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Is This A Christian Nation?: Virtual Symposium September 25, 2020

Roger Williams University School of Law

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August 11, 2020

ATTN: School of Law Community

Is This a Christian Nation? Virtual Symposium – Friday, September 25, 2020. Welcome & Introduction at 9:45 a.m.

Did the Founders intend the United States of America to be a Christian nation? The RWU School of Law assembles some of the nation's most prominent scholars for a one-day, virtual symposium to discuss Establishment Clause and its history. Faculty and students are complimentary but registration is required. More information may be found [here](#). To register, please click [here](#).

A ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

IS THIS A CHRISTIAN NATION?

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020
9:45 AM - 4:30 PM
VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM



For details, fees and registration, visit: law.rwu.edu/events/christian-nation

RWU Law students and members of the judiciary may attend the symposium free of charge but **registration is required.**

This symposium is supported by a generous grant from the **Freedom From Religion Foundation.**

Is This a Christian Nation?

Roger Williams University
SCHOOL OF LAW



IS THIS A CHRISTIAN NATION?

A Roger Williams University School of Law Symposium

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

9:45am - 4:30pm VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

Open to the Public

Has Cost

Registration Required

A Roger Williams University School of Law Virtual Symposium

Did the Founders intend the United States of America to be a Christian nation? Does it violate the Establishment Clause of the Constitution to have a Latin cross on a World War One memorial on a public highway or a crèche on the front lawn of a town hall, or to open a meeting of a public body with the Lord's Prayer? How should history be used to resolve such questions? The Roger Williams University School of Law assembles some of the nation's most prominent scholars for a one-day, virtual symposium.

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM

Welcome, RWU Law Dean Gregory W. Bowman

Introduction to Symposium, RWU Law Professor Carl T. Bogus

AGENDA

REGISTRATION

Meet the Presenters



Bejan

Teresa M. Bejan is Associate Professor of Political Theory at Oxford University. She was previously a research fellow at Columbia University and a member of the political science faculty at Toronto University. She is the author of *Mere Civility: Disagreement and the Limits of Toleration* (Harvard University Press), which compares views about civil discourse by Roger Williams, John Locke, and Thomas Hobbes, as well as articles and book chapters about the philosophies of those three men on religious freedom and toleration. Her TED Talk, “Is civility a sham,” has more than 1.6 million views. She received a B.A. from the University of Chicago, a M. Phil. from Cambridge University, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Yale University.



Case

Mary Anne Case is the Arnold I. Shure Professor of Law at the University of Chicago Law School. She has also taught at Columbia University Law School, Princeton University, American Academy Berlin, New York University School of Law, and the Virginia School of Law. She is the author of dozens of articles and book chapters about religious freedom, gender equality, feminism, and other topics. Her work has appeared in the *Yale Law Journal*, *Stanford Law Review*, *California Law Review*, *Supreme Court Review*, and other leading journals. She received a B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.



Chemerinsky

Erwin Chemerinsky is Dean and the Jesse H. Choper Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of California Berkeley School of Law. He was previously the Founding Dean and Distinguished Professor of the University of California Irvine School of Law, where he also held a joint appointment in the Political Science Department. Prior to that, he taught at Duke, UCLA, USC, and DePaul law schools. He is the author of hundreds of professional and popular articles and the author or editor of eleven books, including most recently *We the People: A Progressive Reading of the Constitution for the Twenty-First Century* (Picador Macmillan). Dean Chemerinsky is one of the most prominent legal scholars and public intellectuals in the nation. He was named one of “top 20 legal thinkers in America” by *Legal Affairs*, and twice named the Most Influential Person in Legal Education by *National Jurist*. He received a B.S. from Northwestern University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.



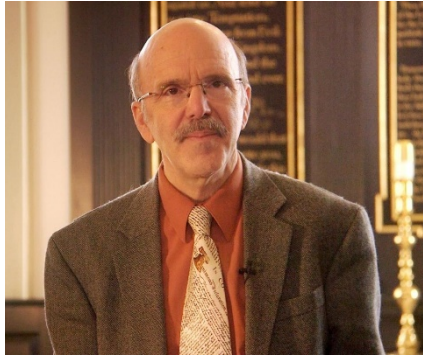
Green

Steven K. Green is the Fred H. Paulus Professor of Law and Affiliated Professor of History and Religious Studies, and the Director of the Willamette Center for Religion, Law and Democracy. He is the author of seven books, including most recently *The Third Disestablishment: Church, State, and American Culture, 1940-1975* (Oxford University Press), and dozens of book chapters and articles about religious freedom. From 1992 to 2002, he was Legal Director and Special Counsel for Americans United for Separation of Church and State. He received a B.A. from Texas Christian University, a J.D. from the University of Texas, and both an M.A. in American Religious History and a Ph.D. in History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He did additional graduate work at Duke Law School and Duke Divinity School.



Hamilton

Marci A. Hamilton is the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program Professor of Practice, and Fox Family Pavilion Resident Senior Fellow in the Program for Research on Religion at the University of Pennsylvania. She is also the founder, CEO, and Academic Director of CHILD USA, a nonprofit academic think tank at the University of Pennsylvania dedicated to interdisciplinary research on child abuse and neglect. Her writings include *God vs. the Gavel: The Perils of Extreme Religious Liberty* (Cambridge University Press), which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. She was a law clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Professor Hamilton received a B.A. from Vanderbilt University, an M.A. in English (Fiction Writing) from Penn State, and both an M.A. in Philosophy and a J.D. from the University of the Pennsylvania.



Ragosta

John A. Ragosta is a historian at the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello. He has taught law and history at University of Virginia, George Washington University, Oberlin, Hamilton, and Randolph College. He is the author of three books, including *Religious Freedom: Jefferson's Legacy, America's Creed* (University of Virginia Press), which was selected as a featured alternate of the History Book Club, as well as articles and book chapters about the Founders and religious liberty. He has, over the course of his career, worked not only as an historian but as a beekeeper and practicing lawyer. He has been a member of the Advisory Committee for the U.S. Court of International Trade and the American Law Institute, and he is a member of the American Bar Federation. He received a B.S. from Grove City College and both a J.D. and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Virginia.



Wexler

Jay D. Wexler is a Professor of Law at Boston University. He is the author of six books, including most recently *Our Non-Christian Nation: How Atheists, Satanists, Wiccans, and Others are Demanding Their Place in American Public Life* (Stanford University Press/Redwood), and is presently at work on a seventh book about marijuana policy, which will be published by the University of California Press. He has also written more than two dozen law review articles about church-state relations and other topics, which have been published by *Stanford Law Review*, *Texas Law Review*, *Vanderbilt Law Review*, and other leading journals, as well as commentary and humor articles in popular publications. Professor Wexler received a B.A. from Harvard University, an M.A. in Religious Studies from University of Chicago Divinity School, and a J.D. from Stanford University.

Associate Dean Jared Goldstein and Professor Carl T. Bogus will moderate the symposium.

Rhode Island MCLE Credit

This program has been approved for 6.5 CLE hours in Rhode Island.

Registration Fees

\$25 includes all symposium sessions and 6.5 Rhode Island MCLE credits.

RWU students and members of the judiciary may attend the symposium complimentary but registration is required.

The last day to register is Tuesday, September 22, 2020.

REGISTRATION

Special Accommodations

Persons who, because of a special need or condition, would like to request an accommodation for an event should contact the Office of Programs & Events, as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours before the event, so that appropriate arrangements can be made. lawevents@rwu.edu

This symposium is supported by a generous grant from the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

Virtual Symposium

Is this a Christian Nation?

Roger Williams University School of Law

Bristol, Rhode Island

September 25, 2020

Did the Founders intend the United States of America to be a Christian nation? Does it violate the Establishment Clause of the Constitution to have a Latin cross on a World War One memorial on a public highway or a crèche on the front lawn of a town hall, or to open a meeting of a public body with the Lord's Prayer? How should history be used to resolve such questions? The Roger Williams University School of Law assembles some of the nation's most prominent scholars for a one-day symposium on its main campus in Bristol, Rhode Island.

This program has been approved for 6.5 CLE hours in Rhode Island.

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM WELCOME, Dean Gregory W. Bowman

INTRODUCTION TO SYMPOSIUM, Professor Carl T. Bogus

10:00 AM – 11:15 AM FIRST SESSION

Professor Teresa M. Bejan, Oxford University

“The Politics of Establishment: Roger Williams vs. John Locke” Professor Bejan will compare the philosophies of Roger Williams and John Locke regarding establishment versus toleration of religion.

John Ragosta, Ph.D., Historian, Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello

“Is this a Christian Nation? What does that mean?” Citing history, the Supreme Court often seems to permit not only favoritism to religion but to Christianity specifically, thus appearing to support the view that this is a Christian nation. Dr. Ragosta will explore what it means to say ‘this is a Christian nation’ by examining the history on which the Court relies.

11:15 AM – 11:30 AM MIDMORNING BREAK

11:30 AM – 12:45 PM SECOND SESSION

Professor Marci A. Hamilton, University of Pennsylvania

“Disaggregating ‘Christian Nation’: The Presbyterian Roots of the Constitution and the Rejection of Theocracy”

During the summer when the Constitution was being drafted in Philadelphia, Presbyterian leaders also gathered there to devise their own governing document. There were strong ties between many Framers, including James Madison, and Presbyterian and Calvinist theology. Professor Hamilton will survey the strong influence of Presbyterianism, much of it coming out of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), on the Framers' principles as reflected in Madison's Notes of the Debates.

Professor Steven K. Green, Willamette University

“The Legal Ramifications of Christian Nationalism”

Claims of Christian nationalism commonly arise in charged political and cultural contexts, and present challenges for a nation that espouses values of religious pluralism and inclusion. Professor Green will examine the legal ramifications of such claims, together with the appropriate uses of historical evidence for addressing contemporary constitutional questions.

12:45 PM – 1:15 PM DISCUSSION OF MORNING SESSIONS

1:15 PM—1:30 PM LUNCH BREAK

1:30 – 2:45 PM THIRD SESSION

Professor Jay D. Wexler, Boston University

“Secular Invocations and the Promise of Pluralism”

Following the Supreme Court’s 2014 decision in *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, atheists and other nonbelievers have given secular invocations before town boards and state legislatures in record numbers. Professor Wexler argues that this is a development worth celebrating, and that courts which hold that governmental bodies may prohibit secular invocations are misreading the law and undermining true religious pluralism in the public square.

Professor Mary Anne Case, University of Chicago

“Who conquers with this sign? The significance of the secularization of the Bladensburg cross” Either the devout Christian proponents of the Bladensburg cross are at heart dominionists, hoping to unite church and state in a Christian theocracy, or they should see it as a Pyrrhic victory if the cross is preserved at the price of their denying its religious meaning.

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM MIDAFTERNOON BREAK

3:00 PM – 3:45 PM FOURTH SESSION

Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, University of California at Berkeley School of Law

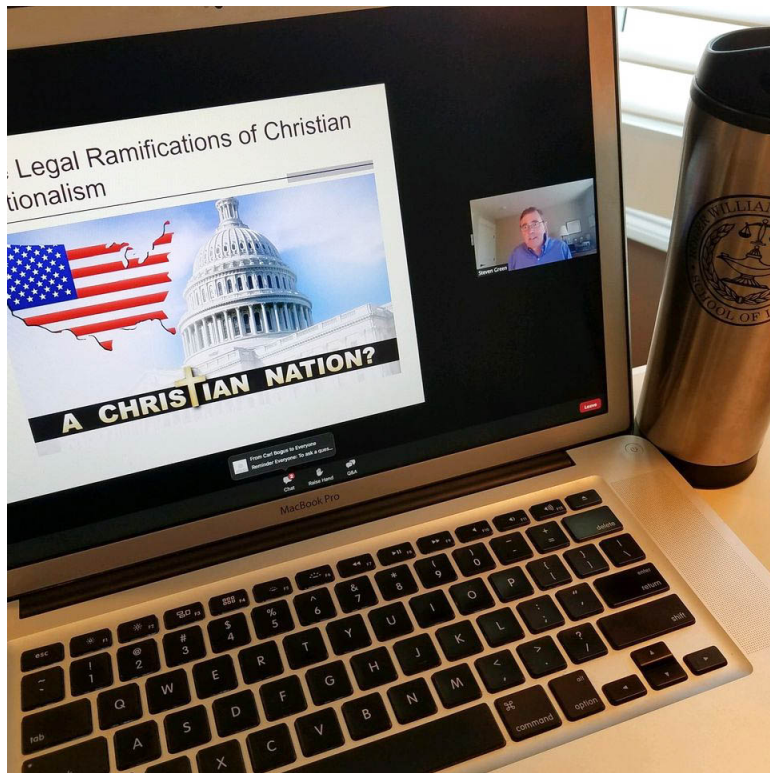
“It never was meant to be a Christian nation and definitely is not one now.” Dean Chemerinski will argue that separation of church and state was the goal of the framers and definitely should be the interpretation of the Establishment Clause today.

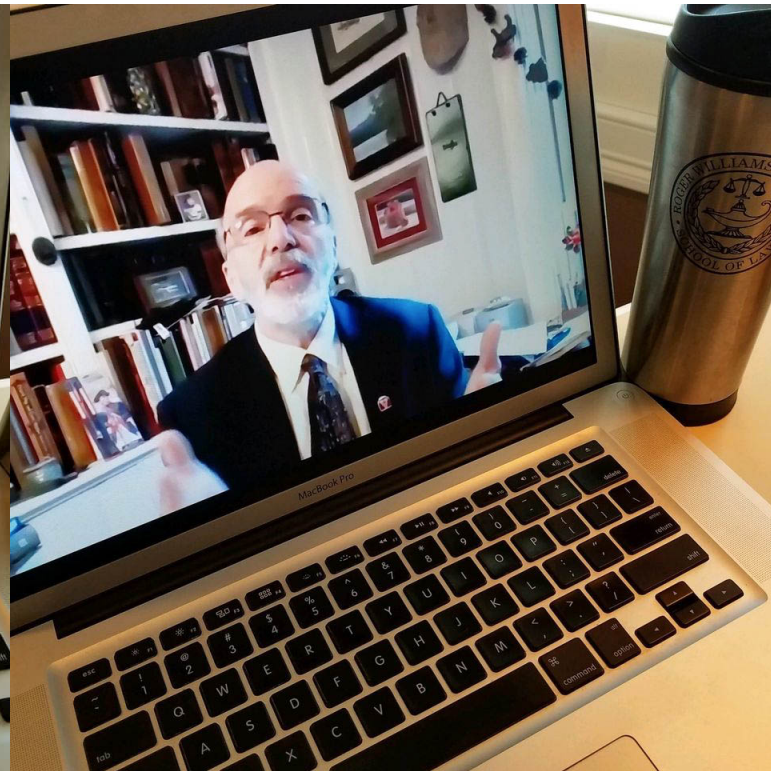
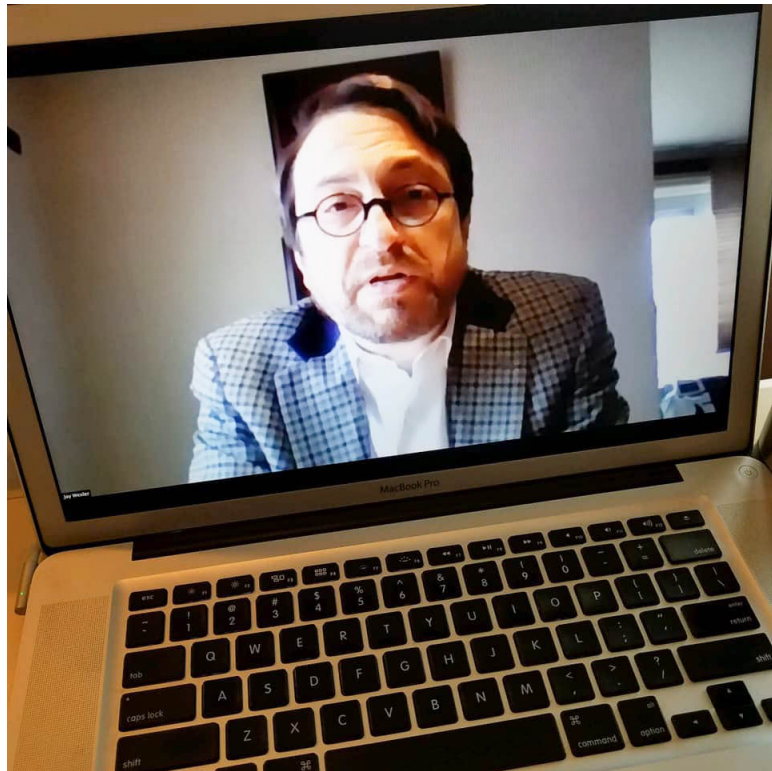
3:45 PM – 4:15 PM DISCUSSION OF AFTERNOON SESSIONS

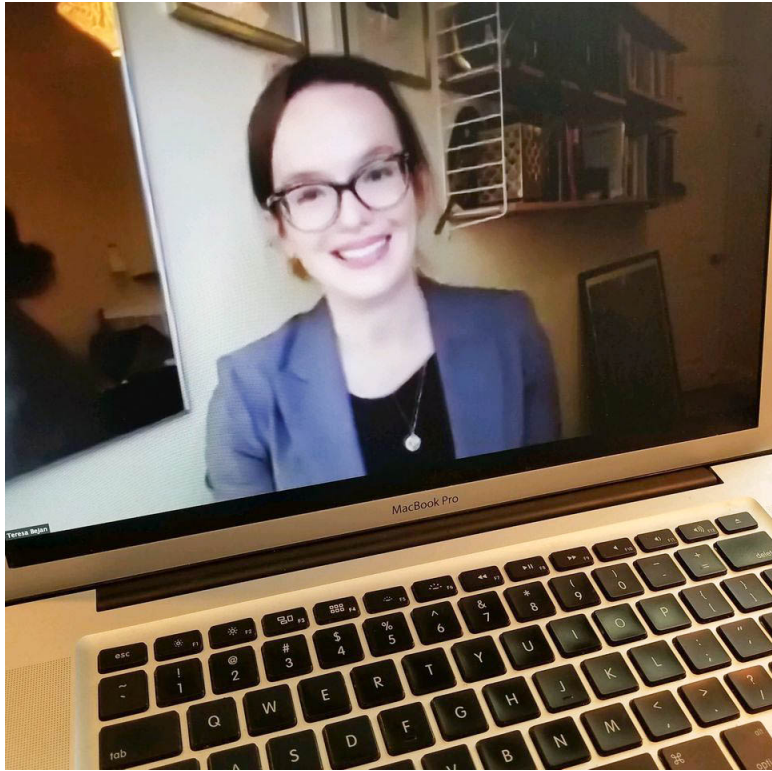
4:15 PM—4:30 PM CONCLUDING REMARKS, Associate Dean Jared Goldstein

This Symposium is supported by a generous grant from the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

Papers from the Participants will be published in the Roger Williams University Law Review.







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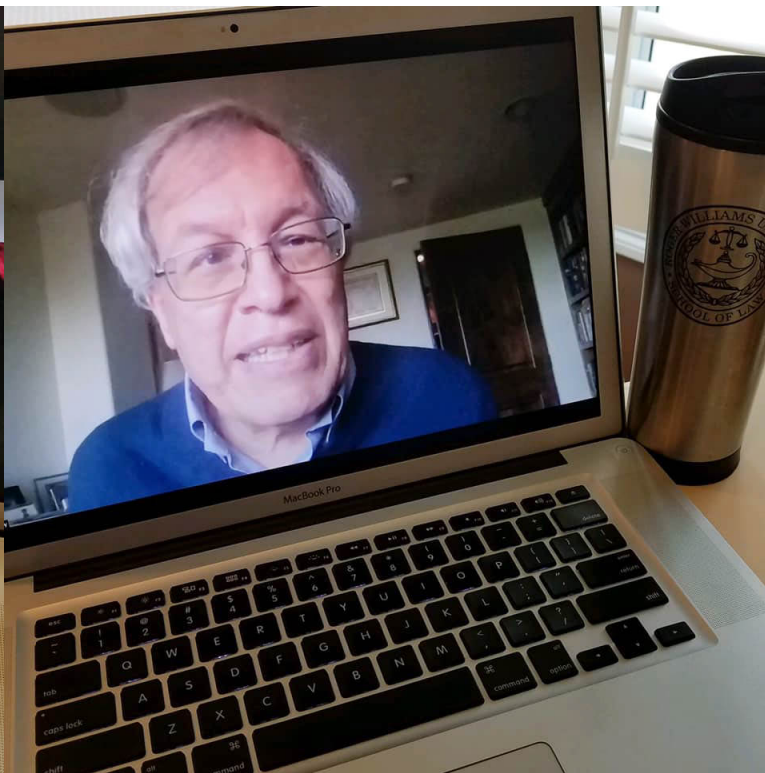
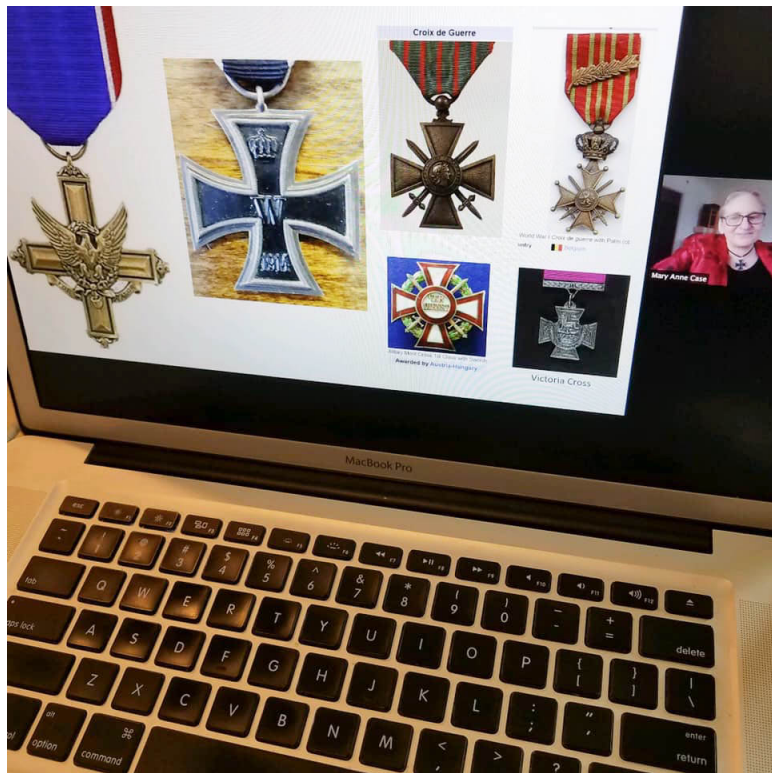
*Government
in
America is not
any more founded on
the Christian religion*

IS THIS A CHRISTIAN NATION?

Gregory Boon

Carl Boon

The slide features a stylized American flag graphic with the text "Government in America is not any more founded on the Christian religion" overlaid in a cursive font. Below the graphic is the question "IS THIS A CHRISTIAN NATION?". The slide is part of a virtual symposium by Roger Williams University School of Law. Two small video thumbnails are visible on the right side of the slide, showing participants Gregory Boon and Carl Boon.





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IS THIS A CHRISTIAN NATION?



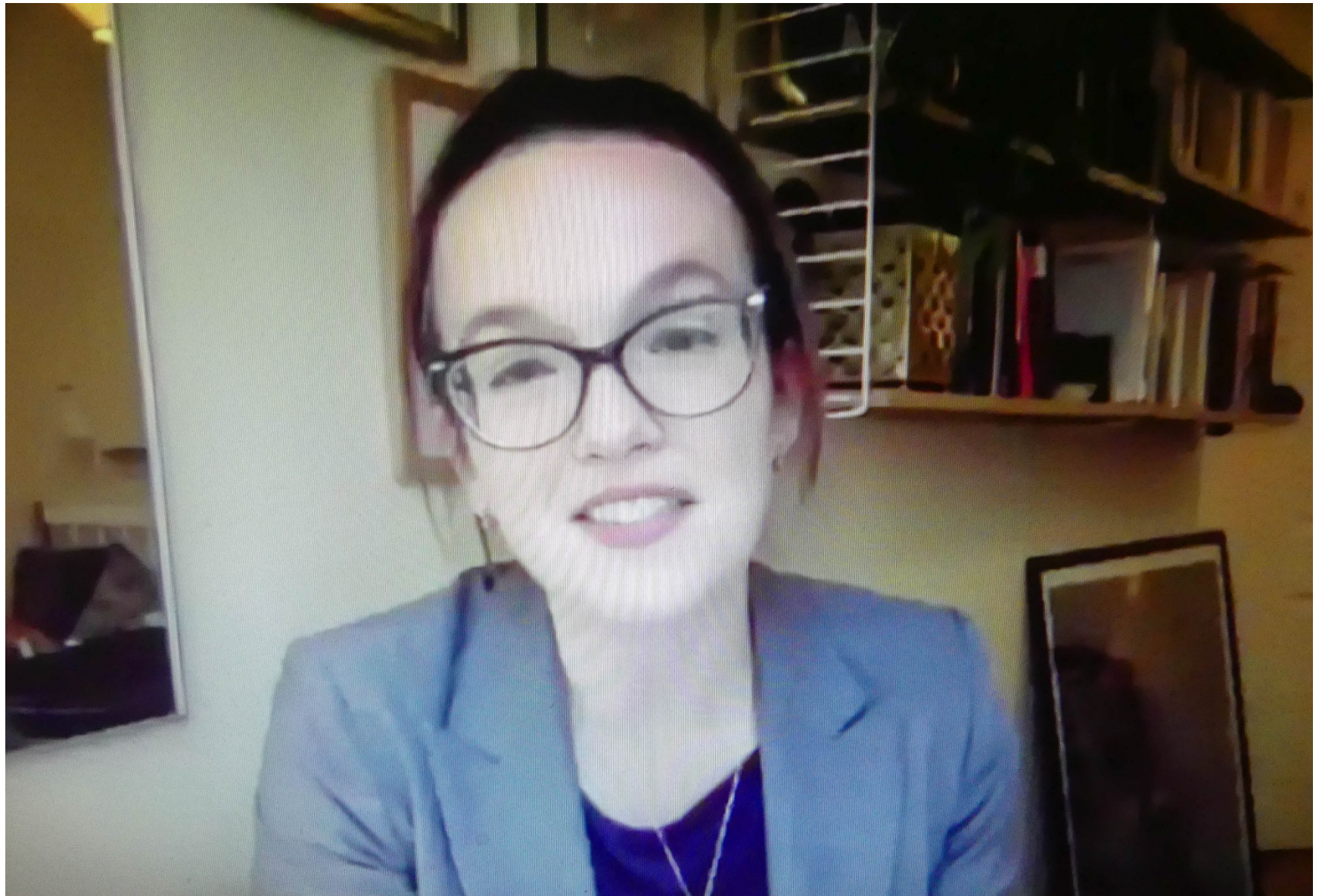
Gregory Bowman

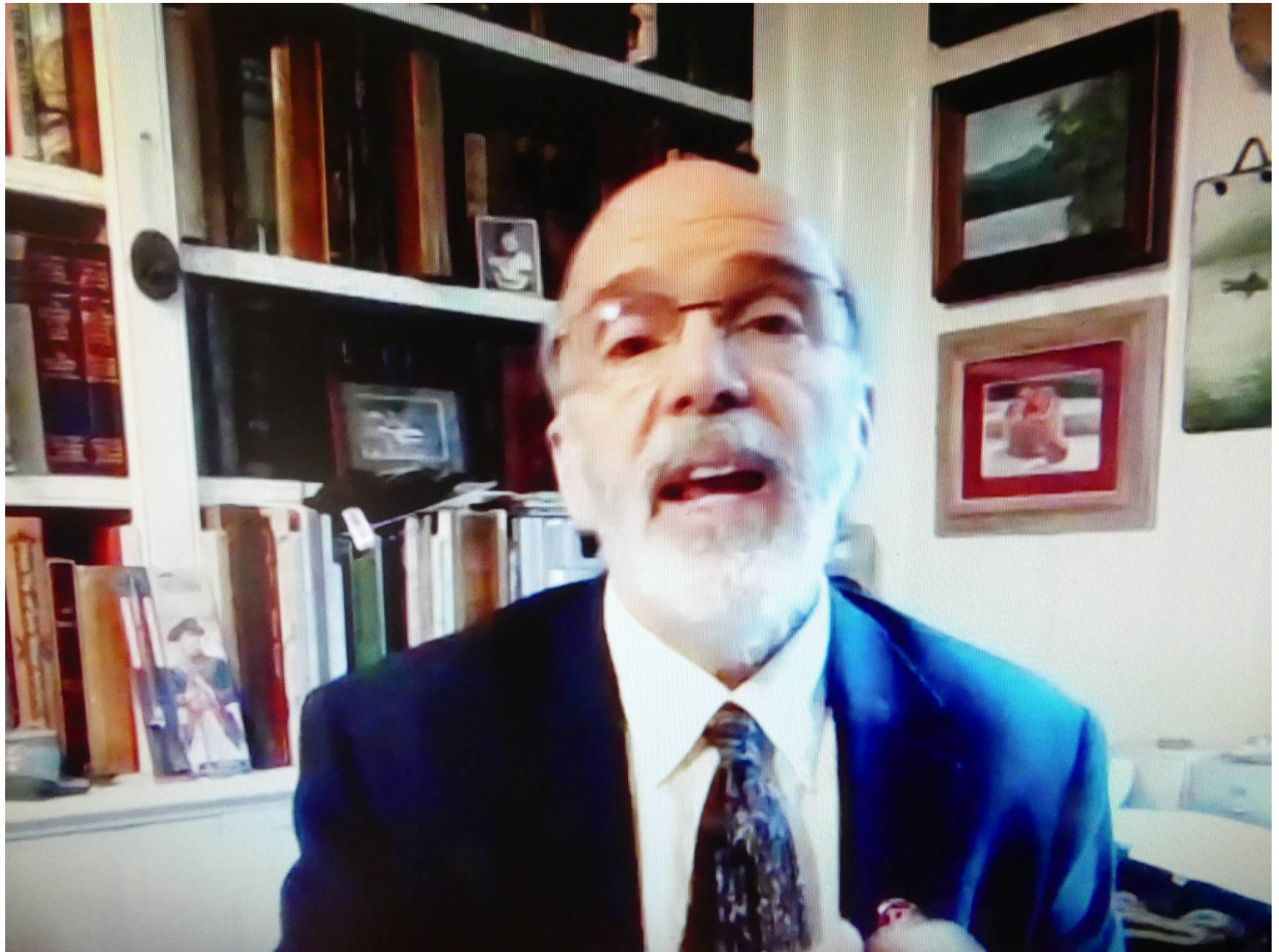


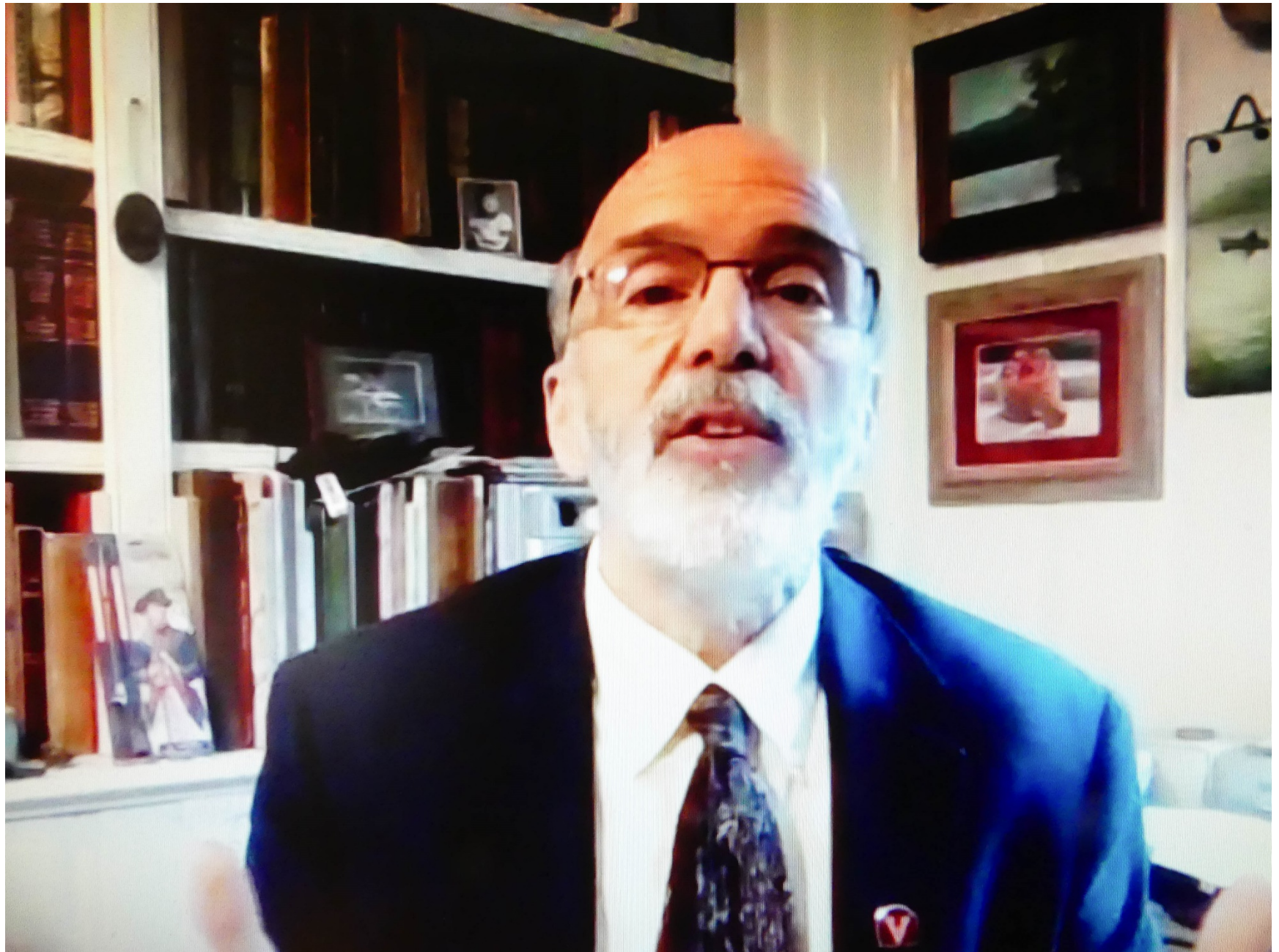
Carl Bogus

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IS THIS A CHRISTIAN NATION?

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IS THIS A CHRISTIAN NATION?

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IS THIS A CHRISTIAN NATION?

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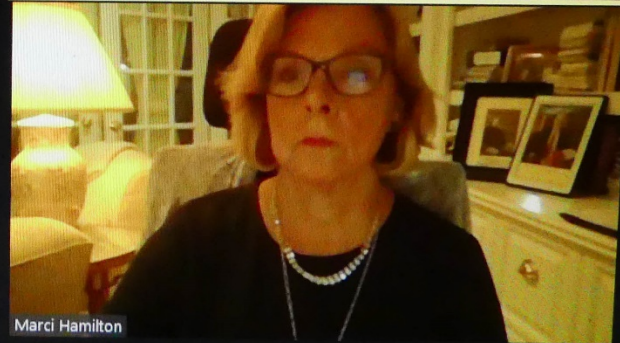
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IS THIS A CHRISTIAN NATION?



Jared Goldstein



Marci Hamilton

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Q&A

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The Legal Ramifications of Christian Nationalism



Steven Green

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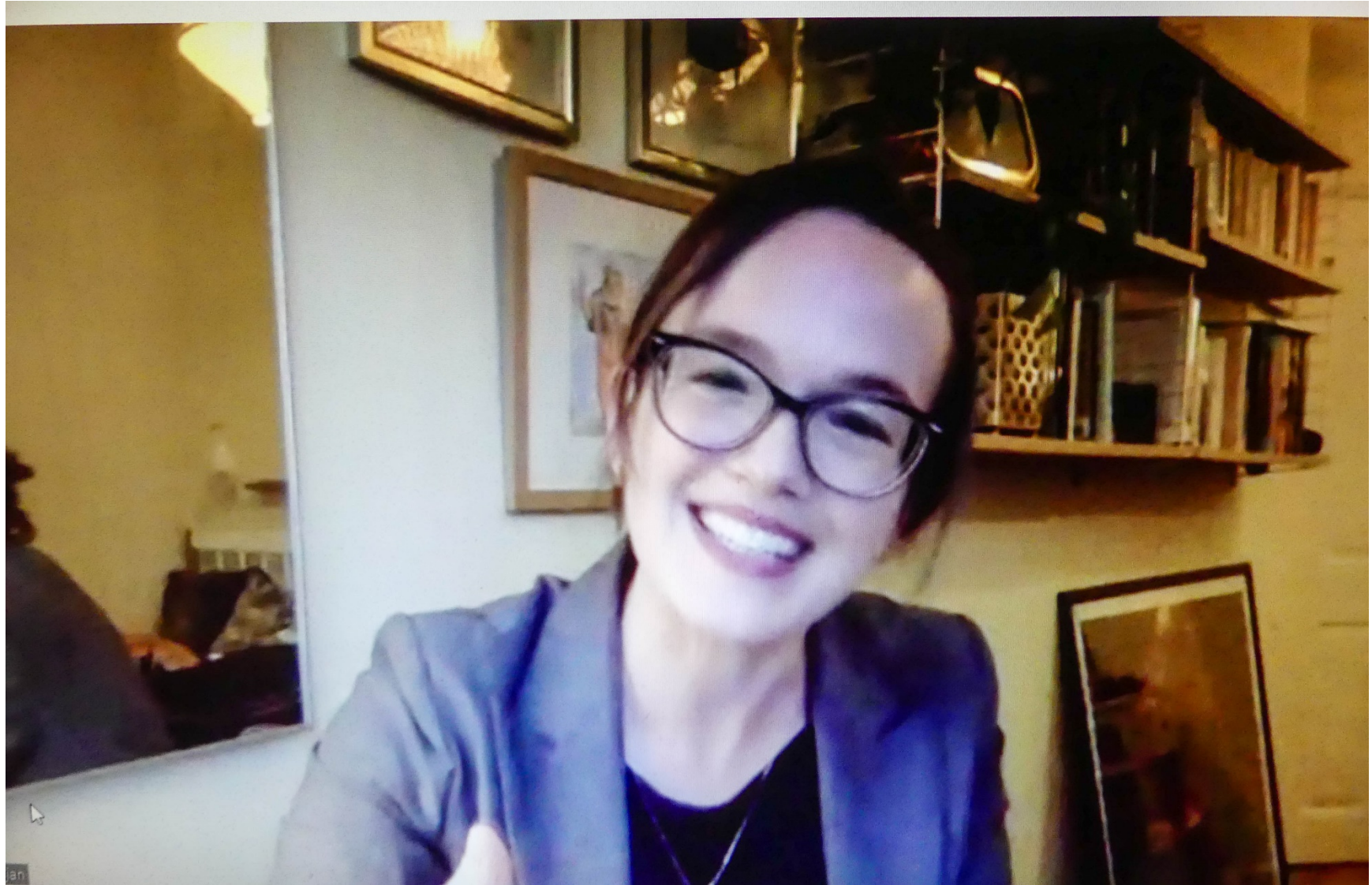
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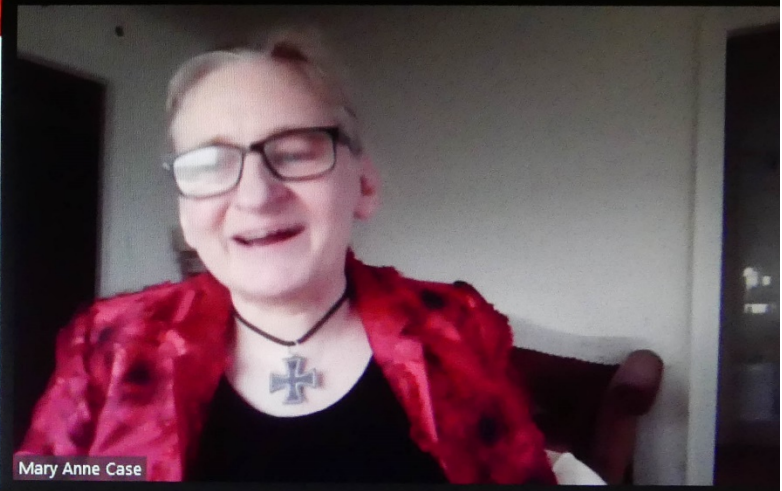
Chat ¹

Raise Hand

Q&A ⁴

Recording

The screenshot shows a PowerPoint presentation slide. The slide title is "Who Conquers With This Sign?" and the subtitle is "The Significance of the Secularization of the Bladensburg Cross". The slide content includes two images: on the left, a close-up of a stone cross with the words "BLADENSUNG VANCEY" inscribed on it; on the right, a photograph of the large, white, stone cross standing in a park-like setting with a flagpole nearby. The PowerPoint interface is visible, including the ribbon with tabs like Home, Insert, Design, Transitions, Animations, Slide Show, Review, and View. The name "Mary Anne Case" is visible in the top right corner of the application window.



Recording

Exit Full

The screenshot shows a PowerPoint presentation slide. The title is "Who Conquers With This Sign?" and the subtitle is "The Significance of the Secularization of the Bladensburg Cross". The slide features two images: on the left, a close-up of a stone cross with the Latin phrase "IN PROCESSIONE VINCIT" (In procession, it conquers) inscribed on it; on the right, a photograph of the large, white, stone Bladensburg Cross in Washington, D.C., with a flag flying in front of it. The presentation software interface is visible, including a ribbon with tabs like Home, Insert, Design, Transitions, Animations, Slide Show, Review, and View. A slide navigation pane is on the left, and a status bar at the bottom shows the name "Mary Anne Case".



Mary Anne Case

