



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

