



LAW, RELIGION, AND YOUTH IN AFRICA

13th Annual Conference

Kigali, Rwanda

May 17th – 20th, 2026

Concept Note

The African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ACLARS) will hold its 2026 annual conference from May 17-20 in Kigali, Rwanda. The conference will bring together scholars and researchers, legal practitioners, government officials, and religious leaders from Rwanda and the entire African continent. The Rwanda conference will focus on the theme: “Law, Religion and Youth in Africa.”

The Rwanda Conference theme is inspired, in part, by the African Union’s desire to address challenges related to African youth in its Agenda 2063. Because more than a third of the world’s young people will live in Africa by 2050, the African Union’s Agenda 2063 seeks to empower Africa’s youth socially, economically, and politically; to mainstream youth issues in all developmental agendas by eliminating systemic inequalities, exploitation, marginalization and discrimination; and to guarantee Africa’s youth full access to education, training, skills and technology, health services, jobs and economic opportunities, recreational and cultural activities, and the financial means and necessary resources to allow them to realize their full potential. Like the African Union, the ACLARS Conference recognizes the need to provide academic research and scholarly support for addressing issues related to African youth in the coming decades.

Objectives

The ACLARS mandate is to promote collaboration between academics, universities and other institutions, and professionals and individuals undertaking research in the field of law and religion; to connect scholars, government officials, religious leaders, and others interested in law and religion; and to foster the work of young scholars in the field. The

Rwanda Conference will provide the opportunity to accomplish these objectives by exploring the intersections between law, religion, and youth in a variety of contexts.

Specifically, the Rwanda Conference will focus on youth agency, dignity, peace, security, and development in Africa, especially as it relates to law, religion, and transformative innovation, including entrepreneurship. Varied African religious traditions can be mined as ethical and practical resources for addressing poverty, inequality, and exclusion, especially if integrated with legal and innovative strategies being championed by the youth. Critical engagement on the issue of how young Africans are asserting their agency and dignity within legal frameworks, religious contexts, and through innovative practices that aim for social transformation will be the focus of the Rwanda Conference.

Tentative Schedule

Saturday, May 16

All Day Arrivals at Kigali International Airport
17:00-19:00 ACLARS Board Meeting

Sunday, May 17

Morning Arrivals at Kigali International Airport
15:30-17:00 Conference Registration & Payment of Dues
17:00-18:00 Opening Ceremony with ACLARS Officers, and Invited University, Government, Community, and Religious Leaders
18:00-18:30 Keynote Session #1
18:30-20:30 Reception and Dinner at Hotel

Monday, May 18

6:30-8:15 Breakfast
8:15-9:15 Plenary Panel #1
9:15-9:30 Break
9:30-10:45 Concurrent Session #1
10:45-11:15 Group Photo and Break
11:15-12:30 Concurrent Session #2
12:30-1:15 Concurrent Session #3
13:30-14:15 Lunch
14:15-15:30 Concurrent Session #4
15:30-15:45 Break
15:45-17:00 Concurrent Session #5
17:00-17:15 Break
17:15-18:30 Concurrent Session #6
18:30-19:00 Break
19:00-20:30 Dinner

Tuesday, May 19

6:30-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-10:00	Plenary Panel #2
10:00-10:30	Break
10:30-11:45	Concurrent Session #7
11:45-12:00	Break
12:00-13:15	Lunch & Breakout Training Sessions
13:15-14:30	Concurrent Session #8
14:30-14:45	Break
14:45-16:00	Concurrent Session #9
16:00-16:30	Break
16:30-17:30	Concluding Session & ACLARS General Assembly
17:30-18:30	Break
18:30-20:30	Concluding Dinner

Conference Sponsors

The Rwanda Conference co-sponsors include the University of Rwanda and the International Center for Law & Religion Studies at Brigham Young University (United States).

Conference Languages

ACLARS Conferences are conducted in English, French, and Portuguese with appropriate translation for conference participants.

Post-Conference Publication

Conference papers that are submitted and accepted for publication by the ACLARS Publications Committee will be published in a peer-reviewed volume following the conference.

Background on the Organizer

After an initial conference in Ghana in 2013, ACLARS was formally launched in May 2014 at the Second Conference on Law and Religion in Africa, held at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. In succeeding years, ACLARS has sponsored conferences in Namibia, Ethiopia, Morocco, Nigeria, Botswana, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Zimbabwe. Each year, 60-80 scholars of law and religion, legislators, government leaders, and representatives of NGOs have met to discuss timely topics concerning the interplay of law and religion in Africa. Conference proceedings are published in ACLARS volumes. African ACLARS participants have come from Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

