaith leaders from around the world, together with non-governmental organisations and other policy leaders. Through three days of discussion and dialogue,