



## Erika E. Cole

PARTNER

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## BIOGRAPHY

Ms. Cole has 20 years of experience advising nonprofit and tax-exempt organizations in a broad range of legal matters, including charitable giving, governance, contracts and mergers.

Ms. Cole launched the Church and Faith-Based Organization practice at Whiteford, Taylor & Preston and is one of only a handful of attorneys in the nation who practices exclusively in the area of Church Law. Known as The Church Attorney®, she has dedicated her life to helping churches of all denominations and sizes ensuring that their legal affairs are in order so they can focus on spreading their message, serving their communities, and growing their ministries.

For nearly two decades, Ms. Cole has partnered with ministries to address everything from church planting, new leadership transitions, buying and selling property to succession planning, and helping leadership address the spectrum of governance matters. She created The Church Attorney® Legal Audit System and has also assisted churches and ministries obtain 501(c)(3) tax exempt status with a 100% success rate.

Whether handling an unexpected legal crisis, legal audit or helping churches

## PRACTICES & INDUSTRIES

Churches and Faith-Based Organizations

Nonprofit Organizations and Associations

Alternative Dispute Resolution  
Business and Corporate

## EDUCATION

James Madison University, 1993,  
B.S.

University of Baltimore School of  
Law, 1996, J.D.

## ADMISSIONS

District of Columbia

Maryland

U.S. Supreme Court

through the buying, selling and construction of property, Ms. Cole's philosophy has remained the same: to provide the same level of excellence, diligence and counsel across the board.

When not serving as General Counsel for her clients, Ms. Cole's activities have included teaching the next generation of lawyers and community leaders as a Professor at the University of Baltimore School of Law and Loyola College of Maryland in their MBA Program.

Her calling to support churches and empower leaders propelled her to join a year-long mission in Latin America where she worked with nonprofits, churches and their members to advanced human rights. Upon returning, she started a mission's ministry at her own church and subsequently participated and oversaw several other mission trips taking missionaries from South Dakota to Namibia.

## **MEMBERSHIPS & ACTIVITIES**

- Founder and Producer of the Church Compliance Conference
  - Editorial Advisory Board for the *Christianity Today* Church Law & Tax Team
  - Appointed to Board of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (2013)
  - Appointed to the Panel of Legal Experts for the Commission of Accountability for Religious Organizations (2011)
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## **PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS**

Quoted: "Leadership Transitions: How Churches Navigate Pastoral Change - and Stay Healthy," Barna Report Produced in Partnership with Brotherhood Mutual (2019)

Speaker & Presenter: The Church Compliance Conference (September 2018)

Speaker: i5 Red Leaders Conference (March 2018)

Speaker: Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability Webinar: "Social Media, Church and the Law" (February 2018)

Author: "Succession Plans: Why Your Church Needs One," Church Law & Tax Update, Christianity Today (March 2017)

Landed on the Top 10 most-read list in 2017 for Church Law & Tax Report of Christianity Today

Author: The Church Attorney's Guide – Love Offerings (September 2014,  
Volume 1)

Author: The Church Attorney's Guide – 501(c)(3)