WASHINGTON (January 27, 2021)—The Berkley Center has received a $346,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to fund the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy (TPNRD), which will migrate from Cambridge University to Georgetown University as one of Georgetown’s ongoing programs. The three-year grant will help the TPNRD to expand its public engagement, capitalize on opportunities to forge new partnerships, and fine-tune its method of fostering transatlantic diplomatic collaboration and policy-relevant scholarship in the field of religion and international affairs.

Judd Birdsall, project director of the TPNRD, said, “The move of the TPNRD project to the Berkley Center, the leading research institute of its kind, presents an exciting new chapter for the network. The international reputation and significant organizational capacity of the center will enhance the project’s efforts to foster diplomatic collaboration and scholarship on religion and global affairs. I am deeply grateful to Georgetown for providing this new institutional base and to the Luce Foundation for their ongoing support.”

In January 2021 Birdsall joined the Berkley Center as he continues to provide leadership for the TPNRD.

The main areas of the program moving forward will include: developing a more collaborative intergovernmental forum that enhances the capacity of TPNRD-participating officials to engage religious actors; enabling more targeted interventions from scholars and expert practitioners on specific areas of collaborative action; and developing the TPNRD website Religion & Diplomacy into a more widely known credible source of analysis on the practical intersection of faith and foreign affairs.

"We are grateful to the Henry Luce Foundation for this generous grant that allows the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy to migrate to the Berkley Center. This effort continues the expansion of the Berkley Center's international work over the last four years. We welcome Judd Birdsall to the center and look forward to expanding the great work of the network."

The Henry Luce Foundation has supported the work of both the Berkley Center and the TPNRD in the past. With Luce support the Berkley Center has released over 30 publications and 400 interviews about the intersection between religion, development, and international affairs. The
TPNRD received grants from the Luce Foundation in 2015 and 2017 while the project was based in England at Clare College, Cambridge. These funds enabled the TPNRD to convene diplomats for workshops, commission papers, develop its website, and create an advisory council of leading experts, which includes Berkley Center fellows Katherine Marshall and Peter Mandaville.

The foundation’s support is part of the Henry R. Luce Initiative on Religion and International Affairs, which aims to provide intellectual leadership, develop new paradigms for research and teaching, create new resources and networks, and enhance public understanding of and discussion about religion in the international sphere.

About the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs: The Berkley Center seeks a more just and peaceful world by deepening knowledge and solving problems at the intersection of religion and global affairs through research, teaching, and engaging multiple publics. Two premises guide the center’s work: that a comprehensive examination of religion and norms is critical to address complex global challenges, and that the open engagement of religious and cultural traditions with one another can promote peace. To this end, the center engages students, scholars, policymakers, and practitioners in analysis of and dialogue on critical issues in order to increase the public understanding of religion.

About the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy: The TPNRD is a forum of diplomats from North America and Europe who are the designated point people on issues of religion and diplomacy within their respective foreign ministries. Launched in 2015, the network includes officials from 16 countries as well as from the United Nations and the European External Action Service. The activity of the network is informed and augmented by a transatlantic advisory council, comprised of top researchers from the North Atlantic region who provide expert advice and deepen connections between scholars and practitioners working on religion and international affairs.

About the Luce Foundation: The Henry Luce Foundation seeks to bring important ideas to the center of American life, strengthen international understanding, and foster innovation and leadership in academic, policy, religious, and art communities. The Henry R. Luce Initiative on Religion in International Affairs launched in 2005.

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