

# COVID-19: Business, Religion, Economics

## EPISODE 7

### SPEAKERS:

**Brian Grim, PhD.**  
President, Religious Freedom & Business Foundation

**Prof. Azza Karam, PhD.**  
Secretary General, Religions for Peace

**Jeffrey Franks, PhD.**  
Assistant Director of the European Department, International Monetary Fund

### CHAIR:

**Prof. Cole W. Durham**  
International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University

COVID-19,  
Religion  
and Belief:  
WEBINAR SERIES



## Biographies



### Brian J. Grim, PhD.

Brian J. Grim, Ph. D., is the founder and president of the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation, and a leading expert on the socio-economic impact of restrictions on religious freedom. Brian's recent widely covered research finds that religion contributed \$1.2 trillion to the U.S. economy annually. Brian has worked closely with the United Nations "Business for Peace" platform. He was recent chair of the World Economic Forum's council on the role of faith, a Davos speaker and a TEDx speaker at the Vatican. He previously directed global religion data research at the Pew Research Center and worked as an educator in the former Soviet Union, China, Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe from 1982-2002.



### Prof. Azza Karam, PhD.

Azza Karam (PhD) serves as Secretary General of Religions for Peace International. Prior to this, she served in diverse positions in the United Nations: as Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion; Senior Advisor on Culture at the United Nations Population Fund; Lead Facilitator for the United Nations Strategic Learning Exchanges on Religion-Development-Diplomacy, Coordinator of the UN's Global Interfaith Networks of 600 faith-based organisations; executive secretary for the UN multi-Faith Advisory Council; and Coordinator of UNDP's Arab Human Development Reports (2004-2007). She has published scholarly works, since 1993, in several languages, on political Islam, Gender, conflict and Peacemaking, Education, and Transnational



Religious dynamics. She is also a Professor of Religion and Development at the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.



**Jeffrey Franks, PhD.**

Jeffrey Franks is currently Assistant Director of the European Department of the IMF in Washington. Previously, he spent 4½ years as head of the IMF offices in Paris and Brussels and was Senior Resident Representative to the European Union. In his career, he has led IMF teams on Austria, Pakistan, Romania, Belgium, France, and Paraguay. He has also held overseas postings in Ukraine and Ecuador, and has worked on a number of other Latin American and European countries. Dr. Franks received his Ph.D. in Political Economy from Harvard, an M.Sc. in Development Economics from Oxford, and an MPA from Princeton. He completed undergraduate studies at Washington State University with a double degree in Political Science and Economics.



**Prof. W. Cole Durham Jr.**

W. Cole Durham, Jr. is the Founding Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, where he was a Note Editor of the Harvard Law Review and Managing Editor of the Harvard International Law Journal. He has focused on comparative law scholarship, with an emphasis on comparative constitutional law. He is the immediate past President of the International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ICLARS), based in Milan, Italy, and a Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Oxford Journal of Law and Religion. He served as the Secretary of the American Society of Comparative Law from 1989 to 1994. He is an Associate Member of the International Academy of Comparative Law in Paris. He served in earlier years as Chair both of the Comparative Law Section and the Law and Religion Section of the American Association of Law Schools. He is the author (with Brett Scharffs) of *Law and Religion: National, International and Comparative Perspectives* (2d ed. 2019); and a co-editor (with Gerhard Robbers) of the *Encyclopedia of Law and Religion* (Brill 2016), and a co-author of a 4-volume treatise, *Religious Organizations and the Law* (Thomson Reuters / West). He currently serves as the President of the G20 Interfaith Forum Association.

