**Religion and Rule of Law in Southeast Asia:**

**The Third Gathering, Deepening the Conversation**

 **Hanoi, Vietnam, June 16-18, 2011**

This is the third in a series of conferences held in Vietnam under the co-sponsorship of the Institute of Religious Studies of the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences (VASS), the Vietnam-U.S.A. Society, The Institute for Global Engagement, and BYU Law School’s International Center for Law and Religion Studies. The first, “Religion and the Rule of Law in Southeast Asia, An International Academic Conference” was held in Hanoi in September, 2006. The second, “Religion and the Rule of law in Southeast Asia: Continuing the Discussion,” was held in Hanoi in November 2007. Each of these conferences has provided an opportunity for international experts to gather with top-level Vietnamese academics, researchers and government officials to discuss issues relating to freedom of religion. This conference is being held at a time when there is considerable uncertainty about whether Vietnam and other countries in Southeast Asia will continue gradually loosening restrictions on religious freedom and in the shadow of some serious crackdowns on religious freedom in recent months. Significantly, the conference will include delegations from Laos, Myanmar, and North Korea.

The June 2011 conference will include scholars from Vietnam, the United States, Brunei, Canada, China, France, Indonesia, Laos (delegation of 6), Myanmar (delegation of 4), North Korea (delegation of 4) Philippines, and Singapore. Cole Durham and Brett Scharffs will attend and make presentations on behalf of the Center, and David Barrett, area counsel in Hong Kong, will attend and make a presentation.

Professor Durham will address the opening session. The body of the conference will consist of eight panels over two days. Panels discussions will be held on 1) Religious Diversity and Pluralism and the Legal Status of Religious Groups; 2) Faith-based Movements: Overcoming the Challenges of Good Governance and Rule of Law (co-chaired by Professor Scharffs), 3) Religion and Civil Society: Grassroots Contributions to Societal Development and Stability (including a presentation by David Barrett about the LDS Church’s contributions to societal development and stability); 4) Religion and Civil Society: Providing a Sound Legal Framework; 5) Religion and Rule of Law in the ASEAN Block and its relation to the UN Declaration on Human Rights; 6) The UN Declaration on Human Rights: International Standards of Religious Freedom and the Rule of Law (co-chaired by Brett Scharffs and including a presentation by Professor Scharffs on the UN Declaration on Human Rights and international standards and religious freedom and the rule of law); 7) Religion and Government’s International Affairs; and 8) Developing Effective Law on Religion (co-chaired by Cole Durham and including a presentation by Professor Durham, “Typical Features of Effective Laws on Religion: A Comparative Perspective.”