

Interreligious Engagement in a Global Context

*Utah Valley University Interreligious Engagement Initiative
with
The Elijah Interfaith Institute*

*November 16, 2016
Lakeview Room, Library
5:30-8:30*

Event Description

Throughout history, religion has been central to human experience. It frequently binds and unites, but is also a source of fragmentation and conflict. This paradox demands ongoing critical analysis to identify improved approaches for interreligious engagement across boundaries of different traditions. Furthermore, these efforts must be done with heightened civility and practiced diplomacy. This event brings together over thirty prominent religious leaders from around the world to engage with students and community leaders. These religious leaders identify with a variety of faith traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. They convene for the purpose of exploring models and best practices for interreligious engagement in a global context.

Participants

Swami Amarananda (Switzerland) was born in Bengal in British India. He graduated in Civil Engineering (Kolkata) in 1962, and soon came in touch with his spiritual master Swami Madhavananda. He joined the Order of Ramakrishna in 1966.

Swami Atmapriyananda (India) is Vice Chancellor of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University. Before becoming a monk, Swami Atmapriyananda completed his doctoral work at the University of Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

Yihya Mossa Basha (USA) is the current Chairman of the Muslim American Coalition. He also served as the President of the Islamic Medical Association- Midwest Region.

Jan Chozen Bays (USA) is an ordained Soto Zen priest. In 2002 she helped to found Great Vow Zen Monastery, a residential center for intensive Zen training in Clatskanie, Oregon, where she currently is the co-abbot.

Imam El Amin (USA) has served for the past 24 years as the Resident Imam of the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam. El Amin holds a PhD from Harvard University. His hands-on approach to leadership has helped develop the Atlanta Masjid into one of the largest Muslim communities in the US.

Br. Thomas Josef Goetz (Germany) is the former Secretary of the German Commission of the Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (MID). He is a member of the Board of European-Network for Buddhist-Christian studies and of the Board of the Institute Occurso for the Dialogue of Religions.

Sister Maureen Goodman (United Kingdom) is the Programme Director for the Brahma Kumaris UK and the Brahma Kumaris (BK) representative at the United Nations, Vienna. She is the Coordinator of Inner Voice Dialogues (UK and India) that explores spiritual aspects of dialogue.

Acharya Shri Shrivatsa Goswami (India) is a leading figure in the Vaishnava tradition, representing the leadership of the Bhakti (devotional) movement, in a school dating back to the 16c. figure of Chaitanya. One of the focuses of his present work is the alliance of religion and conservation.

Rabbi Arthur Green (USA) is the rector of the Rabbinical School and Irving Brudnick Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Religion at Hebrew College. He is Professor Emeritus at Brandeis University. He is a historian of Judaism and a theologian; he seeks to bridge these two fields.

Bishop Frank Griswold (USA) was elected to a nine-year term as Presiding Bishop at the 1997 General Convention. He serves as Primate and chief pastor of the Episcopal Church, president of the House of Bishops, and president of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.

Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi (India) 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.

Dimitra Koukoura (Greece) is a professor at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She has been involved in the ecumenical movement for past 28 years. She is a representative of Ecumenical Patriarchate, and is a member of the Faith and Order Plenary and Standing Commission (WCC).

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

Rabbi Richard Marker (USA) is Vice Chair of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, has been involved in interfaith matters his entire career and has been involved with the Board of World Religious Leaders since its inception. Currently he teaches at NYU.

Adamou Ndam Njoya (Cameroon) is Minister Plenipotentiary in Cameroon's government. From 1994 to 1999, he served as President of the World Conference on Religion and Peace and currently sits on its governing board.

Nazeer Ahmed (USA) is Executive Director of the American Institute of Islamic History and Culture. He also directs the World Organization for Resource Development and Education (Washington DC). He is a member of the State Knowledge Commission in Bangalore, India.

Swami Rameshwarananda Giri (Spain) established the Phi School of Yoga Vedanta and Meditation in 1993 and founded the Vedantic Centre of Valencia in 1994. He continues to head both institutions. He also president of the Interfaith Meeting Forum of Valencia.

Maria Reis Habito is the International Program Director of the Museum of World Religions and the Director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute USA.

Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh (United Kingdom) is president of "Religions for Peace." In 2010 he received the Juliet Hollister Award from the Temple of Understanding for intra- and interfaith work internationally. In 2012, he received a Papal Knighthood of St Gregory the Great from Pope Benedict XVI.

Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp (Netherlands) leads the Liberal Jewish Community in The Hague. He is co-chair of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders with Sheikh Ahmed Kuftaro, Grand Mufti of Syria. He leads the Hope Foundation for Children for Universal Education.

Jinwol Sunim (Korea) is the President of United Religions Initiative of Korea and an Executive Council Member of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, and Professor of Buddhist Studies at the Seoul Graduate School of Buddhism.

Swami Sugunendra Theertha is the youngest swamiji ever to ascend the Paryaaya Peetam in Udupi. He established a world-wide Maadhwa Sangha for the propagation of spirituality named Vishwa Maadhwa Sangha.

Muhammad Suheyf Umar (Pakistan) is the Director of Iqbal Academy Pakistan. His specialties 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 of Riwayat, a scholarly Urdu journal.

Rabbi Dr. Alon Gottstein (Israel) is the founder and director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute. He has held academic posts at Tel Aviv University and has served as director of the Center for the Study of Rabbinic Thought at Beit Morasha College in Jerusalem.

Therese Androven-Gottstein (Israel) specializes in Jewish-Christian relations with a particular focus on implications of Catholic theology following the creation of Nostra Aetate during Vatican II. She has worked with Elijah interfaith Institute since its inception.

Peta Pellach (Israel) is the Director of Educational Activities for the Elijah Interfaith Institute. She was Director of Adult Education at The Shalom Institute, University of NSW, Sydney, and was educator-in-residence at that institute.

Hogen Bays (USA) is co-abbot of Great Vow Monastery. He has practiced and taught Zen Buddhism for decades and pursues ongoing work in the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon Interfaith Outreach.

Natalee Cohen (Israel) has been associated with Elijah Interfaith Institute since 2006. In October 2015 she assumed the role of Administrator for the institute.

Brian Farr (USA) is the Chair of the North American Interfaith Network, global Chair-elect of the Rotary Action Group for Peace, Peace Committee Chair of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable. He was Chief Legal Counsel and Deputy Chief of Policy to the Governor of the State of Utah.

David Ford (UK) is Regius Professor of Divinity Emeritus in the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Selwyn College. He was founding Director of the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme and co-founder of the interfaith practice of Scriptural Reasoning.

Timothy Gianotti (Canada) is a scholar of classical Muslim thought, a contemporary Muslim theologian, and an interfaith advocate. His research reflects a fascination with the soul, especially as understood by the classical Islamic philosophical, theological, and spiritual traditions.

Tim Kelly (USA) is a retired Naval Reserve officer and employs new paradigm systems and methods designed to expedite peace where conflict persists. He has interests in the Middle East with a particular focus on resolving conflict between Palestine and Israel.

Rabbi Meir Sendor (USA) is the Spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Sharon and is a scholar of Jewish history with an emphasis on Jewish Mysticism, philosophy, and medicine. He conducts training in Jewish meditation techniques for stress reduction and personal growth.

Piotr Sikora (Poland) teaches philosophy of religion at Jesuit University “Ignatianum” in Krakow. Among his specialties is the philosophical problems of religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue. He has worked with the Elijah Interfaith Institute since 2010.

Sukhbir Singh (UK) specializes in teaching Sikh Scripture and Sikh Dharam. He is an Executive of Sangat Trust and Director of Sangat TV Ltd. He sits on the Interfaith Committee of the Universal Peace Forum and serves on the Executive Committee of the Museum of World Religions.

Jonathan Teubner (UK) is the co-director of Global Covenant Relations which works to reduce religion-related violence. He is the Associate Director of the Initiative on Religion, Politics and Conflict at the University of Virginia.

Mary Virtue (USA) is the founder of Cornerstone Consultants which provides technical expertise to nonprofits, cultural institutions, foundations, and businesses. She teaches graduate students and others how to establish marketing plans for community-base businesses and loan programs.

Norman Wolfe (USA) was ordained an Interfaith Minister in 2008 at The New Seminary of Interfaith Studies in New York City. He is founder and spiritual guide of Walking with Spirit, an interfaith community in Portland, Oregon.

Vanessa Sasson (Canada) is a professor of Comparative Religion at Marianopolis College and is a Research Fellow in the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies at the University of the Free State (South Africa). She directs an annual Graduate Interfaith Seminar at McGill University.

Sponsored by Religious Studies Program and the Center for the Study of Ethics and is part of the Interreligious Engagement Initiative at Utah Valley University; Mormon Chapter of the Foundation for Religious Diplomacy; Interfaith Student Council at Utah Valley University; Elijah Interfaith Institute