

# Religious Organizations

Sherman & Howard's Religious Organizations team serves a wide array of churches, church denominations, religious educational institutions, faith-based social service providers, mission organizations, international relief and development entities, and other religious organizations. Our attorneys provide responsive and well-informed counsel focused on the unique needs and objectives of our faith-based clients.

## Our Difference

Our Religious Organizations team has broad experience working with religious and other nonprofit organizations. Our team members possess a nuanced understanding of the legal issues and challenges specific to faith-based organizations. Just as importantly, we know their cultures, and we understand their callings, their language, and their goals. Drawing on these insights, we help each of our religious organization clients identify its distinct legal challenges, and we craft practical solutions for each client that incorporate available legal protections, ensure compliance with applicable laws, and facilitate the activities that nurture its character and accomplish its mission.

Members of our Religious Organizations team are also active as board members, speakers, writers, and advisory council members of many entities that serve religious organizations, including Christian Legal Society, Christian Leadership Alliance, and Missio Nexus.

## Our Approach

Our team includes lawyers who work primarily with religious organizations and who focus on corporate, tax, employment, constitutional, international, and common operational issues. The team also includes lawyers who practice in other areas of law and possess a clear understanding of how their areas uniquely apply to faith-based organizations. As a result, our team is able to provide sophisticated guidance on every aspect of a religious organization's operation, helping each organization navigate its distinct legal landscape as it works toward accomplishing its mission.

## Contact us



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## Our Services

We assist our faith-based clients with:

- ✔ Corporate formation, governance, reorganizations, and dissolutions
- ✔ Tax-exempt status issues and planning
- ✔ Employment law issues and volunteer liability
- ✔ Employee benefits
- ✔ Risk management, including child protection policies
- ✔ First Amendment challenges and religious accommodations
- ✔ International structure, operations, registrations, and immigration
- ✔ Trademarks, copyrights, patents, and other intellectual property matters, including licensing, publishing and media activities
- ✔ Real estate acquisitions, mortgages, leases, and environmental compliance
- ✔ Mergers and acquisitions, partnerships, joint ventures, cooperatives, commercial co-ventures, and other strategic alliances
- ✔ Fundraising matters and government funding
- ✔ Debt issues, tax-exempt bond financing, and other loan transactions
- ✔ Litigation and alternative dispute resolution proceedings
- ✔ Data protection, transfer, and privacy strategies

## Our Representative Experience

- ✔ Filed amicus briefs before the U.S. Supreme Court and other appellate courts on behalf of more than 70 national religious organization clients.
- ✔ Crafted policies to strengthen religious exercise protections in employment and activities for many organizations nationally.
- ✔ Assisted more than 50 clients with obtaining classification by the IRS as churches, conventions or associations of churches, or religious orders.
- ✔ Advised numerous religious organizations regarding legal compliance and corporate structure for carrying on their international activities, including strategies for operating in restricted and closed countries.
- ✔ Formed a new Protestant church denomination.
- ✔ Obtained religious property tax exemptions for camp and conference centers nationally.
- ✔ Led the merger of two large nonprofit organizations, each with more than 1,000 employees and budgets exceeding \$150 million.
- ✔ Advised a number of church denominational bodies and other church organizations on church property disputes.
- ✔ Represented borrowers in multiple tax-exempt financing transactions.

## Representative Clients

ABWE Ministries  
Azusa Pacific University  
Billy Graham Evangelistic Assn.  
Catholic Diocese of Colorado Springs  
Cherry Hills Community Church  
Christian Care Ministry  
(dba Medi-Share)  
Christian Community Foundation  
(dba Waterstone)  
Christian Leadership Alliance  
Church of the Nazarene  
Community Bible Study  
Compassion International  
CRISTA  
Cross Catholic Outreach  
David C Cook  
ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical  
Presbyterians  
Evangelical Council for Financial  
Accountability  
Far East Broadcasting Company  
Fellowship of Christian Athletes  
Fuller Theological Seminary  
Glorieta 2.0  
International Church  
of the Foursquare Gospel  
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship  
Mount Hermon Association  
National Christian Foundation  
Operation Mobilization  
The Christian and Missionary Alliance  
The Navigators  
Upward Sports  
Valor Christian Schools  
World Vision  
Wycliffe Bible Translators  
YMCA of the Rockies  
Young Life  
Youth for Christ

