



**THE ELIJAH INTERFAITH INSTITUTE**

FIFTH MEETING OF THE ELIJAH BOARD OF WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS

**FRIENDSHIP ACROSS RELIGIONS**



A hand is shown holding a dark, textured book against a warm, textured background. The background has a rich, reddish-brown hue with visible brushstrokes or a similar artistic texture. The hand is positioned at the top left, with fingers gripping the top edge of the book. The book itself is dark and appears to have a woven or fabric-like texture. The overall composition is artistic and evocative, suggesting a sense of history or tradition.

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## **PROGRAM & SCHEDULE**

## SUNDAY, MARCH 18

- 16:30 Welcome ceremony
- Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh
  - Sr Jayanti
  - Rabbi Dr Alon Goshen Gottstein
  - Awet Andemicael
- 18:00 Prayer by religion
- 18:30 Dinner
- 19:30 First meeting of interreligious discussion groups  
Discussion thread:  
Introductions - narration of personal stories of interreligious friendships

## MONDAY, MARCH 19

- 09:00 Plenary – opening prayer and orientation
- 09:30 ‘Interreligious Friendship’ – intra-faith discussion groups  
Discussion thread: How does the paper written from the perspective of my faith reflect my personal experiences, attitudes and concerns?
- 10:30 Morning tea break
- 11:00 ‘Interreligious Friendship’ – moderated interfaith discussions:  
Discussion thread: What do we mean by ‘friendship’ and what makes friendship across religions different?

- 12:30 Lunch break
- 14:00 Interest groups (pre-assigned)
- Giving our religions a voice: The response process and op eds
  - Giving our religions a voice: Public visibility and presence of religious leaders at events
  - Sharing wisdom: Leaders learning with and from each other
  - Sharing wisdom: Learning and sharing with our communities
  - Cultivating interreligious friendship: practical applications
- 15:00 Tour of Oxford and its colleges
- 18:00 Dinner and ‘Town Hall Meeting’ at the Divinity School, Oxford (until 21:00)

## TUESDAY, MARCH 20

- 09:00 Plenary – opening prayer and orientation
- 09:30 ‘Interreligious Friendship’ – moderated interfaith discussions:  
Discussion thread: Risks and Challenges
- 11:00 Morning tea break
- 11:30 Plenary discussion - focus on risks and challenges of interreligious friendships
- 13:00 Lunch break

- 15:00 Meeting of Interest groups
- 16:15 'Interreligious Friendship' – moderated interfaith discussions:  
Discussion thread: Benefits and Opportunities
- 17:30 Plenary discussion – focus on benefits and opportunities of interreligious friendships
- 19:00 Prayer by religion
- 19:30 Dinner
- 20:30 Evening program – Interviews with Cardinals: modeling friendship, modeling techniques for working across distance (until 21:30)

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

- 09:00 Morning contemplation - plenary
- 09:30 'Interreligious Friendship' – moderated interfaith discussions:  
Discussion thread:  
Finding Balance: Practical Applications
- 11:00 Morning tea break
- 11:30 Meeting of regional groups
- 12:30 Lunch break
- 14:00 Feedback from Interest Groups – recommendations to plenary

- 16:00 Writing time for personal conclusions, balances and recommendations (afternoon tea available)
- 17:00 Plenary – 'What have we learned?'; developing the Joint Statement
- 19:00 Prayer by religion
- 19:30 Dinner and closure (until 21:00)

## THURSDAY, MARCH 22

### **Elijah Faith and Business Leaders Forum**

#### **Workshop on Faith and Economic Development: Translating Hope & Belief into Real Economic Actions**

#### Program Agenda

- 08:30 Registrations and Refreshments
- 09:00 Welcome Address and Launch of "Elijah Business and Faith Leaders Forum"  
Dr. Alon Goshen-Gottstein, Executive Director, Elijah Interfaith Institute  
Mr. Sanmit Ahuja, Chief Executive, ETI Dynamics
- 09:30 Panel Discussion 1: The World of Business and the World of Faith – Travelling Together  
This panel will address the questions related to the collaboration construct of business and faith based organisations when addressing issues afflicting the world.



Q1. Shouldn't the two worlds attempt greater collaboration?

Q2. How can business interface with religion within its organisational boundaries and outside?

Q3. How to build greater trust and mutual respect of each other to then jointly address greater problems in the world?

11:00 Refreshments Break

11:30 Panel Discussion 2:

Delivering Real Change and Economic Impact

This panel will offer a showcase into some major issues that faith based organisations are addressing global challenges and where they seek support of Government and the business communities to further the good work being done.

This study will case study based.

13:00 Working Lunch:

Discussions on "Business and Friendship"

The Discussion on each table will be hosted by a Senior Religious and a Business Leader.

14:00 Summary, Call to Action and Close of Forum  
(until 14:30)

18:30 Concluding reception at home of Chief Rabbi,  
Jonathan Sacks  
85 Hamilton Terrace, NW8 9RH  
(until 19:30)

## OUR PARTNERS

**FONDAZIONE GAETANO SALVEMINI**

**VON GROEBEN FOUNDATION**

**THE FORUM HUMANUM FOUNDATION**

**THE WILLIAM AND MARY GREVE FOUNDATION**

**THE JOYCE AND IRVING GOLDMAN FOUNDATION**

**THE ST. OTILIE MONASTERY**

**THE HERSHEY FOUNDATION**

**MR. XAVIER GUERRAND HERMES**



## **MESSAGES OF WELCOME**



Welcome to the 5th meeting of the Elijah Board of World's Religious Leaders on the theme of 'inter-religious friendship'.

We will treasure the friendship that has developed between the Board's members all our lives. For many, the journey of friendship began in Seville, Spain in 2003; then to Taiwan in 2005; to Amritsar, India in 2007; to Haifa, Israel in 2009; (as well as the meeting in Marrakech, Morocco in 2011, which I sadly missed).

It is these bonds of friendship which have been cultivated over the years that the fifth meeting of the Elijah Board in Oxford, UK will build on. I believe that it is not in the formal parts of meetings that friendships grow, but through personal interaction and the sharing of values which takes place informally.

We must express our gratitude to Dadi Janki and the Brahma Kumaris who have opened their doors to host us. Although I am disappointed that there was not an opportunity for the participants of the meeting to come and visit Birmingham, where the Headquarters of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ) are based; I would nonetheless like to extend an open invitation to you all (either individually or collectively) to come and visit us whenever you are in the UK.

Oxford is a historical city, home to the first University in the English speaking world since the 11th Century, which is now internationally renowned and attended by 21,000 students. Education is of course increasingly important in a globalised world, which is faced with global issues. However, it is only through values based and values led education that we can create a new global consciousness which will meaningfully unlock potential and create change so that global issues can be tackled. Individuals must be nurtured



with values, virtues, morals, ethics and dispositions which impel them to act compassionately and benevolently. Such qualities emanate from our own respective religious traditions, but also through meaningful relationships and friendships with those from other religious traditions.

I hope that this meeting will be stimulating and enriching for all the participants; I also look forward to the Elijah Faith and Business Leaders Forum which will follow the meeting in London. It is an innovative and collaborative venture which I commend. I trust that the outcomes of both the meeting and the forum will be powerful and affect positive change; and that the friendships will continue beyond the meeting, far into the foreseeable future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh'. The signature is stylized with a circular emblem on the left and a long, sweeping underline.

Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh

# WELCOMING THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE ELIJAH BOARD OF WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest religious leaders of modern India, once wrote to his Irish disciple Miss Margeret Noble (Sister Nivedita): “Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.”

These words, albeit more than a century old, are true to this day. Globalization and the staggering advances in science and technology have thrown up unprecedented challenges in recent times. One such is the stupendous challenge to the ancient question of ethics and higher values that religions talk about vis-à-vis human development. Dharma, the Sanskrit word for ethics and values, literally means ‘holding together’. W.B. Yeats’ poignant verse *The Second Coming* (1920) laments that

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;*

*Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, the blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*

*The ceremony of innocence is drowned;*

*The best lack all conviction, while the worst*

*Are full of passionate intensity.*

If ‘holding together’ is Dharma, then non-holding by the ‘centre’ should be non-Dharma (*adharma* in Sanskrit), leading to what Yeats laments about anarchy being released and the ceremony of innocence being drowned. With the decline of Dharma, the dark clouds of disintegration (‘things fall apart’) and anarchy looming large on the horizon of modern development are agitating the collective human conscience. The very question of what really constitutes human development has resurfaced in this rudely shaken and profoundly agitated collective conscience, clamouring for an urgent revisit and revaluation. The developmental role of religions is being subject to scrutiny. The role of religions of the world in promoting holistic human development needs to be rekindled to show that religion is as much potent a force as science and technology are, if not more, to promote and sustain total human development. Unless religions come together as one collective force and friendship among religions grows as a powerful tool for holistic human development, the cyclonic march of science and technology is likely to sweep away modern man’s faith in the Divine Presence as Immanent and Transcendent. This would not only uproot modern man’s faith in the unifying force of religion, but, much worse, reinforce his already deeply rooted conviction that religion is to blame for underdevelopment in vast sections of humanity.

That the present meet organized by Elijah Interfaith Institute in Oxford may, by sharing of the wisdom of the leaders of various religions, engender a new paradigm of friendship and togetherness among religions to awaken a new awareness among the religionists about the developmental role of religions in the modern world is the earnest prayer of

Swami Atmapriyananda

On behalf of the Steering Committee of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders

13 February 2012

# IJCIC - INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE FOR INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

Dear cherished colleague,

It is a great pleasure to be together once again. Those of us who have been past participants in the gatherings of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders know that we are about to partake in an extraordinary few days.

Many of you are regularly in places of leadership, with those of your own faith traditions. Not a few have other leadership roles in the interfaith realm. So you know how distinctive these meetings have been in the past – and this one promises to be. Meeting away from the glare of those looking for our immediate answers, convening in the confines of closed-door settings with scholars and fellow leaders, exploring the most challenging and often profound questions which define our quest for meaning and understanding, none of us is unchanged. Between our biennial meetings, I find that I often think back on what I have learned, colleagues whose friendship I value, and experiences hard to replicate elsewhere. I am confident that most of us would feel the same.

Some of you are joining us for the first time. On behalf of the Steering Committee and the other co-chairs, we welcome you and extend our hand in open friendship. Please let us know how we may enhance your time. Your contributions to our deliberations will expand our learning. We do hope that you too find the days to be meaningful as well.

With warmest best wishes, and prayers for peace for all, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Professor Richard A Marker  
Co-Chair

# SISTER JAYANTI EUROPEAN DIRECTOR BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

Dear Friends,

Greetings of peace.

I am delighted to welcome you to the Global Retreat Centre, to the fifth bi-annual meeting of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders. We are honoured to be partners in exploring this significant theme: Friendship Across Religions.

Many things can be accomplished through friendship. True friendship is based on values such as honesty, compassion and empathy. Friendship engenders understanding and trust; together, as friends, we can find solutions to the challenges that we face.

In today's world of competition and fragmentation, the importance of friendship is often diminished. Some would say that friendship between religions is not only impossible, but even undesirable. Such attitudes keep alive harmful divisions that work against a peaceful future.

I hope that you will enjoy the tranquil surroundings and atmosphere of the Global Retreat Centre and take the opportunity for some silent reflection in the midst of our time together. The more we reflect on our own inner journeys, the richer and more meaningful our sharing will be.

Therefore, I am sure that at our meeting we will not only talk about friendship, but warmly experience the joy of being together. Such friendships can heal our communities and uplift our world.

With warm regards and thoughts of peace,

Sister Jayanti  
European Director  
Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University



# THE ELIJAH INTERFAITH INSTITUTE

## RABBI DR. ALON GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN

A hearty welcome to members of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders, Elijah scholars and guests, attending the fifth bi-annual meeting of our forum.

If someone were to ask me what are my hope and expectation for the forthcoming meeting, I would reply not in terms of the conversations, discussions and friendships that are built or strengthened through our common process. Thank God, we can almost take these for granted, after nearly a decade of collaboration between scholars and leaders where a new benchmark for interreligious discussions has been established. Rather, I would point to the question of how to actualize the potential that our group has and how to make it a visible and powerful voice in our communities and in the world at large.

All those who are here for the second time or more (for many this is the fifth Elijah event) appreciate the quality of discussion and friendship. But all have also commented that this group has potential that must find expression also between meetings. I am thankful that much has happened between the previous and present meetings. Thanks to the generosity of Xavier Hermes Guerrand we have established a Forum for the Interreligious Study of the Mystical and Spiritual Life, that has by now held two meetings. Our response process has continued. Our leaders have been sharing information through the periodic newsletter “Sharing Vocations”. We have taken important steps in reaching out to our communities, especially through the efforts in India for

training interreligious facilitators (thanks to the Guru Nanak Seva Nishkam Jatta for their support). We have participated in various public events, featuring Elijah’s work, held several conferences, and another book (Jewish Theology and World Religions) will be published very shortly. And we have invested great efforts in upgrading our virtual resources so that more and more action and interaction between leaders, scholars and communities may take place.

Even so, much remains to be done, and our Board, as most of you have expressed to me in recent interviews, can and should be doing much more. Accordingly, my hope is that we will come away from the Oxford meeting with an action plan for the coming years, with renewed commitment to collaboration and with stronger than ever organizational foundations. To this end, we have structured our time together so that our discussions do not focus exclusively on the meeting’s theme but also on the ongoing work of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders and on further actualizing its potential.

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A word about the participants who will be attending our meeting. The steering committee of the EBWRL and myself have been acutely aware of the strong male dominance of the Board. This is an obvious reflection of the fact that religious leadership globally is primarily in the hands of men, not women. Some have

criticized our group for not giving sufficient room for women. We have struggled with how to include more women in our midst, without thereby compromising the representative nature of our group. The steering committee has decided to broaden the working definitions of the Board and to include not only religious leadership but also religious/educational leadership, in view of the fact that even those religions whose hierarchies or religious bureaucracies are exclusively male do feature women in prominent positions when it comes to educational work. In view of the fact that Elijah is ultimately about education, within and beyond our religions, it therefore made sense to invite women who were educational leaders within their religions to join our meeting. The efforts at including women were far more extensive than the number of women who were able to respond positively to our invitation, and I hope the number will continue to increase.

Another word is in order concerning Board members who are not with us in Oxford. We have suffered a number of cancellations by previously confirmed participants. Whether it is the Dalai Lama, Cardinal Tauran or various other leaders who had to cancel for health or other reasons, it is important to recall that our Board includes many more members who continue to work with us on specific projects, statements and who contribute in a variety of ways, even if they will not be attending the Oxford meeting, or, in some cases, any in-person meeting. Indeed, I hope that the action plan with which we come away will include possibilities for these participants finding additional ways for expressing their support for and membership in the work of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders.

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Words of welcome are the time to give thanks. Perhaps thanks are due for the Oxford meeting even more than for any previous meeting. The number of partners who have made this meeting possible is probably larger than ever. And the financial basis for holding the meeting is weaker than ever, thereby making the efforts and contributions of all even more meaningful.

I begin by thanking each and every one of those who have come to Oxford for the efforts. These efforts include the time spent in preparation and in coming to the meeting, the costs born by many of you, the thought, and the care and devotion made manifest through your continuing affiliation with Elijah.

The steering committee has become a cornerstone of our continuing work. Between in-person meetings, distance communications, regular conference calls they have all provided continuing support and partnership to the staff's efforts, but more importantly, have demonstrated that the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders really does belong to the religious leaders. The Oxford meeting is an opportunity for broadening membership in the steering committee and in various task forces, thereby strengthening further our organizational foundations.

What makes Elijah unique is the coming together of religious leaders and scholars. Our sharing of wisdom is enabled by the depth of knowledge, critical perspective and reflective powers that our scholars bring to bear on the chosen topic of our discussions. Our ability to reflect on "Friendship Across Religions" is in no small measure a function of the fact that our think tank have practiced this for long enough to allow them to reflect constructively on what it means to practice interreligious friendship. Some members of the think tank were unable to attend the meeting, but their thoughts, feelings and prayers are with us, as we explore their work, making it our own.

I would not be able to do my work without the support of a dedicated staff. Peta Jones Pellach has come on board since our

last meeting as director of Educational Activities. All of you have been in touch with her. Her contribution to planning, thinking and driving Elijah's activities has been invaluable. Pascal Carlier provides the continuing foundation for the successful operations of a virtual organization. His apparently limitless technical expertise allows us to develop platforms for learning and communication that will continue to serve us as we reach further and deeper in our efforts to realize Elijah's motto: "Sharing Wisdom – Fostering Peace". Miriam Weil has held together the manifold details related to planning and executing the meeting with truly admirable focus and presence. I thank all of them for their continuing partnership and, in the spirit of this meeting, friendship.

It would have been inconceivable to hold our meeting without the generosity of the Brahma Kumaris, who have extended to us their generous hospitality. I have come to value Sr. Maureen Goodman in ever deeper ways as a partner who is both spiritual and practical. It is a pleasure for me to work with Sr. Jayanti, with whom we held a program a few years ago, and who is now the BK's representative to Elijah. She is as touched by Elijah's vision and the role she can play in it as we are by her presence, and I am sure the fruitful partnership will continue. The staff at the Global Retreat Center, especially Sr. Brigitte Fohano, have done their utmost to make our meeting a success. Koudos and much gratitude to all of them.

None of our work could be carried out without the support of those philanthropists who believe in our work. These are listed separately and I will not repeat the list here. I will only state that many have become friends through the process. For those for whom this is the first occasion to work with Elijah, I express the hope that their partnership too will blossom into personal friendship.

A final word of thanks to Therese, who since the last meeting has become my wife. She has been a source of support for Elijah since

its foundation. Now, her support involves not only sharing of vision, offer of counsel and involvement in details of organization but also the sacrifice that the wife of someone who seeks to bring to fruition a complex spiritual vision must make. All this is an expression of her love, for me and for the work that unites us.

I conclude with prayers for the success of our meeting, may it be a blessing for you, may it be a blessing for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alon Goshen-Gottstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alon" being more prominent.

Rabbi Dr. Alon Goshen-Gottstein  
Director, The Elijah Interfaith Institute

# STEERING COMMITTEE DECLARATION

## PARIS, MAY 2008

The following seven points constitute the ethos and vision of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders. They were formulated by the steering committee of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders at its Paris meeting.

These points grow from the experience of the work of the Board, since its creation in 2003, and provide the guidelines for generating future activities of the Board.

1. Activities of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders should be based on the common virtue of humility as a fundamental principle of the spiritual life and an orienting principle of religious leadership. We seek to manifest this attitude in our relationship to other traditions, their wisdom and in our implementation of that wisdom in meeting today's challenges.

2. We acknowledge the importance of membership in the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders and partaking of its activities as a source for personal growth and transformation of individual participants.

3. We affirm a shared sense of need to extend our experience and learning at Elijah to our communities.

4. Ongoing work of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders should accordingly seek to strike a balance between

personal processes of participants and collectively owning our responsibility in relation to the world.

5. In relating to other religions, we recognize and respect differences while seeking to uncover our common spiritual ground

6. We recognize the profundity and complexity of our religious traditions, their multiple manifestations as well as the challenges of the day and see our own efforts at humility-based learning from other traditions as a way of respecting those complexities.

7. Based on the above, we seek to not only share these recognitions with our own communities but also to engage those who are not associated with religion, especially the younger generation, in dialogue with the sense of complexity and wisdom as they are known to us through our own search.



## STEERING COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATION



### **Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh, England**

A civil engineer by profession, Mohinder Singh is the chairman of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha in Birmingham, England. A strong proponent of interreligious dialogue, Singh is a member of the European Council of Religious Leaders and an advisor to the Sikh Heritage Trust.



### **Swami Atmapriyananda, India**

Hindu leader, Swami Atmapriyananda is the Vice Chancellor of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University. Before becoming a monk, he completed his PhD in the Department of Theoretical Physics, University of Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Inspired by the ideal of renunciation and service as taught by Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, he joined as a Brahmacharin at Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, Belur Math, the Headquarters of the worldwide organization, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.



### **Rabbi Richard Marker, USA**

Rabbi Richard Marker has been a university chaplain, chief executive of a philanthropic foundation, a professor, a management consultant in the private sector, and an executive in the not-for-profit world. Rabbi Marker is Vice-President of IJCIC.

**His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas Lulias, USA**

His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas (Lulias) of Dardanelia was the inaugural Metropolitan of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia and is now serving as Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute. Metropolitan Nikitas Lulias is the

permanent representative of Patriarch Bartholomew to the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders.

**Dr. Nazeer Ahmed, USA**

Dr. Nazeer Ahmed is currently Director of the American Institute of Islamic History and Culture and a director of the World Organization for Resource Development and Education. He belongs to the Naqshabandi Sufi Order and has learned

tasawwuf from Shaikh Nazim al Haqqani of Cyprus and Shaikh Hisham Kabbani of the US. He has lectured widely in the United States, Canada, India, Malaysia and South Africa on issues related to science, history, religion and spirituality. Dr. Ahmed represents Sheikh Kabbani at the meeting and is on the steering committee of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders.

**Maria Reis Habito, USA**

Maria Reis Habito is the International Program Director of the Museum of World Religions and the Director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute USA. She studied Chinese Language and Culture at Taiwan

Normal University in Taipei, and received her M.A. in Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies and Philosophy at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet in Munich. She was a research fellow at Kyoto University and completed her Ph.D. at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet. Dr. Reis Habito represents Dharma Master Hsin Tao on the steering committee.

**Alon Goshen-Gottstein, Israel**

Alon Goshen-Gottstein is the founder and director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute, and lecturer and director of the Center for the Study of Rabbinic Thought, Beit Morasha College, Jerusalem.

Ordained a Rabbi in 1977, he holds a Ph.D. from Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the field of Rabbinic Thought. His four score publications are divided between the areas of Interreligious Dialogue, Theology of Religions, Jewish Spirituality and Rabbinic Thought.

**Peta Jones Pellach, Israel**

Peta Jones Pellach is Director of Educational Activities for the Elijah Interfaith Institute. Her expertise is in adult education and she was prominent in interfaith dialogue in Australia before joining Elijah in 2010.

**Pascal Carlier, Israel**

Pascal Carlier is the IT & Online Communications Manager for the Elijah Interfaith Institute. He's also responsible for Development, Research and Support.

**Miriam Weil, Israel**

Miriam Weil is the administrator for the Elijah Interfaith Institute.



The image features a close-up of two hands reaching towards each other over a wooden surface. The surface has a prominent geometric pattern of intersecting lines, creating a grid-like effect. The hands are positioned on the left side of the frame, with fingers slightly spread. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the wood and the skin. A large white speech bubble shape is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

# **THE ELIJAH BOARD OF WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS**



## BUDDHIST LEADERS



### **H.H. the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, India**

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is the spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people. As such, he carries on a tradition that stretches unbroken to the 13th century. His Holiness has traveled to more than 52 countries and met with presidents, prime ministers and crowned rulers of major nations. He has held dialogues with the heads of different religions and many well-known scientists. He has waged a peaceful campaign to free Tibet from Chinese rule, a struggle that won him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. As The Dalai Lama lives in Dharamsala, he heads the Tibetan government in exile.



### **Ven. Norman Fischer, USA**

Zoketsu Norman Fischer is a poet, Zen priest and teacher in the Soto Zen lineage of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. He served as co-abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center, the oldest and largest Zen organization in the Western world, from 1995-2000. He is now founder and teacher of the Everyday Zen Foundation, an organization devoted to sharing Zen teaching and practice widely with the world.



### **Blanche Zenkei Hartman, USA**

Zenkei Blanche Hartman began sitting in 1969 at the Berkeley Zen Center with Sojun Mel Weitsman and in San Francisco with Suzuki-roshi. She was priest ordained in 1977 by Zentatsu Baker-roshi and received dharma transmission with Sojun Mel Weitsman in 1988. Zenkei became abbess of San Francisco Zen Center in February of 1996.



#### **Dharma Master Hsin-Tao, Taiwan**

Dharma Master Hsin Tao is the founder of the Museum of World Religions, the President of The Global Family for Love and Peace, and the founder of the Ling Jiou Mountain Wu-Sheng Monastery on

Taiwan's northeastern coast, which now houses nearly 100 nuns and monks. Master Hsin Tao also leads the Ling Jiou Mountain Prajna Cultural Education Foundation, the Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Foundation, the Social Welfare and Charity Foundation of Taipei County, and related projects in New York, Vancouver, Nepal, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia and Hong Kong.



#### **Ven. Bhikkhuni Kusuma, Sri Lanka**

The Ven Bhikkhuni Kusuma pioneered the re-establishment of the female Buddhist order and became the first fully ordained nun in 1996, 1000 years after the Order had died out. She is a member

of the executive committee of the International Association of Buddhist Women - Sakyaditha and permanent member of the World Sangha Council. She is building the Ayya Khema International Buddhist Mandir in Sri Lanka, a study and retreat center that will offer studies of Pali and Buddhism.



#### **Jan Chozen Bays, USA**

Jan Chozen Bays, MD, has studied and practiced Zen Buddhism since 1973. She is an ordained Soto Zen priest and teaches at the Great Vow Zen Monastery, a residential center for intensive Zen training in Clatskanie, Oregon. She is the author of "Jizo Bodhisattva", "Modern Healing" and "Traditional Buddhist Practice".



#### **Ven. Phra Dharmakosajarn, Thailand**

The Ven. Phra Dharmakosajarn is Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU), Regional Ecclesiastical Governor, and Assistant Abbot of Wat Prayoonrawongsawas, Bangkok. He has formerly been Dean of MCU's Graduate School and Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the World Council of Religious Leaders.



#### **Ven. Jinwol Lee, Korea**

The Ven. Jinwol Lee is the President of United Religions Initiative of Korea, Dean of Gwangmyeong Buddhist College in Cheongju, Korea, an Executive Council Member of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, and Professor of Buddhist Studies at the Seoul Graduate School of Buddhism. He received his Doctorate in Buddhist Studies from the University of California at Berkeley and is widely published in both English and Korean.



#### **Ven. Sayadaw Ashin Nyanissara, Myanmar**

Ven. Ashin Nyanissara is a teacher of Buddhism and a humanitarian. He is the founder of BBM College in Lower Myanmar and was responsible for the construction of a water supply system that now provides clean drinking water to over eight thousand residents of Sagaing Hills, Myanmar as well as a fully modernized hospital in Burma that serves over 250 people a day. He is the founder of the Theravada Dhamma Society of America.

**Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo, USA**

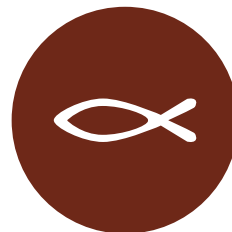
Karma Lekshe Tsomo is an Assistant Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of San Diego. She is president of Sakyadhita: International Association of Buddhist Women and director of Jamyang Foundation, an initiative to provide educational opportunities for women in developing countries, especially in the Indian Himalayas and Bangladesh.

**Ven. Khandro Rinpoche**

At the age of two, Ven. Khandro Rinpoche was recognized by His Holiness the 16th Karmapa as the re-incarnation of the Great Dakini of Tsurphu, Khandro Ugyen Tsomo, who was one of the most well known female masters of her time. Rinpoche is a teacher in both the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. She speaks fluent English, Tibetan and Hindi dialects and has completed a western education at St. Joseph's Convent, Wynberg Allen and St. Mary's Convent. Rinpoche has been teaching in Europe, North America and Southeast Asia since 1987.

**Ven. Bhikkhu Sanghasena, India**

A Buddhist monk, Ven. Sanghasena founded the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC) in Ladakh. Since then, he has worked tirelessly to put the Buddha's teachings on loving kindness and compassion into action. He has been awarded the "National Award for the Welfare of People with Disabilities" by the Indian Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.



## CHRISTIAN LEADERS



#### **Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev, Russia**

Archbishop Alfeyev is the Chairman of the Inter-Christian Affairs of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. He is the author of 250 publications including 30 books in six languages. He holds a doctoral degree in philosophy from Oxford and a doctorate in theology from St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris. Archbishop Alfeyev is an accomplished musician, whose religious oratorios have been performed in Rome, Moscow and other venues. He is the former Bishop of Vienna and Austria, and was elevated to the dignity of Archbishop on 20 April 2009.



#### **Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, Turkey**

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I is the 270th successor to the Apostle Andrew and spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. Since ascending the Ecumenical Throne on November 2nd, 1991, he has tirelessly pursued the vision of his enthronement message: Spiritual revival, orthodox unity, christian reconciliation, interfaith tolerance and coexistence, protection of the environment and a world united in peace, justice, solidarity and love.



#### **Prior Isabelle Flye-Saintmarie, Israel**

Sr. Isabelle Flye Sainte Marie is prioress of the monastic family of Bethlehem, the Assumption of the Virgin and St. Bruno. The monastic family consists of 28 houses in 14 countries. The characteristic of this monastic family consists of a liturgical life, silence, solitude and fraternal communion in deep listening to the gospel.



#### **Archbishop Vincentiu Grifoni, Romania**

Archbishop Vincentiu Grifoni is Bishop of the Diocese of Slobozia and Calarasi in Romania. His previous post was Assistant to the Patriarch-Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. He was formerly abbot of the Romanian Settlement in Jerusalem. In 2000, he was named Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. He has represented the Romanian Orthodox Church at orthodox, ecumenical and interreligious meetings.



#### **Bishop Frank Griswold, USA**

Bishop Griswold was elected to a nine-year term as Presiding Bishop at the 1997 General Convention and invested in January 1998. He was educated at St Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire and earned an AB in English literature from Harvard College. He attended the General Theological Seminary and earned his BA in theology and MA from Oriel College, Oxford University. He serves as Primate and chief pastor of the Episcopal Church, president of the House of Bishops and president and chief executive officer of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.



#### **Bishop Lennart Koskinen, Sweden**

Lennart K. Koskinen is Bishop of Visby and the Church of Sweden overseas. A student of eastern and western philosophy, Sanskrit and Greek, he received his PhD in theology in 1980, and has served as lecturer in philosophy of religion. He has served as Dean of the Cathedral of Stockholm and assistant to the Bishop of Stockholm, where he was responsible for social-ethical questions, contacts with civil society and international dialogue.

**Cardinal Jorge Maria Mejia, The Vatican**

Jorge Maria Cardinal Mejia has served as Secretary of the College of Cardinals and Archivist and Librarian of the Holy Roman Church. He has taught Sacred Scripture, Biblical Greek, Hebrew and Archeology, as well as serving as the Director of the Catholic Journal *Criterio* for over 20 years. He received the red biretta and the deaconry of S. Girolama della Carita, in 2001. Cardinal Mejia heads the Vatican delegation to the dialogue with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

**Patriarch Mesrob II, Turkey**

Patriarch Mesrob II was elected the 84th Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul & All Turkey in 1998. Before his enthronement he served as Patriarchal Locum Tenens and Chairman of the Patriarchal Synod. He has taught Ecumenical Theology at St. Thomas Aquinas University in Rome and Old Testament Studies at the Armenian Theological Seminary in Jerusalem. Patriarch Mesrob has been seriously ill for the past two years. Nevertheless, he retains the title of Patriarch.

**Archbishop Boutrous Mouallem, Israel**

His Excellency Archbishop Boutrous Mouallem was ordained as Metropolitane of Sao Paulo and all of Brazil in 1990. He was been appointed by Paul VI and later confirmed by John Paul II as the only Oriental Catholic member in the committee of the Catholic-Orthodox Theological dialogue. Archbishop Muallem has been active in many interfaith initiatives, including participating at the first International Christian-Jewish Conference in 1994. He was appointed Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Galilee in 1998 and has published over 40 books in Arabic and Portuguese.

**Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Austria**

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn is an Austrian Cardinal of the Catholic Church and theologian. He currently serves as the Archbishop of Vienna and President of the Austrian Bishops Conference. He was elevated to the cardinalate in 1998. Cardinal Schönborn is active in dialogue with the Orthodox Churches and has a keen interest in Jewish-Christian relations. He is an original thinker and often expresses fresh views on important public issues.

**Cardinal Telesphore Placidus Toppo**

Telesphore Placidus Toppo is a Cardinal Priest and Archbishop of Ranchi in the Roman Catholic Church. He is the first Adivasi Indian to be created a Cardinal. Born the 8th of 10 children, Toppo studied at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi and Theology at the Urbanianum, Rome. After a stint at Torpa, as Headmaster of St Joseph's School and Director of the Lievens Vocational Center, Toppo was ordained bishop for the diocese of Dumka and soon transferred to Ranchi as Archbishop. Toppo was made Cardinal by Pope John Paul II on 21 October 2003. He is the former president of CBCI (Catholic Bishops' Conference of India).

**Abbot Primate Notker Wolf OSB, Italy**

Dr. Notker Wolf OSB is Titular head and first representative of the Benedictine Order, which consists of monasteries throughout the world of 8,500 men and 16,500 women. He is the Abbot of the Primatial Abbey of Sant'Anselmo, Rome and Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical College of Sant'Anselmo, Rome.





## LEADERS OF RELIGIONS OF INDIA



### **Swami Agnivesh, India**

Swami Agnivesh is the president of the World Council of Arya Samaj "Society of Nobles", a Hindu reform movement, founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 1875. He is also Chairperson of United Nations Trust Fund, President of World Council of Arya Samaj and Chairperson of Bonded Labour Liberation Front. Among Swami Agnivesh's immense contributions is his championing of dialogue and peace activities, the anti-caste movement, liberation of bonded labour activities, a movement against alcoholism, and equal rights of women (such as their right to education and reading Indian scriptures).



### **Swami Amarananda, Switzerland**

Swami Amarananda is the Director of the Centre Védantique in Geneva. Shortly after receiving a Civil Engineering degree, he joined the Order of Ramakrishna in 1966. He sat on the Committee of World Faiths Development Dialogue (1998-2000), and the Inter-religious Platform, Geneva since its inception. Swami Amarananda participated in European peace meetings under the auspices of Sant'Egidio and the Third and Fourth and Fifth Parliaments of World's Religions.

His printed works include Stories from Vedanta, Views from the Vedantic Window (in press), drama texts for use by children, and Biographie de Ramakrishna (co-author).

**Mata Amritanandamayi, India**

Amma, as she is known all over the world today, has inspired and started innumerable humanitarian services. She has earned international recognition for her outstanding contributions to the world community. She is recognized as an extraordinary spiritual leader by the United Nations and by people all over the world.

**Swami Atmapriyananda, India**

Hindu leader, Swami Atmapriyananda is the Vice Chancellor of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University. Before becoming a monk, he completed his PhD in the Department of Theoretical Physics, University of Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Inspired by the ideal of renunciation and service as taught by Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, he joined as a Brahmacharin at Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, Belur Math, the Headquarters of the worldwide organization, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

**Shrivatsa Goswami, India**

Acharya Sri Shrivatsa Goswami is a member of an eminent family of spiritual leaders and scholars at Sri Radharamana Mandir, Vrindaban. His writings have been published by the University presses of Princeton, Berkeley and others. Among other commitments, he is connected with several important international peace and environmental movements.

**Sister Jayanti, UK**

Sister Jayanti is the European Director of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University and their NGO Representative to the United Nations, Geneva. She has been an emissary for peace for over 40 years, travelling extensively as a speaker and broadcaster. She has contributed to the interfaith movement for over 35 years, presenting at many events including the Parliament of the World's Religions and most recently at the Durban Interfaith Rally on Climate Justice held at the start of COP17.

**Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, India**

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has inspired numerous educational and charitable organizations around the globe. He established the Art of Living Foundation in 1982 to promote self-development and health-related educational programs, many of which feature his Sudarshan Kriya technique. To date, his programs have been enjoyed by more than a million people in more than 100 countries. Sri Sri Ravi Sankar has served on the advisory board of Yale University's School of Divinity and chaired the International Conference of Religions at Kyoto, Japan.

**Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh, England**

A civil engineer by profession, Mohinder Singh is the chairman of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha in Birmingham, England. A strong proponent of interreligious dialogue, Singh is a member of the European Council of Religious Leaders and an advisor to the Sikh Heritage Trust.



### **Chandra Swami, India**

In 1947, Chandra Swami was initiated into the Usadin order by Mahant Girdhari Dassji. At the age of 35, he had the ultimate and integral realization of the Divine. In time he became a well-respected yogi in India and abroad. He wrote various books on Hinduism, such as "The Practical Approach to Divinity." Even while observing complete silence for 13 years, he inspires people all over the world through his visits and written guidance.



### **Jagadguru Karmayogi Charukeerty Bhattarak Swamiji, India**

H.H. Swamiji is the present pontiff of the world renowned Jain Shravanabelagola Math. He studied Jain Philosophy in Prakrit, Sanskrit and Kannada and has an M.A. in History (Mysore University) and an M.A. in Philosophy (Bangalore University). H.H. Swamiji became a Jain Monk on December 12th, 1969 and ascended the Dharmacharya Peetha at Shravanabelagola Math on April 19th, 1970. He moved on to become the Chairman of The Managing Committee of Shravanabelagola Shrine.



### **Sugunendra Theertha Swamiji, India**

His Holiness Sri Sri Sugunendra Theertha Swamiji is the youngest Swamiji ever to ascend the Paryaaya Peetam in Udupi and the author of many books on religion and philosophy. The Swamiji has set up a world-wide Maadhwa Sangha for the propagation of spirituality named Vishwa Maadhwa Sangha. He is dedicated to the eradication of unemployment and has founded "Suyoga," an institution that imparts training in the rudiments of selected vocations.



## **JEWISH LEADERS**



#### **Chief Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, Israel**

In 1975, Rabbi Bakshi-Doron was appointed to the position of Chief Rabbi of Haifa, a position in which he served for 18 years, and in 1993, was appointed Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel. He has written dozens of articles dealing with religious issues. His first book (1982) researches halachic questions, and the second (1989) and third (1995) volumes deal with daily halachic issues and include orations given by him on special occasions. He serves as president of the Israeli Sephardic Community Committee, as president of various charity foundations and is a member of the directorate of LIBI.



#### **Chief Rabbi Gilles Bernheim, France**

Rabbi Bernheim has been serving as chief rabbi of France since 2008 and before then was head rabbi at the Great Synagogue de la Victoire, the largest synagogue in Paris. He currently chairs the Committee on Medical Ethics at the Consistory of Paris and is also vice-president of the Jewish-Christian Friendship of France. Bernheim is well known for building bridges between Jews and other communities and religions, and is greatly respected for his writings on the topic.



#### **Chief Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, Israel**

Rabbi Cohen serves as Chief Rabbi of Haifa. He is also the Founder and President of Ariel and President of the Haifa District Rabbinical Courts. Rabbi Cohen has achieved wide recognition for his work in bridging differences and solving internal divisions within Israeli society and the Jewish world.



#### **Chief Rabbi Menachem HaCohen, Romania**

Rabbi Menachem HaCohen currently serves as chief Rabbi of Romania. His rich rabbinic and public career includes many years in army chaplaincy, and service as a Rabbi of labor unions as well as of the labor settlements in Israel. A prolific writer and educator, Rabbi HaCohen also served for 14 years as a member of the Israeli parliament.



#### **Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar, Russia**

Rabbi Berel Lazar was elected Chief Rabbi of Russia in 2000. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Rabbinical Council of the World Congress of Russian Jewry and Chairman of the Rabbinical Alliance of the CIS. Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar opened Russia's first Jewish, post-communist day school and currently oversees 80 educational institutions. He is a leading advocate of religious freedom and human rights in Russia.



#### **Rabbi Michael Melchior, Israel**

Since 1980, Rabbi Michael Melchior has held the position of Chief Rabbi of Norway. He is the International Director of the Elie Wiesel Foundation as well as an administrator of various human rights, immigration and educational organizations. Since 1996, Rabbi Melchior has served as Chairman of Meimad, a Modern-Orthodox political party in Israel. He was elected to the Israeli Parliament in May 1999. Rabbi Melchior has received the Norwegian Nobel Institute's Prize for Tolerance and Bridge-Building.

**Rabbi Mordechai Peron, Israel**

Rabbi Mordechai Peron served in the IDF since its conception in 1948. From 1971-77 he served as the Chief Rabbi of the IDF. Rabbi Peron served for 12 years as the Chief Rabbi of Zurich. He is the author of numerous books and publications on Judaism. Rabbi Peron is a member of the steering committee of the President and Prime Minister's Memorial Council to commemorate former Israeli Prime Ministers and Presidents.

**Rabbi David Rosen, Israel**

Rabbi Dr. David Rosen, the former Chief Rabbi of Ireland, is the International Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee and Director of AJC's Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding. He also serves as the Honorary Advisor on Interreligious Affairs to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. From 2005 – 2009 he served as Chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) that represents World Jewry to other world religions. Rabbi Rosen is a Co-President of Religions for Peace (WCRP), the all-encompassing world interfaith body and a Past President and current Honorary President of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ). In 2005 he was knighted by the Pope for his contribution to Catholic-Jewish reconciliation, and in 2010 he was awarded a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) by Queen Elizabeth II.

**Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, England**

Rabbi Dr. Sacks has been Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth since September 1, 1991. Prior to becoming Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Sacks had been Principal of Jews' College, London, the world's oldest rabbinical seminary, as well as rabbi of the Golders Green and Marble Arch Synagogues in London. He gained rabbinic ordination from Jews' College as well as from London's Yeshiva Etz Chaim.

**Chief Rabbi Rene Sirat, France**

Chief Rabbi Rene Sirat holds a PhD in Hebrew Language and Literature. He has taught at the Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations at the University of Paris and served as Chief Rabbi of France from 1981-87. He is currently Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory and Vice Chairperson of the Conference of European Rabbis. He is involved in interfaith teaching and research, through a variety of academic institutes of which he is president.

**Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, The Netherlands**

Sjalom Awraham Soetendorp is Rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Community in The Hague. He presides over the European Region of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and serves as Earth Charter Commissioner and is a Founding Board Member of the Green Cross International. Since 1993, Soetendorp has been co-chair of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders with Sheikh Ahmed Kuftaro, Grand Mufti of Syria. He acts as advisor to the American Jewish World Service and is the Founder and Chair of the Hope Foundation for Children for Universal Education.

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## IJCIC

### **The International Jewish Committee On Interreligious Consultation (IJCIC)**

The International Jewish Committee On Interreligious Consultation represents the major Jewish religious streams and communal agencies, develops and coordinates relations with the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, the Orthodox Church and other international central religious bodies. IJCIC provides ongoing consultations, promotes and participates in conferences, forums and dialogues on behalf of world Jewry to promote interfaith cooperation and to develop common agendas among religious communities.



**MUSLIM LEADERS**

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#### **Sheikh Muhammad Nur Abdallah, USA**

Sheikh Mohammed Nur Abdullah, Imam and director for the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis, came to the United States from Sudan in 1978. Sheikh Nur Abdullah is the past chairman of the ISNA Fiqh Council and has been a member of the Fiqh Council of North America since 1982. Sheikh Muhammad Nur Abdullah now lives in St. Louis, Missouri, and is currently the President of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).



#### **Imam Plemon El Amin, USA**

Imam El Amin has served for the past 24 years as the Resident Imam of the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam. He worked closely as an aide and supporter of Imam W. Deen Mohammed and his Ministry for 33 years and takes his place on the EBWRL following the latter's death in 2008. Imam El Amin holds a PhD from Harvard University. His insightful and hands-on approach to leadership has helped develop the Atlanta Masjid into one of the largest and most progressive Muslim communities in the US.



#### **Dr. Y. Mossa Basha, USA**

Dr. Basha is the current Chairman of the Muslim American Coalition. He was the former Chairman of the American Muslim Council (AMC), a national non-profit organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C. His accolades also include Board Member of the Board of Governors for the Arab American Institute, President of the Islamic Medical Association- Midwest Region, and former President of the Cultural Association of Franklin, Michigan.



#### **Dr. Mustafa Ceric, Bosnia**

Dr. Mustafa Ceric is the Reis-ul-Ulema - President of the Council of Ulema in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He graduated from Al-Azhar University in Cairo and afterwards accepted the position of Imam at the Islamic Cultural Center in the United States. During his tenure at the Center, he earned a Ph.D. in Islamic Theology at the University of Chicago. In 1987, he returned to his homeland and became a practicing Imam in a learning center in Zabreb.



#### **Dr. Muzaffar Iqbal, USA**

Dr. Iqbal is the founder-president of Center for Islam and Science, Canada, and editor of Islam & Science, a semi-annual journal of Islamic perspectives on science and civilization. Born in Lahore, Pakistan, he has lived in Canada since 1979. He holds a Ph.D. in chemistry (University of Saskatchewan, Canada, 1983), but most of his published work is related to Islam and various aspects of Islamic civilization, including the Islamic scientific tradition.



#### **Moulana Umer Ahmed Ilyasi, India**

Moulana Umer Ilyasi is the President of the All-India Association of Imams and Mosques, which represents more than half a million Imams and 150 million Muslims, the world's second largest Muslim population. He travels widely, meeting people belonging to all shades of opinion and denominations. His open-minded and flexible approach has earned him goodwill around the world. He is a strong believer in dialogue.

**Sheikh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, USA**

A prominent scholar of traditional Islam, Shaykh Kabbani has spent his life spreading the teachings of peace, tolerance, respect and love that are the message of Islam. He is the Founder and Chairman

of the Islamic Supreme Council of America, the Chairman of American Muslim Assistance relief organization, the Founder of Kamilat, an international Muslim women's organization, the Chairman of the As-Sunnah Foundation of America, and the Founder of Muslim Magazine, a top-rated Islamic newsmagazine.

**Dr. Wahiduddin Khan, USA**

Dr. Wahiduddin Khan devotes his life to presenting Islamic teachings in the style and language of the present day. He is the author of some two hundred books in India and abroad. Dr. Wahiduddin Khan is

also founder of the Islamic Centre, India's vanguard Urdu Islamic Institution, which has done much to awaken in Muslims a new awareness of their religion and social responsibilities.

**Chief Khadi Ahmed Natour, Israel**

Ahmad Natour is the President of Israel's High Shari'a Court of Appeal (Chief Kadi). He also serves as an adjunct Professor of Law at Haifa University.

In addition to earning two law degrees at Tel Aviv University, Kadi Natour is a doctoral candidate at the American University of Washington, D.C. He also has two certifications in "Family Mediation" and "Independent Judiciary and the Rule of Law".

**Sayyed Jawad al-Khoei, England**

After the first Gulf War, and following the tragic death of his grandfather, Sayyed Jawad was forced to leave Iraq due to the political unrest and the constant dangers that he and his family faced. He

has studied Shi'a Islamic theology at Al-Kadhem University in Qum, Iran. At present, Sayyed Jawad dedicates most of his time between the United Kingdom and Iraq carrying on the work of his father and grandfather and fulfilling his responsibilities as Assistant Secretary-General of the Al-Khoei Foundation.

**Dr. Adamou Ndam Njoya, Cameroon**

Dr. Adamou Ndam Njoya currently serves as Minister Plenipotentiary in Cameroon's government and President of the Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU) political party. From 1994 to 1999, he served

as President of the World Conference on Religion and Peace and currently holds a position the organization's International Governing Board. He has published several academic books, articles, poems and four novels.

**Imam Dr. Abduljalil Sajid, UK**

Imam Sajid is the Chairman of Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony (MCRRH) and one of the founders of the Muslim Council of Britain, the largest umbrella organisation of Muslims in the

UK. Imam Sajid also serves as President of the UK Chapter of the World Conference of Religion for Peace, the Deputy President of European World Conference of Religion and Peace, President of the National Association of British Pakistanis and a member of the Central Working Committee of the Muslim Council of Britain.

**Muhammad Suheyl Umar**

Muhammad Suheyl Umar is the Director of Iqbal Academy Pakistan and his area of specialty and interests include Sufism as well as the thought of Muhammad Iqbal and the intellectual history of the Indian subcontinent from Shah Waliullah to Iqbal. He is the Founder-Editor of Riwayat, a scholarly Urdu journal; Editor, Iqbal Review, a quarterly journal, published alternately in Urdu and English (as well as in Persian, Arabic and Turkish) focusing on Iqbal studies in addition to Islamic Studies, Comparative Religion, Philosophy, Literature, History, Arts and Sociology.

**Dr. Ahmed Taoufiq, Morocco**

Dr. Ahmed Taoufiq is Morocco's Minister of Habous (endowments) and Islamic Affairs. He has served as the Director of both Morocco's Institute of African Studies and the Generale Library. He is a renowned historian, focusing on nineteenth century Moroccan society, as well as a certified archaeologist. Dr. Taoufiq is also a distinguished poet, having published several works in tandem with Jarat Abi Mussa.

**ADDITIONAL  
PARTICIPANTS**

**Archbishop Aram Ateshian**

Archbishop Aram Ateshian is ordained as a priest in 1976 and bishop in 1999. He is elected in 2010 as a General Vicar of Armenian Patriarchate by General Religious Council of Turkey. He has studied theology in Armenian Seminary school of Jerusalem. Bishop Ateshian represents Patriarch Mesrob who for health reasons is no longer able to execute his responsibilities.

**Bishop Gali Bali, India**

Bishop Bali is the Bishop of Gundur, India. He holds a doctoral degree in Theology. Prior to his Episcopal ordination in 1984, Bishop Bali was a Professor of Sacred Scriptures in St. John's Regional Seminary in Hyderabad. He is a published author on the Church's place in India. The Bishop is presently the Chairman of the CBCI Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue and Desk for Ecumenism. Bishop Bali represents Cardinal Toppo at the present meeting.

**The Revd Charlotte Bannister-Parker, England**

The Revd Charlotte Bannister-Parker is the Bishop of Oxford's Adviser for Overseas Programmes and Associate Priest at the University Church, St Mary the Virgin. She is also the UK Chair of the Children's Radio Foundation, Trustee of The International Interfaith Centre and an Associate Faculty Member of the Theology Department at Oxford University. The Revd co-founded the charity Learning for Life which funds schools and education projects in India and Pakistan. She also founded the annual inter-faith "Friendship Walk" in Oxford and the annual seminar "One Earth, Many Faiths".

**Rabbi David Bigman, Israel**

Rabbi David Bigman is the head of the Maale Gilboa Yeshiva since 1995. Rabbi Bigman studied in Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and in Yeshivat Netzech Yisrael and received smicha at Mechon Ariel in Haifa. From 1983 until 1988, Rabbi Bigman served as the Rabbi of Kibbutz Maale Gilboa and from 1987 until 1992 he served as Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshivat haKibbutz HaDati Ein Tzurim. He is active in issues pertaining to society and halacha, and in dialogue between secular and religious Israelis as well as between members of different faiths in Israel.

**William Charlton, England**

William Charlton is the author of three books on the philosophy of religion and co-author of a book on religious responses to the Industrial Revolution. He has taught philosophy at the Universities of Trinity College, Dublin, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Edinburgh and Bucharest, and his is a Knight of Honour of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Malta.

**Rabbi Moshe Freedman, UK**

Rabbi Freedman received his Bachelors degree in Medical Electronics from the University of Liverpool and Masters and PhD in Medical Physics from the University of Surrey. Then he spent five years at David Shapell College of Jewish Studies/Yeshivat Darche Noam in Jerusalem, and gained rabbinic ordination from HaRav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg. Rabbi Freedman joined Northwood United Synagogue shortly before Pesach 2009 and is involved in a variety of interfaith activities including the Catholic-Jewish relations sub-committee of the Catholic Bishops Conference.

**Sister Maureen Goodman, UK**

Sister Maureen is the Programme Director of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, UK and the Brahma Kumaris NGO representative to the UN in Vienna. She has served on several committees for interreligious dialogue including the World Congress of Faiths Executive and the Prince's Trust Forum of Faiths. She travels widely conducting seminars and lectures on spiritual development.

**Rabbi Yuval Cherlow, Israel**

Rabbi Yuval Cherlow (1957) is head of the Chesder Yeshiva of Petach Tikvah. He is a graduate of Yeshivat Har Etzion and was ordained as a Rabbi by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. Rabbi Cherlow is one of the founders and leaders of the Tzohar Institute, set up after the assassination of Yitzchak Rabin to bridge the secular and religious sectors of Israeli society. Tzohar set itself the goal of returning the figure of the Rabbi to the centre of Israeli discourse, and making the Rabbi the one to whom anyone can turn; bringing him 'out of the Beit Midrash and making him available to the mainstream of Israeli society'. He currently serves as the head of the Religious and Ethics Centre in Jerusalem.

**H.H. Pujya Swami, Chidananda Saraswatiji, India**

Pujya Swamiji is President and Spiritual Head of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, one of the largest spiritual institutions in India. He is founder/chairman of India Heritage Research Foundation (IHRF), an international, non-profit, humanitarian foundation which runs and sponsors free schools, women's vocational training programs, a medical clinic, orphanages/gurukuls, free medical health camps, "Clean, Green and Serene" programs, organic gardening programs, Cow-Care programs, an extensive rural development program, and innumerable other projects, including the first ever Encyclopaedia of Hinduism as well as ashrams and medical clinics in Tibet. He has contributed to numerous international, inter-faith summits, including the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the UN, the World Economic Forum and dialogues initiated by the Vatican.

**Alessandra Gerolin, Italy**

Alessandra Gerolin belongs to the ecclesial movement Communion and Liberation. She is research fellow in Philosophy at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan (Faculty of Education) from which she received a doctoral degree. She is the scientific secretary of the Atheneum Centre for the social doctrine of the Church based at the Catholic University. She is author of three books and a series of articles. She is member of the editorial board of two journals of philosophy and theology: "Philosophical News", and "Radical Orthodoxy: Theology, Philosophy, Politics".

**Br. Thomas Josef Goetz, Germany**

Br. Josef Thomas Josef Goetz OSB is the former Secretary of the German Commission of MID - Monastic Interreligious Dialogue. He is member of the Board of the European-Network for Buddhist-Christian studies ([www.buddhist-chritian-studies.org](http://www.buddhist-chritian-studies.org)) and of the Board of the Institute Occurso ([www.occurso.de](http://www.occurso.de)) for the Dialogue of Religions. As a Benedictine monk, he has spent 30 years engaged in monastic interreligious dialogue ([www.dimmid.org](http://www.dimmid.org)). He studied mathematics, physics in Munich and Catholic Theology in France and has published in Buddhist-Christian Dialogue. He is a former co-Principal and is still a teacher and the Head of the Administration of the Archabbey of St.Ottilien. Br. Goetz represents Board member Abbot Notker.

**Katharine Henderson, U.S.A.**

The Rev. Dr. Katharine Rhodes Henderson is President of Auburn Seminary, New York, a think-tank that combines research, education, media and movement building. Author of *God's Troublemakers: How Women of Faith are Changing the World* (Continuum, 2006), Henderson has pioneered programs for excellence in religious and progressive moral leadership in the public square. She is a bridge-builder between the Christian, Jewish and Muslim world and is particularly involved in debates around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She has spearheaded innovative educational programs including gathering young leaders from war-torn countries to practice conflict resolution and multifaith understanding (Face to Face/Faith to Faith). Henderson is a regular contributor to *The Washington Post's* "On Faith" forum and has appeared in outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Crain's New York Business*, and *NPR's On the Media*.

**Dimitra Koukoura, Greece**

Professor Dimitra Koukoura was appointed lecturer on Homiletics and Communication at "Aristotle" University of Thessaloniki in 1993 and was the first and only woman in the Department of Theology.

She currently teaches Homiletics and Church Communication, Rhetorics, Introduction to Theology and Women's Issues. She has published seven books and numerous articles in multiple languages. She has been involved in the ecumenical movement for the 25 last years, attending the three last WCC Assemblies, representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate and she is a member of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission and F&O Standing Commission and member of the Commission Churches in Dialogue - CEC (2004-2009). She represents the WCC on the steering committee of Global Christian Forum. She is fluent in English, French and Italian and understands Spanish and Russian.

**His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas Lulias, USA**

His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas (Lulias) of Dardanellia was the inaugural Metropolitan of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia and is now serving as Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras

Orthodox Institute. Metropolitan Nikitas Lulias is the permanent representative of Patriarch Bartholomew to the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders.

**Alison Murdoch**

Alison Murdoch is the founding Director of the Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom, an educational NGO under the patronage of HH The Dalai Lama. She is also a Board member of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, a network of 160+ Tibetan Buddhist centres worldwide. She is passionate about finding fresh and contemporary ways to share the essence of the Buddha's teachings, especially with secular audiences and young people.

**The Very Reverend June Osborne, England**

June Osborne is the Dean of Salisbury and as such she is the most senior woman in the Church of England, the senior priest of the Salisbury Diocese and responsible for Salisbury Cathedral. She has previously worked in parishes in some of the poorest urban areas of London and Birmingham and spent many years in different roles in the Church of England's General Synod. She currently takes a particular interest in the Episcopal Church of the Sudan where she has responsibility for training their deans. She is married to a barrister and has two children who are both at Oxford University.

**Gilla Rosen, Israel**

Gilla Rosen is Dean of the Yakar Centers for Tradition and Creativity in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Founded in England by Rabbi Michael Rosen, Yakar is a place to pray and study with passion and openness and to engage in social action. Gilla directs study programs and teaches Talmud and Midrash at Yakar and Nishmat, a center for women's advanced study, and she also works as a Yoetzet Halakha (advisor in Jewish family law). She lives in Jerusalem with her children and grandchildren.

**Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Ph.D**

Sadhvi Bhagawati, who has a Ph.D in psychology, took official vows of renunciation in 2000, from her guru Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji Maharaj. She teaches meditation to seekers from every corner of the globe and also counsels people who come looking for answers and guidance. Furthermore, Sadhvi Bhagawati is the International Director of Youth Education Services, a charitable program that sponsors and runs free schools, women's vocational training programs and orphanages/gurukuls in India, and the Managing Editor for the Encyclopedia of Hinduism.

**Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, England**

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg is Rabbi of the New North London Synagogue and Senior Rabbi of The Assembly of Masorti Synagogues UK. He is a leading writer and thinker on Judaism. Rabbi Wittenberg is the author of *The Three Pillars of Judaism*, *The Eternal Journey: Meditations on the Jewish Year*, and *The Silence of Dark Water: An Inner Journey*.



## PAST PARTICIPANTS AND BOARD MEMBERS



### **Sheikh Mohammed Mohammed Ali, UK**

Sheikh Mohammed Ali is a Shiite scholar of Islamic theology and history and mechanical engineer by training, holding BSc, MA, and Phd degrees. He is a member and leader of the National Consensus Alliance, the Iraqi Reconstruction Group, Forum 2020, and other NGOs. An Iraqi by birth and frequent visitor to Iraq, he is currently a resident of the United Kingdom. He has lectured in conferences around the world and has vast experience within UN agencies in New York and Geneva. Sheikh Ali is a human rights activist.



### **Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, Israel**

Sefardi Chief Rabbi, Shlomo Amar was born in Morocco in 1948 and immigrated to Israel in 1962. A close associate of the Shas Party's spiritual leader and former Chief Rabbi Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Rabbi Amar served as head of the Petah Tikva Rabbinical Court. In March 2002, he was elected chief rabbi of Tel-Aviv, the first sole chief rabbi of the city. Rabbi Amar was sent by then Interior Minister Eli Yishai to Ethiopia to meet with the Falash Mura community there. In 2003, Rabbi Amar was appointed Chief Rabbi of Israel.



### **Rabbi Joseph Azran, Israel**

Rabbi Joseph Azran is the Chief Rabbi of Rishon Lezion. He is also a member of the Chief Rabbinate's permanent dialogue commission with the Vatican and member of the Paris Beth Din. Rabbi Azran served as a Member of Parliament from the religious party Shas in the Israeli Knesset for two terms, and held the role of Deputy Speaker of the Knesset during one term.





**Dr. Muhammad Zaki Badawi, UK**

Shaikh Mohammed Aboulkhair Zaki Badawi KBE was a prominent Egyptian Islamic scholar, community activist, and promoter of interfaith dialogue. He was the principal of the Muslim College in London, which he founded in 1986. He was a frequent writer and broadcaster on Islamic affairs, and was made an honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire (KBE) in 2004. Badawi was also appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Order of Francis I in recognition of his interfaith work. Dr. Badawi passed away in 2006.



**Rabbi Dr. Naftali Brawer, England**

Rabbi Brawer is the rabbi of Northwood United Synagogue and serves on the Chief Rabbi of England's cabinet with responsibility for Jewish-Muslim relations. He is a regular columnist for the Jewish Chronicle and a broadcaster on the BBC. Rabbi Brawer is an honorary research fellow and lecturer at the London School of Jewish Studies where he teaches applied ethics. He holds a PhD in Hebrew and Jewish Studies from University College London.



**Archbishop Dr. Elias Chacour, Israel**

Archbishop Dr. Elias Chacour currently serves as Archbishop of Akko, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. He is vice president of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, and the founder of the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Northern Israel. Archbishop Chacour is the recipient of the prestigious World Methodist Peace Award and the Niwano Peace Prize.



**Jalal Hatami, Israel**

Jalal Hatami was appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the Bahá'í International Community in August 2008. He is resident at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel and his primary focus is the relationship with governmental authorities and civil society in Israel. While living in the United States, Mr. Hatami served on various regional and local Bahá'í institutions there. In 2005, he was invited to serve at the World Centre as Director of the Office of Social and Economic Development, a position he held until his current appointment.



**Judith Hertz, USA**

Judith Hertz serves on the International Council of Presidents of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, as well as on the Executive Committee for the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East. She is an active member of the Jewish Reform Movement and within the organization, she co-chairs the Commission on Interreligious Affairs, serves on the Commission for Social Action and the Board of Directors of Women of Reform Judaism.



**H.H. Dadi Janki, India**

Dadi Janki is Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumari movement. She has traveled to the Brahma Kumaris centers in all 70 countries. For about four months each year she lives in Mt. Abu at the University's world headquarters and for the other eight months she works out of its International Coordinating Office in London. Even now at the age of 90, Dadi Janki refuses to set limits and boundaries as to what is achievable.

**H.H. Shri Shrikant Jichkar, India**

Dr. Shrikant Jichkar holds 20 post-graduate University degrees. In 1980, as the youngest member ever, he was elected Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and subsequently became a powerful Minister with fourteen portfolios. Jichkar has served as a Member of the Indian Parliament (MP) and is President of the Marathi Encyclopedia Production Board. He is one of the great ritualists in India and an Agnihotri, one who continuously maintains the three sacred Vedic fires.

**Rabbi Daniel Kohn, Israel**

Rabbi Kohn is the rabbi of Bat Ayin, an orthodox Hassidic village in the Judean Mountains. Over the past 20 years he has taught hundreds of students, combining the world of Torah learning, Jewish mysticism and deep psychological insight, and has culled and developed effective techniques for personal and spiritual renewal. He is trained as a narrative therapist and life coach and teaches in various yeshivot and rabbinical programs.

**Albert Lincoln, Israel**

Albert Lincoln serves as the Secretary-General of the Bahá'í International Community in Haifa, Israel. He was appointed to this position by the international governing body, the Universal House of Justice, in October 1994. Mr. Lincoln served for 17 years as chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer of the national governing bodies of the Bahá'í communities where he lived, provided legal advice and representation to many Bahá'í institutions on the continent, and represented the Bahá'í International Community at numerous international conferences and seminars in Africa and Europe.

**Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick, USA**

Cardinal McCarrick is an eminent leader in the Catholic Church and a distinguished human rights advocate. He serves as Chairman of the Domestic Policy Committee for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and is a founding member of the Papal Foundation. In December 2000, he was awarded the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights by President George W. Bush. In February 2001, Archbishop McCarrick was elevated to the College of Cardinals. Cardinal McCarrick retired from the EBWRL in 2009.

**W. Dean Mohammad, USA**

Imam W. Dean Mohammad is a tireless laborer for the interests of peace and justice in our world. He has worked for and realized direct and genuine dialogue between people of all races and religions. Outdistancing the purveyors of narrow race concerns, Imam Mohammed's leadership continues to build upon a solid religious foundation with concrete plans for the strengthening of families and communities. W. Dean Mohammad passed away in 2008.

**H.H. Sri Rishi Prabhakarji, India**

Well versed in both Eastern and Western philosophies, Guruji Sri Rishi Prabhakar is a silent meditator with a large number of disciples. His fundamental instruction 'Siddha Samadhi Yoga,' (SSY) is made available to thousands of people around India by teachers trained by him. Rishi Prabhakar is currently involved with development in Karnataka and has been successful in eliminating tobacco and alcohol addiction from several villages.



#### **His Eminence Paul Cardinal Shan, Taiwan**

His Eminence Paul Cardinal Shan, the Bishop of Kaohsiung since 1991, has been an active member in religious education and theological councils. He was ordained a priest in 1955 and has served as a religious educator and minister in the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan. In 1998, Shan was appointed Cardinal by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Cardinal Shan is also Chair of the Board of Trustees at Fu Jen Catholic University.



#### **Imam Muhammad Siddeeq, USA**

Imam Muhammad Siddeeq is a long time Muslim American pioneer. Professionally a biologist, medical researcher and teacher, he became Muslim under the leadership of Imam Mohammed's father, the late Hon. Elijah Muhammad. Imam Muhammad Siddeeq has held many positions in the Muslim community of the United States and has been mentor to newly converted and young Muslim men, many who have been released from prison.



#### **Rabbi Dov Singer, Israel**

Rabbi Singer represents a generation of young Israeli religious leaders, who are forging new paths in religious leadership. For the past 25 years he has been the head of a prestigious Yeshiva high school, that has trained thousands of students. He also heads the Center for Spiritual Renewal, where educators, religious leaders, psychologists and others seek to articulate novel contemporary forms of Jewish identity and spiritual experience, combining halachic aspirations with the changing needs of Israeli society.



#### **Harmoinder Singh**

S. Harmohinder Singh is reader in History at the University of Delhi. He has been teaching since 1975 and is considered an expert in Modern Indian History. Singh has been actively involved in the affairs of the Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee, which manages the historical Gurudwaras of Delhi and runs a large number of public schools, colleges, and hospitals.



#### **H.H. Swami Swatantranand**

Swami Swatantranand was born on December 15th, 1950 in Itawa Uttherpradesh (India). He completed his studies at Kanpur University in 1974. He has traveled with J.P. Narayan as a social reformer in North India and was active in establishing peace initiatives in Punjab. Swamiji has established an ashram at Rishikesh named Swatantrananda ashram. He travels all around the world giving discourses on Veda, Bhagawatam and Upanishad.



#### **His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal**

Prince El Hassan bin Talal is the youngest son of King Talal and Queen Zein El Sharaf. Prince Hassan has founded and is actively involved in a number of Jordanian and international institutes and committees, such as The Arab Thought Forum, Higher Council for Science and Technology, and the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies.

**Father MD Thomas, India**

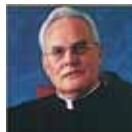
Father Thomas is the National Director of the Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue in the Catholic Bishop's Conference in India. He has worked in the area of interreligious dialogue for the past 17 years, delivering lectures worldwide. Father Thomas also has a doctorate in Hindi literature. His book, entitled "Kabeer and Christian Thought", was awarded by the Hindi Academy, Delhi. Fr. Thomas represents Cardinal Toppo at the present meeting.

**Ven. Geshe Tashi Tsering, UK**

Ven. Geshe Tashi is a Tibetan Lama who holds the Lharampa Geshse degree from Seramay Monastic University in South India. In 1991, he began a three year appointment at Nalanda Monastery in France to teach advanced level Tibetan Buddhist philosophy to Western students. Since 1994, he has been based at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre in London, where he is renowned for his ability to make philosophical teachings accessible to students. Ven. Geshe Tashi represents His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders

**Archbishop Fouad Twal, Jerusalem**

Archbishop Twal is the Roman Catholic archbishop and Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. He was ordained a priest in 1966 and was appointed the vicar of Ramallah. In 1972 he entered the Pontifical Lateran University where he studied for a doctorate in canon law. He was appointed the prelate of the territorial prelate of Tunis in May 1992 and was consecrated to the episcopate later that year. In 1995 the territorial prelate was elevated to become the Diocese of Tunis, and he was made an archbishop ad personam. In 2005 he was named the coadjutor Archbishop of Jerusalem and in 2008 he became Patriarch of Jerusalem.

**Cardinal Carlos Amigo Vallejo, Spain**

Cardinal Carlos Amigo Vallejo O.F.M. has served as Archbishop of Seville since 1982 and has been an ordained priest since 1960. He presides over the Episcopal Commission of Missions and Cooperation between the Churches in the Spanish Episcopal Conference and was previously President of the Episcopal Commission of Superior Bishops. Cardinal Vallejo is a recipient of the Favorite Son of Andalusia Award.

**Dr. Abdurrahman Wahid, Indonesia**

Abdurrahman Wahid is the former President of the Republic of Indonesia. He serves on the Board of numerous organizations dedicated to reconciliation of conflict. Some of his current positions include Rector of Darul Ulum Univeristy in East Java and President of the Non Violence Peace Movement. In 2003, Dr. Wahid was awarded the World Peace Prize Award.



**Bishop Baerbel Wartenberg-Potter, Germany**

Right Reverend Bishop Baerbel Wartenberg-Potter is the Bishop of Holstein-Luebeck, North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany. She has served as the Chairperson of the Joint Working Group of Christian Churches of Germany and the Director of the World Council of Churches' project on Women in Church and Society. Bishop Wartenberg-Potter retired from her office in 2007.



**THINK TANK  
MEMBERS**

**Awet Andemicael, U.S.A.**

Awet Andemicael researches and writes on Christian theology, primarily as it intersects with interfaith engagement, refugee studies, and music. She holds degrees from Harvard and Yale universities, and is currently pursuing doctoral study in theology and peace studies at the University of Notre Dame and Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies. She was born in Ethiopia to an Eritrean Evangelical (Lutheran) family with roots in the Eritrean/Ethiopian Orthodox Tewhado Church.

**Balwant Singh Dhillon, India**

Balwant Singh Dhillon is Head of the Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. He studied History in Rajasthan University, Jaipur, and Religious Studies in Panjabi University, Patiala. He was awarded a Doctoral degree by Guru Nanak Dev University for his thesis on The Sikh Gurus and the Mughal State. He has 25 years of teaching and research experience, and has published three books and numerous articles.

**Timothy Gianotti, USA**

Dr. Timothy J. Gianotti is a scholar of Islamic philosophy, theology, and spirituality, as well as a Muslim theologian and interfaith advocate who has served on the faculties of the University of Virginia, the University of Oregon, and Penn State University. Most recently he has served both York University and the Noor Cultural Centre (Toronto) as the Noor Chair of Islamic Studies and the Noor Fellow in Arabic & Islamic Studies. His published writings include *Al-Ghazali's Unspeakable Doctrine of the Soul* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001) and *In the Light of a Blessed Tree: Illuminations of Islamic Belief, Practice and History* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011).

**Alon Goshen-Gottstein, Israel**

Alon Goshen-Gottstein is the founder and director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute, and lecturer and director of the Center for the Study of Rabbinic Thought, Beit Morasha College, Jerusalem. Ordained a Rabbi in 1977, he holds a Ph.D. from Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the field of Rabbinic Thought. His four score publications are divided between the areas of Interreligious Dialogue, Theology of Religions, Jewish Spirituality and Rabbinic Thought.



**Maria Reis Habito, USA**

Maria Reis Habito is the International Program Director of the Museum of World Religions and the Director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute USA. She studied Chinese Language and Culture at Taiwan Normal University in Taipei, and received her M.A. in Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies and Philosophy at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet in Munich. She was a research fellow at Kyoto University and completed her Ph.D. at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet. Dr. Reis Habito represents Dharma Master Hsin Tao on the steering committee.



**Ryan McAnnally-Linz, U.S.A.**

Ryan McAnnally-Linz is a doctoral student in Theology at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. He holds an MA in Religion from Yale Divinity School. His research interests include the use of scripture in Christian theology, political theologies, eschatology, and contemporary Latin American religion.



**Stephen Butler Murray, U.S.A.**

Stephen Butler Murray is Dean of the College and Associate Professor of Theology at Barrytown College on the Hudson, the American Baptist Chaplain to Harvard University, and Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Boston, Massachusetts. In higher education, he previously served as the chaplain and on the faculty at Endicott College, Skidmore College, and Suffolk University, and in parish ministry has served as the pastor of American Baptist, Congregationalist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches in Massachusetts and New York. He received his Ph.D. in systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and is the former Managing Editor of The Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue. He has published books in the fields of the history of Christian thought and homiletics, and is editing upcoming volumes on inter-religious dialogue and God in popular culture.



**Eleanor Nesbitt, England**

Eleanor Nesbitt is Professor Emeritus (Religions and Education), in the Institute of Education, University of Warwick). Her ethnographic research has focused on the perpetuation and adaptation of Sikh, Hindu and Christian tradition. Her many publications include *Sikhism A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2005), *Intercultural Education : Ethnographic and Religious Approaches* (Sussex Academic Press, 2004) and *Interfaith Pilgrims* (Quaker Books, 2003).



#### **Anantanand Rambachan, USA**

Anantanand Rambachan is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at Saint Olaf College, Minnesota, USA, where he has been teaching since 1985. He received his M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in religion from the University of Leeds, in the United Kingdom. Prof. Rambachan is the author of several books, book-chapters and numerous articles and reviews in scholarly journals. Among these are: "Accomplishing the Accomplished: The Vedas as a Source of Valid Knowledge in Shankara", "The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Authority of the Vedas" and "The Advaita Worldview: God, World and Humanity". The British Broadcasting Corporation transmitted a series of 25 lectures by Prof. Rambachan around the world.



#### **Vanessa Rebecca Sasson, Canada**

Vanessa Sasson is a professor of Comparative Religion in the Liberal Arts Department of Marianopolis College where she has been teaching since 1999. She is also a Research Fellow in the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, and Adjunct Professor of Comparative Religion at McGill University. She directs an annual Graduate Interfaith Seminar at McGill and is the Canadian director of the Elijah Educational Network.



#### **Kurt G. Schreiber, USA**

Kurt Schreiber is the Program Director for the Center for Research on Economic Development and Information Technology (CREDIT). He serves as a member of the Elijah Interfaith Institute's Administrative Board. He received his law degree at the University of Michigan and has a Masters in Theological Studies from Vanderbilt University.



#### **Meir Sendor, USA**

Meir Sendor has been the Rabbi of the Young Israel of Sharon, MA for over two decades. He received his ordination from the Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University and his Doctorate in Medieval Jewish History from Harvard University. Rabbi Sendor has served as a visiting professor at Brandeis University, and an instructor for the Me'ah Program of Hebrew College. He lectures on medieval Jewish history, medieval Jewish philosophy and Kabbalah, the philosophy of Jewish law, the history of Jews and medicine and Jewish medical ethics, and serves on Bioethics Advisory Boards. He has written on issues in Jewish spirituality, Halakhah and Jewish history.



#### **Johann Marie Vento, USA**

Johann Marie Vento is a professor in the Department of Religious Studies and Theology at Georgian Court University. Her research interests include theologies of the body, the relationship between feminist theology and political theology, Mysticism and advocacy theologies and theologies of suffering as they relate to violence against women.





### **Miroslav Volf, USA**

Miroslav Volf is currently the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale University Divinity School and Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture. He has been a member in both the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Evangelical Church in Croatia. He is widely known for his works on systematic theology, ethics, conflict resolution, and peace-making. He studied at Evangelical-Theological Faculty, Zagreb (B.A), Fuller Theological Seminary (M.A) in Pasadena, California, and University of Tübingen (Dr. Theol., Dr. Theol. habil.), where he studied under Jürgen Moltmann. His book "Exclusion and Embrace", was selected as among the 100 best religious books of the 20th Century by Christianity Today.



for his brother what he loves for himself  
to friends whom I knew not  
a friend is more to be longed for than the light  
- unite me with God  
- comradeship, companionship  
- a true friendship



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