

# OUR WHOLE SOCIETY

*Identity & Common Ground in an Age of Transition*



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, April 28-30, 2019

## CONFERENCE PROGRAM 2019

Rethinking  
**IDENTITY**

**EXTREMISM** *and*  
**POLARIZATION**

**TECHNOLOGY**  
**VALUES** *and*  
**SOCIETY**

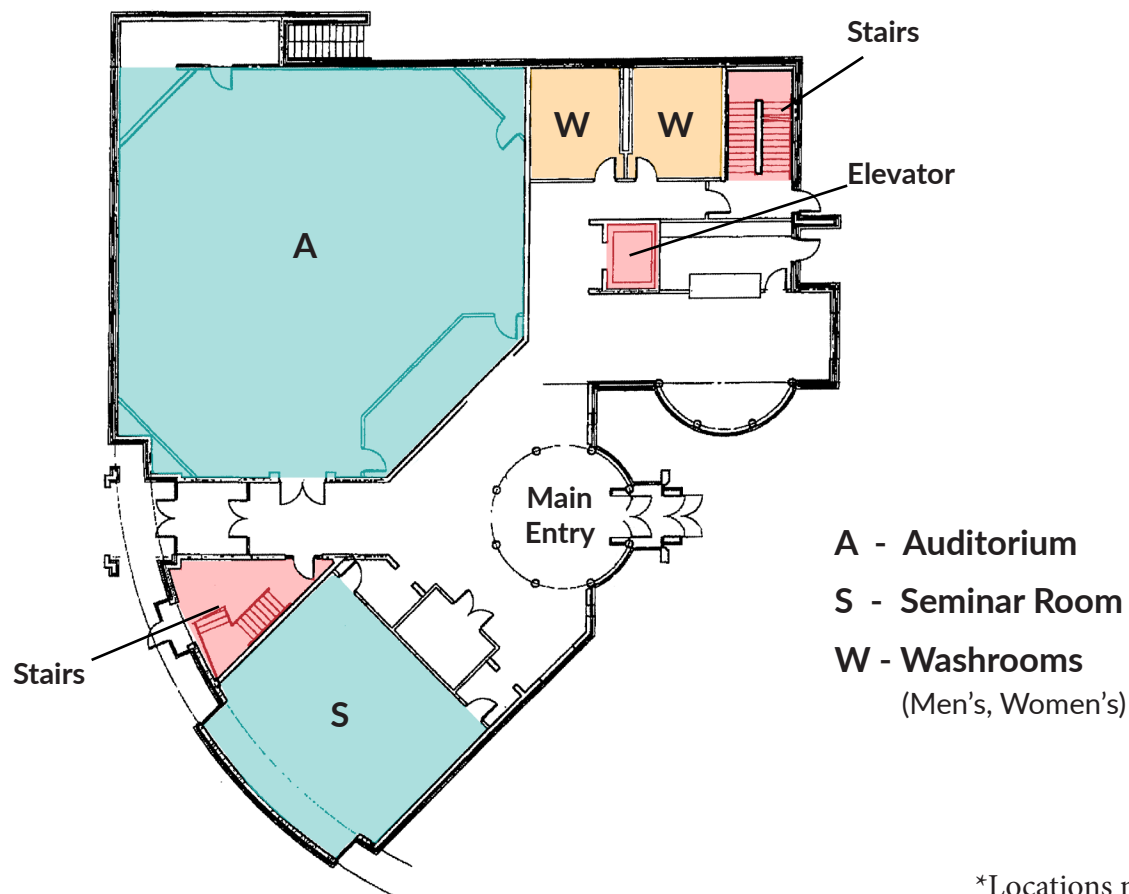
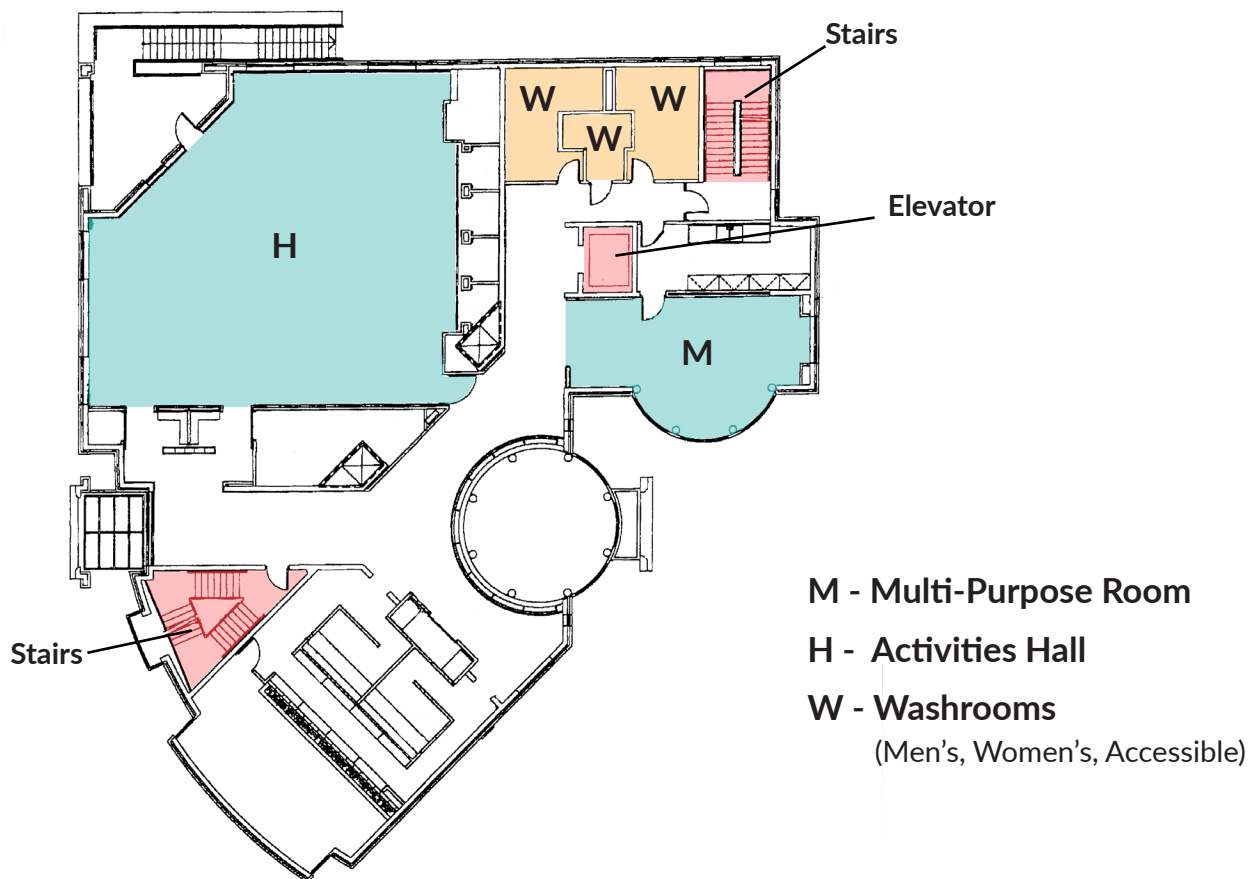


Organized by the Canadian Interfaith Conversation  
in partnership with the U of T Multi-Faith Centre.



Multi-Faith Centre  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## Multi-Faith Centre - Second Floor



\*Locations noted by letter in session titles in program.

## Multi-Faith Centre - Ground Floor



The Canadian Interfaith Conversation is pleased to host this fourth iteration of the “Our Whole Society” Conference. Our experience with the conferences held in Montreal (2013), Vancouver (2015) and Ottawa (2017) suggests that you will benefit greatly, as we have, from:

- ◆ Thought-provoking presentations that stimulate faith communities in the building of Canadian civil society
- ◆ Opportunities to connect with peers in related academic fields and/or local expressions of interfaith collaboration
- ◆ Participation in a moment that demonstrates that faith communities of all kinds – including those who profess non-religious adherence – can come together in ways that strengthen each other

We thank you for your participation in Our Whole Society and invite you to join us in our efforts to promote harmony and insight among religions and religious communities in Canada, strengthen our society’s moral foundations, and work for greater realization of the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion for the sake of the common good and an engaged citizenship.

We need one another more than ever!

Zul Kassamali, Co-Chair  
Aileen Van Ginkel, Co-Chair  
Canadian Interfaith Conversation

## PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

**Sunday, April 28, 2019**

University of St. Michael’s College, University of Toronto, Muzzo Family Alumni Hall, 121 St. Joseph Street, Toronto

**7:00-8:00PM PUBLIC LECTURE: UNITY IN DIVERSITY**

**Chair:** Dr. Gerald Filson - *Baha’i Community of Canada*  
Dr. David Novak - *Professor, University of Toronto*  
Dr. Mary Jo Leddy - *Founder, Romero House*

**8:00-9:30PM RECEPTION**

**Monday, April 29, 2019**

Multi-Faith Centre, University of Toronto, 569 Spadina Avenue, Toronto

**8:00-9:00AM REGISTRATION**

**9:00-9:15AM (A) WELCOMING REMARKS**

**9:15-10:15AM (A) PLENARY 1: RETHINKING IDENTITY**

**Chair:** Chander Khanna - *Canadian Board of Directors, Parliament of the World’s Religions*  
Nuzhat Jafri - *Executive Director, Canadian Council of Muslim Women*  
Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo - *Director of Indigenous Initiatives, University of Toronto*  
Dr. Kofi Hope - *Senior Policy Advisor, Wellesley Institute*

**10:15-11:00AM (A) KEYNOTE 1: Pluralism is a Contested Idea in Today’s World: The Continuing Threats of Populism, Nationalism, and Religious Dogmatism**

The Honourable Bob Rae - *University of Toronto, Special Envoy to Myanmar*

# PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

11:00-11:15AM BREAK

11:15-12:30PM WORKSHOP CYCLE 1

(S) From Dialogue to Institutional Change: A Theoretical Framework for Inclusion of Religious and Non-Religious Identities in Higher Education	(A) Identity, Religion, and Social Contract: Finding Common Ground Despite Competing/Conflicting Values and Priorities	(H) Interfaith is Intercultural: Naming Identity as Essential to Relationship Across Diversity	-INTERFAITH TRACK- (M) Why Work Together? Interfaith Groups Bridging Differences for the Common Good
<p><b>J. Cody Nielsen</b> Founder and Executive Director, Convergence</p> <p><b>Richard Chambers</b> OWS Steering Committee; Director of the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Toronto</p> <p><b>Chair: Dr. Aileen Van Ginkel</b> Co-Chair, Canadian Interfaith Conversation; OWS Steering Committee; V.P., Ministry Services, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada</p>	<p><b>Dr. Nadia Z. Hasan</b> Deputy Director, National Council of Canadian Muslims</p> <p><b>Dr. Shari Golberg</b> Senior Policy Advisor at OPS Diversity Office, Inclusion, Diversity, Anti-racism Division, Cabinet Office</p> <p><b>Facilitator: Ahmet Tamirci</b> National Director, Intercultural Dialogue Institute</p> <p><b>Facilitator: Muneeb Nasir</b> President, Olive Tree Foundation</p> <p><b>Chair: Peter Noteboom</b> OWS Steering Committee; General Secretary, The Canadian Council of Churches</p>	<p><b>Dr. Emo Yango</b> The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning; Canadian Baptist Ministries</p> <p><b>Maureen Scott Kabwe</b> The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning; United Church of Canada</p> <p><b>Chair: Sandra Pallin</b> OWS Steering Committee; National Director of Public Affairs, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</p>	<p><b>Nil Sendil</b> Organizer, Workers' Action Centre's \$15 and Fairness Campaign</p> <p><b>Dr. John Milloy</b> Assistant Professor of Public Ethics; Director, Centre for Public Ethics; Practitioner-in-Residence, Department of Political Science, Wilfrid Laurier University</p> <p><b>Facilitator: Danielle Yett</b> OWS Steering Committee; Animator, Canadian Interfaith Research Centre for Learning &amp; Engagement (CIRCLE)</p> <p><b>Facilitator: Barbara Boraks</b> CIRCLE Steering Committee; Executive Director, Christian Jewish Dialogue of Toronto</p> <p><b>Chair: Héctor A. Acero Ferrer</b> OWS Steering Committee; Animator, Canadian Interfaith Research Centre for Learning &amp; Engagement (CIRCLE)</p>

12:30-2:00PM

LUNCH

New College Cafeteria, Wetmore side, 40 Willcocks Street  
(Meal tickets can be found in your name badge)

2:00-3:00PM (A) PLENARY 2: ADDRESSING EXTREMISM AND POLARIZATION

**Chair: Rabbi Adam Cutler** - Toronto Board of Rabbis; Senior Rabbi, Adath Israel Congregation  
**Mustafa Farooq** - Executive Director, National Council of Canadian Muslims  
**Giuliana Natale** - Director, Inclusion and Religious Freedom, Global Affairs Canada  
**Dr. Anna Su** - Assistant Professor, University of Toronto

# PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

3:00-3:15PM BREAK

3:15-4:15PM WORKSHOP CYCLE 2

(H) Countering the Rise of Antisemitism: An Analysis and Strategy	(S) In or Out of Prison: Young People and Spirituality	(A) Addressing Religious Intolerance in Daily Life	-INTERFAITH TRACK-(M) The Urban Spiritual Commons: Beyond Interfaith
<b>Steve McDonald</b> <i>Director, Policy and Strategic Communications, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs</i>  <b>Chair: Dr. Geoffrey Cameron</b> <i>OWS Steering Committee (Chair); Director, Office of Public Affairs Baha'i Community of Canada</i>	<b>Imam Yasin Dwyer</b> <i>Silk Road Institute</i>  <b>Chaplain Kate Johnson</b> <i>Queen's University</i>  <b>Chair: Imam Abdul Hai Patel</b> <i>OWS Steering Committee; Canadian Council of Imams</i>	<b>Dr. G. Eric Jarvis</b> <i>McGill University</i>  <b>Dr. Catherine Jarvis</b> <i>McGill University</i>  <b>Dr. W. Y. Alice Chan, OCT</b> <i>Executive Director, The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy</i>  <b>Chair: Anita Bromberg</b> <i>OWS Steering Committee; Ontario Bar Association</i>	<b>Rev. Dr. Jason McKinney</b> <i>Trinity College and Anglican Diocese of Toronto</i>  <b>Michael Burt</b> <i>Making Room Community Arts</i>  <b>Chair: Dr. Ronald A. Kuipers</b> <i>CIRCLE Steering Committee; President and Associate Professor, Institute for Christian Studies</i>

4:15-4:30PM BREAK

4:30-5:30PM (A) KEYNOTE 2: What is the Relationship Between Media and Radicalization Leading to Violence?

**Dr. Solange Lefebvre** - *Research Chair for the Management of Cultural and Religious Diversity, Institute for Religious Studies, University of Montreal*

**Tuesday, April 30, 2019**

Multi-Faith Centre, University of Toronto, 569 Spadina Avenue, Toronto

9:00-9:15AM (A) WELCOMING REMARKS

9:15-10:30AM (A) PLENARY 3: TECHNOLOGY, VALUES & SOCIETY

**Chair: Sadia Zaman** - *CEO, Inspirit Foundation*  
**Dr. Tracy J. Trothen** - *Professor, Queen's University*  
**Dr. Borna Nouredin** - *Professor, BCIT*  
**Joseph Brean** - *Features Writer, National Post*

10:30-10:45AM BREAK

# PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

10:45-12:00PM WORKSHOP CYCLE 3

(S) Living Clothes, Edited Humans, and Bioweapons: What is Synthetic Biology and Where is it Headed?	(H) Autonomous Weapons Systems and Human Control	(A) Creating Media Across Difference in an Urban Middle School	-INTERFAITH TRACK-(M) A Relational Ecosystem for Peace (REP) to Integrate an "Agenda of the Heart" into Dialogue Activities
<b>Matthew Legge</b> <i>Canadian Friends Service Committee</i>  <b>Chair: Maria Simakova</b> <i>OWS Steering Committee; Commission on Faith and Witness; Secretary, Christian Interfaith Reference Group, The Canadian Council of Churches</i>	<b>Branka Marijan</b> <i>Program Officer, Project Ploughshares</i>  <b>Chair: Danielle Yett</b> <i>OWS Steering Committee; Animator, Canadian Interfaith Research Centre for Learning &amp; Engagement (CIRCLE)</i>	<b>Esther Maloney</b> <i>Director, Illumine Media Project</i>  <b>Chair: Fayyaz Ali</b> <i>OWS Steering Committee; Youth Community Educator, 1Naas</i>	<b>Dr. Patrice Brodeur</b> <i>Professor, University of Montreal</i>  <b>Brigitte Gagnon</b> <i>Consultant, PhD candidate, University of Montreal</i>  <b>Chair: Dr. Anne Pearson</b> <i>CIRCLE Steering Committee; Hamilton Interfaith Peace Group</i>

12:00-1:30PM

LUNCH

New College Cafeteria, Wetmore side, 40 Willcocks Street  
(Meal tickets can be found in your name badge)

1:30-3:00PM

(A) KEYNOTE 3: A Meaning to Life: Darwinian Existentialism

**Dr. Michael Ruse** - *Professor of Philosophy, Florida State University*

**Response: Dr. Ronald A. Kuipers** - *President and Associate Professor, Institute for Christian Studies*

3:00-3:30PM

(A) WRAP-UP

Follow along with the Our Whole Society 2019 conference and keep the conversations going with your friends and colleagues!



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SESSIONS	
Sunday, April 28, 2019	
PUBLIC LECTURE, 7:00-8:00PM	
Public Lecture - Muzzo Family Alumni Hall	<p><b>Unity in Diversity</b></p> <p><i>Speakers: Dr. David Novak, Dr. Mary Jo Leddy</i></p> <p><i>Chair: Dr. Gerald Filson</i></p>
Monday, April 29, 2019	
PLENARY 1 - RETHINKING IDENTITY, 9:15-10:15AM	
Auditorium	<p><i>Speakers: Nuzhat Jafri, Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo, Dr. Kofi Hope</i></p> <p><i>Chair: Chander Khanna</i></p> <p>We are living through uncertain times, when established ideas and institutions are under pressure from a variety of social forces. In the midst of our turbulent age, many people are rethinking the basis of our human identity. What does it mean to be human, in a society that is increasingly diverse, in flux, and shaped by new technologies? What can be done to protect human dignity and nobility? How can we find common ground: a basis of shared principles and values that can help us to navigate through rapid changes? How could these principles and values help us to heal our social divisions, address the injustices of the past, and build communities that can foster ties of solidarity, cooperation and reciprocity between many diverse people?</p>
KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1 - 10:15-11:00AM	
Auditorium	<p><b>Pluralism is a Contested Idea in Today's World: The Continuing Threats of Populism, Nationalism, and Religious Dogmatism</b></p> <p><i>Speaker: The Honourable Bob Rae</i></p>
WORKSHOP CYCLE 1 - RETHINKING IDENTITY, 11:15-12:30PM	
Workshop 1.1 - Seminar Room	<p><b>From Dialogue to Institutional Change: A Theoretical Framework for Inclusion of Religious and Non-Religious Identities in Higher Education</b></p> <p><i>Facilitators: J. Cody Nielsen, Richard Chambers</i></p> <p>Higher education has been somewhat responsible for work toward reconciliation, the inclusion of GBTLQIA identities, and the promotion of women in society. Higher education has the ability to serve as a key vessel toward the end of Islamophobia, Antisemitism, and even Anti-atheism in our world, though the struggles to fully incorporate these identities into higher education has become pronounced. In partnership with the UofT Multi-Faith Centre, this highly interactive workshop draws upon research from across North America, culminating in the "4 Pillars of Policy and Practice," a framework designed by Convergence on Campus, the only North American organization focused on campus climate change for higher education inclusion of religious and non-religious identities.</p>



## SESSIONS

Workshop 1.2 - Auditorium	<p><b>Identity, Religion, and Social Contract: Finding Common Ground Despite Competing/Conflicting Values and Priorities</b>  <i>Speakers: Dr. Nadia Z. Hasan, Dr. Shari Golberg, Peter Noteboom</i>  <i>Facilitators: Ahmet Tamirci, Muneeb Nasir</i></p> <p>This workshop will look at how faith communities are navigating their identities in a secular pluralist country and how their respective religions help or hinder their adaptation to the highly diverse society and turbulent times. It will feature an expert panel of religious leaders reflecting on how their respective faiths address cultural and religious diversity, and those faith traditions inform the formation of identities in a multicultural secular society where there may be conflicting values and priorities. It will also look at how people of faith are finding commonality and highlighting shared principles and values to strengthen our society.</p>
Workshop 1.3 - Activities Hall	<p><b>Interfaith is Intercultural: Naming Identity as Essential to Relationship Across Diversity</b>  <i>Facilitators: Dr. Emo Yango, Maureen Scott Kabwe</i></p> <p>Interfaith brings together cultures that include resources for relationship across diversity. These differences can also keep us from truly meeting each other, and at worst cultivate violence or stand in the way of building authentic community. Using a variety of learning activities, participants will name some of the conscious and unconscious of their cultures, reflect on how naming of culture and identity are tools for relationship between diverse peoples, and identify how they might engage their faith communities in similar conversations. This workshop is offered by the Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning of The Canadian Council of Churches.</p>
INTERFAITH TRACK Workshop 1.4 - Multi-Purpose Room	<p><b>Why Work Together? Interfaith Groups Bridging Differences for the Common Good</b>  <i>Speakers: Nil Sendil, Dr. John Milloy</i>  <i>Facilitators: Héctor A. Acero Ferrer, Danielle Yett, Barbara Boraks</i></p> <p>What motivates groups to reach across the religious-secular divide? What are the conditions of possibility for successful collaboration between faith-based and secular social activism groups? The Canadian Interfaith Research Centre for Learning &amp; Engagement (CIRCLE) seeks to promote research on such questions in order to mobilize learners and communities across social and religious divides. To that end, CIRCLE will lead a moderated discussion and capacity-building workshop encouraging active reflection on motivating principles and collaboration strategies at play among a sampling of secular and faith-based social activism initiatives. This workshop will invite participants to establish connections regarding how both secular and faith-based initiatives' work might be deepened for the common good.</p>
PLENARY 2 - ADDRESSING EXTREMISM AND POLARIZATION, 2:00-3:00PM	
Auditorium	<p><i>Speakers: Mustafa Farooq, Giuliana Natale, Dr. Anna Su</i>  <i>Chair: Rabbi Adam Cutler</i></p> <p>In a society that is increasingly pulled towards the extremes, many are looking to reinforce a common centre of reasonable, respectful discourse. What is the role of religion in this conversation? How does religion become a source of social good, reconciling viewpoints, transcending divisions, and rejecting those who would spread hate in its name? How should religious concepts inform political language and strategies? In what ways should religious and secular actors work together to create a more robust public discourse?</p>



# SESSIONS

## WORKSHOP CYCLE 2 - ADDRESSING EXTREMISM AND POLARIZATION, 3:15-4:15PM

Workshop 2.1 - Activities Hall	<p><b>Countering the Rise of Antisemitism: An Analysis and Strategy</b>  <i>Facilitator: Steve McDonald</i></p> <p>Seven decades after the Holocaust, the world is seeing an alarming growth in antisemitism. While Canada is a relatively safe home for Jews and other minorities, Statistics Canada reports that the Jewish community is the most frequently targeted group when it comes to hate crimes – with such crimes taking place on average once every 24 hours in 2017. In liberal democratic countries like those of Western Europe, Jews are facing the highest levels of antisemitic hostility and violence in generations. What lessons can be drawn from these disturbing trends? How can we develop an effective strategy for countering antisemitism and other forms of bigotry? Join Steve McDonald from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) for a thought-provoking look at this pressing topic.</p>
Workshop 2.2 - Seminar Room	<p><b>In or Out of Prison: Young People and Spirituality</b>  <i>Facilitators: Imam Yasin Dwyer, Chaplain Kate Johnson</i></p> <p>Imam Yasin Dwyer and Chaplain Kate Johnson both served as chaplains in the Correctional Service of Canada. Both left prison ministry to serve in post-secondary institutions. Kate and Yasin will briefly describe their observations of these two populations made up largely of young people. Drawing from both case examples and academic research, participants will then be invited to reflect on some of the following questions: How does the experience of incarceration/ sequestering influence the spiritual development of young people? How can mature adults engage in the spiritual lives of young people to support a future that includes religious pluralism? Young people drawn into violent extremism sometimes use a religious lens. How can we address the question of violent extremism in the context of religion and spirituality? Is violent religious extremism truly about religion?</p>
Workshop 2.3 - Auditorium	<p><b>Addressing Religious Intolerance in Daily Life</b>  <i>Facilitators: Dr. G. Eric Jarvis, Dr. Catherine Jarvis, Dr. W. Y. Alice Chan, OCT</i></p> <p>Intolerance is on the rise in democratic states like Canada. Fuelled by mass migration and populist governments, Canadians may encounter an increasing number of discriminatory attitudes and practices. How can respect be fostered without creating division or anger? This workshop will promote active collaboration among participants to discuss and resolve vignettes from daily life of religious stereotypes, negative attitudes toward the non-religious, and misunderstandings about immigrants.</p>
INTERFAITH TRACK Workshop 2.4 - Multi-Purpose Room	<p><b>The Urban Spiritual Commons: Beyond Interfaith</b>  <i>Facilitators: Rev. Dr. Jason McKinney, Michael Burt</i></p> <p>This workshop will introduce participants to the work of the PPE and the concept of The Urban Spiritual Commons, a community-based initiative rooted in Parkdale, Toronto. The project is embedded within the Parkdale People's Economy (PPE), which is made up of Parkdale residents and over 30 local organizations. The Spiritual Commons project seeks to bring a spiritual lens to the PPE's mandate of ensuring equitable development, decent work, and shared wealth within the religiously diverse and rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood of Parkdale. Our claim is that encounters across religious difference in this context can be generative of emergent spiritualities. Such emergent spiritualities can open space for deeper connection, inspire movements for justice and wellbeing, and produce a common spiritual "grammar." Participants in this workshop will be invited to engage conceptually and in participatory art-making, led by Making Room Community Arts.</p>

# SESSIONS

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2 - 4:30-5:30PM

Auditorium

### **What is the Relationship Between Media and Radicalization Leading to Violence?**

*Speaker: Dr. Solange Lefebvre*

## PLENARY 2 - TECHNOLOGY, VALUES & SOCIETY, 9:15-10:30AM

Auditorium

**Speakers: Dr. Tracy J. Trothen, Dr. Borna Nouredin, Joseph Brean**  
**Chair: Sadia Zaman**

There is a growing anxiety about a technological future in which people are powerless to make meaningful choices about the development and uses of technology. Many are asking how we can think in new ways about the relationship between emerging technologies, values and society. What values does technology express? What can religion bring to conversations about the role of technology in society? What means should be explored to ensure that technologies are developed and used to serve human and social well-being, rather than the other way around?

## WORKSHOP CYCLE 3 - TECHNOLOGY, VALUES & SOCIETY, 10:45-12:00PM

Workshop 3.1 - Seminar Room

**Living Clothes, Edited Humans, and Bioweapons: What is Synthetic Biology and Where is it Headed?**  
**Facilitator: Matthew Legge**

It's happening right now. Many scientists, technology-enthusiasts, and corporations hope to create novel life forms. They seek to move from evolution through natural selection into a moment of ever more human-conceived and designed life. This presentation does not require any science background or familiarity with genetic engineering practices. It will briefly introduce many applications of techniques like CRISPR, peeling back the hype to discuss both the potential benefits and harms. The focus will be on the social, ecological, and spiritual impacts of synthetic biology.

Workshop 3.2 - Activities Hall

**Autonomous Weapons Systems and Human Control**  
**Facilitator: Branka Marijan**

This workshop will focus on small-group discussion about lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), more commonly known as killer robots. These weapons would be able to target, select, and kill without any human input. Increasing autonomy in already developed weapons systems indicates a current need for regulation. Most countries agree that fully autonomous weapons should not be developed and that some element of human control or oversight should be present in all weapons systems. But technology is outpacing regulation. Autonomous weapons raise ethical, moral, legal and humanitarian questions amongst others. However, there remains an awareness gap about the impacts of these systems on society.

Workshop 3.3 - Auditorium

**Creating Media Across Difference in an Urban Middle School**  
**Facilitator: Esther Maloney**

This workshop draws on experience and emerging insights with Illumine Media Project, a grassroots media initiative operating in Toronto neighbourhoods. Central to the work of this initiative is the awareness that while the problems of the existing media landscape are apparent, there is great potential for envisioning and creating an alternative. This workshop will create space for discussion around one of Illumine's films, engage participants in reflecting on their own media environments and invite us to collectively imagine the potential story and narrative have in the building of inclusive, peaceful communities.

# SESSIONS

<b>INTERFAITH TRACK</b> Workshop 3.4 - Multi-Purpose Room	<p><b>A Relational Ecosystem for Peace (REP) to Integrate an “Agenda of the Heart” into Dialogue Activities</b>  <i>Facilitators: Dr. Patrice Brodeur, Brigitte Gagnon</i></p> <p>This workshop presents a Relational Ecosystem for Peace (REP), a comprehensive template and tools to help us move individually and collectively from states and feelings of separation, to communication, and from there to deep connection. Its first of four key pillars shows how to put our common human identity at the top of our personal hierarchy of identities while remaining assertive about sub-identities, but with radical respect. The next two pillars help us make choices that transcend polarization by making wise and discerning choices towards prosocial values for real and sustainable dialogue. The last pillar exposes the practical basis for this REP, which is based on two approaches for peacebuilding: 1) InterWorldView Dialogue and 2) Compassionate Listening. REP aims to integrate an agenda of the heart to other types of agendas (religious, political, economic, etc.), and to deeply transform and heal.</p>
<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS 3 - 1:30-3:00PM</b>	
Auditorium	<p><b>A Meaning to Life: Darwinian Existentialism</b></p> <p><i>Speaker: Michael Ruse</i></p> <p><i>Response: Dr. Ronald A. Kuipers</i></p>

**The Canadian Interfaith Conversation thanks the following organizations for contributing to the organization of the Our Whole Society conference through representation on the OWS Steering Committee:**

**Baha'i Community of Canada**

**Canadian Council of Churches**

**Canadian Council of Imams**

**Canadian Interfaith Research Centre for Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE)**

**Institute for Christian Studies**

**Multi-Faith Centre, University of Toronto**

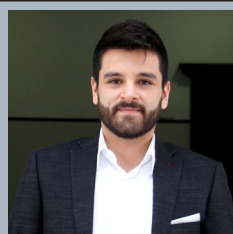
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**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

**The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada**

**Toronto Board of Rabbis**

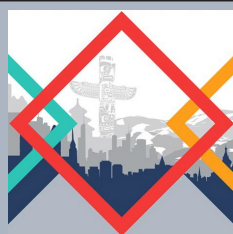
## MEET THE PRESENTERS



**Héctor A. Acero Ferrer** is Associate Director of the Centre for Philosophy, Religion, and Social Ethics at the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS/CPRSE), and serves as Adjunct Faculty at the Martin Luther University College, Wilfrid Laurier University. Héctor is also an Animator for the Canadian Interfaith Research Centre for Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE), a research initiative of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation. He is also currently pursuing his PhD in Philosophy at ICS.



**Barbara Boraks** is the Executive Director of Christian Jewish Dialogue of Toronto. The CJDT was one of the first formal interfaith organizations in Canada. The long history and deep relationships developed through CJDT have facilitated cooperation amongst faith representatives on issues of mutual social concern. Barbara has become deeply involved with the issue of basic income and its implementation in Canada. Working on this issue has created the bridge between faith and secular organizations.



**Joseph Brean** has been a news reporter and feature writer for the *National Post* newspaper since 2001. His work focuses on the legal system, science, and national current affairs, but frequently is aimed more broadly at emerging cultural themes, such as the resurgence of Nietzschean ideology in far-right populism, the role of social media in electoral politics, and the dark turn of popular online atheism. He studied philosophy and linguistics at Queen's University.



**Dr. Patrice Brodeur** is an associate professor at the Institut d'études religieuses at the Université de Montréal. He was the Canada Research Chair (junior) on Islam, Pluralism and Globalization (2005-2015). His expertise includes contemporary Islamic thought and interreligious dialogue. He is also Senior Adviser at the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) in Vienna, Austria. His publications include more than fifty articles, book chapters and books. He has lectured academically to a variety of audiences and conducted trainings on dialogue in over fifty countries around the world.



**Michael Burt** is the Artistic Director of Making Room Community Arts. Making Room is a radically inclusive, interdisciplinary arts company that brings together individuals and communities through art-making. For the last decade, Making Room has been ensconced in the Parkdale neighbourhood of Toronto. Michael has developed a grounded arts practice rooted in the asking of Big Questions in a way that is radically inclusive. He brings to this practice twenty-five years of experience as a community-based organizer and cultural worker. He has a master's degree from the Faculty of Environmental Studies, studying the connection between community arts and the sacredness of everyday life.



**Richard Chambers** is the director of the University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre for Spiritual Study and Practice. The Centre engages students in questions of inclusion and difference, including religious identity, spiritual well-being and purpose, both individually and in society. Richard has graduate degrees in applied ethics, education, and theology from Harvard University and the University of Toronto. Research interests include moral development with young adults and the role of religion in civil society.



**Dr. W.Y. Alice Chan, OCT** works on issues related to religious bullying, religious literacy, and violent extremism. She has worked with UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, the Religious Freedom Center in the US, the Interfaith Youth Core, the Hindu American Foundation, and the Tony Blair Institute of Global Change on these matters. She is also the executive director and co-founder of the Centre for Civic Religious Literacy, which aims to foster the understanding of religious, spiritual, and non-religious beliefs in all sectors of society.

## MEET THE PRESENTERS



**Rabbi Adam Cutler** serves as President of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and is Senior Rabbi of Adath Israel Congregation in Toronto, one of Canada's oldest and largest synagogues. Rabbi Cutler received his ordination and MA from the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he was a Wexner Graduate Fellow. He is one of few Canadian born rabbis serving at a Canadian synagogue.



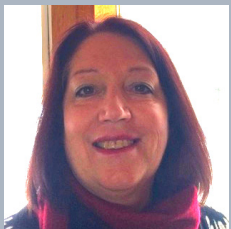
**Imam Yasin Dwyer** was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba to parents of Jamaican heritage. He served as an itinerant chaplain with the Correctional Service of Canada for 12 years. Imam Yasin has been a pioneer in the field of Muslim chaplaincy, integrating the principles of restorative justice and Islamic spirituality. He co-ordinated counter-radicalization programmes for federal inmates convicted of terrorist related offenders. Imam Yasin was a consultant and advisor with the Queen's University chaplaincy team and now ministers at Ryerson.



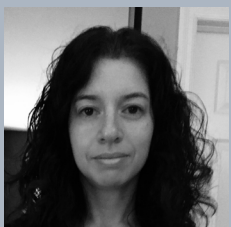
**Mustafa Farooq** recently joined the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) as its fifth Executive Director. Mustafa Farooq completed his JD at Osgoode Hall and the University of Alberta and later earned his LLM at UC Berkeley. Mustafa was recently a visiting scholar at Osgoode Hall where he researched countering violent extremism (CVE) policy in Canada. His first book, entitled *Law, Policy, and Countering Violent Extremism* (Routledge) is forthcoming. He is a published writer and commentator on Canadian Muslims, human rights and civil liberties, and public policy issues including national security and Islamophobia.



**Dr. Gerald Filson** is a member of the Baha'i national governing council, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Canada. He served as Director of Public Affairs for the Canadian Baha'i Community from 1993 to 2017. He has a PhD from the University of Toronto, and his contributions to civil society include service as the Chair of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation 2012-16, and Chair of the Network on International Human Rights, a coalition of Canada's human rights organizations, 1999-2002. He is married with three children, and one grandchild.



**Brigitte Gagnon** is a PhD (ABD) student in Religious Studies at the University of Montreal and Consultant with over 20 years' experience of project design and implementation in the fields of health and social services, as well as in research and evaluation. She is also a trauma and crisis intervention specialist and offers coaching, training and counselling in a variety of workplaces. Being a Certified Facilitator with the method of Compassionate Listening, offered by The Compassionate Listening Project (Seattle, USA) that has taught and applied this approach for the last 20 years in different countries and settings (health, schools, workplaces, etc.), and most especially in delegations in Israel/Palestine, Mrs. Gagnon's research interests are on factors and conditions for successful dialogue and spiritual and transformational conflict resolution and peacebuilding. She has a degree in psychology and received a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Ottawa in Ontario.



**Dr. Shari Golberg** has a PhD in Religion from the University of Toronto and an MA from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her academic work and teaching explores feminist approaches to Jewish and Islamic texts, along with contemporary text-based collaborations. From 2015-2016, Golberg delivered workshops across Ontario for the Canadian Race Relations Foundation on competing rights and issues of religious accommodation and discrimination in workplace contexts. She also co-ordinates and facilitates Shema & Iqra': The Jewish-Muslim Text Project, a grassroots initiative which brings Muslims and Jews together using classical religious texts as a springboard for dialogue.



## MEET THE PRESENTERS



**Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo** is from Kahnawake, a Mohawk community located outside of Montreal. After graduating from Concordia University, he moved to Toronto in 1993, making Scarborough his home. Working in the financial sector, he discovered his love for teaching, setting him on a path to get his Bachelor of Education. Mr. Hamilton-Diabo has taught ESL to recent arrivals to Canada; coordinated a life-skills and careers program at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto; and taught at Emmanuel College (Victoria University) and the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary (Wilfred Laurier University). In 2000, just as he was about to embark on a teaching career with the TDSB, First Nation House lured him away, effectively beginning an 18 year journey at the University of Toronto, in which 16 were at First Nations House. There, he had various roles: Student Recruitment Officer; Academic and Financial Aid Counsellor; and Director. In April of 2017, Mr. Hamilton-Diabo was appointed Director, Indigenous Initiatives at the University of Toronto.



**Dr. Nadia Z. Hasan** is Deputy Director of the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM). Nadia has a PhD in Political Science from York University. Nadia has a diverse background in teaching, project management and the non-profit sector. Nadia has several years of experience working on policy and programs at Canadian think tanks and NGOs and she has taught university courses in South Asian studies, religion and gender. Her doctoral research focused on Muslim women's organizations and the practice of Islam in Canada and Pakistan.



**Dr. Kofi Hope** is a Rhodes Scholar, Doctor of Philosophy in Politics, community activist and youth advocate. He is a Senior Policy Advisor at the Wellesley Institute. He also serves as a Strategic Consultant for the Vice President HR/Equity at the University Toronto and is the current Bousfield Distinguished Visitor in Planning at UofT's School of Urban Planning. He is the 2017 winner of the Jane Jacobs Prize. Kofi previously served as Executive Director of the CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals (CEE) a non-profit he founded in 2012 which creates economic opportunities for Black youth in Toronto. In 2005 he created the Black Youth Coalition Against Violence, a group which advocated for real solutions to the issue of gun violence. This advocacy work included a presentation for then Prime Minister Paul Martin and led to him being named one of the Top Ten People to Watch in Toronto in 2006 by the *Toronto Star*. Kofi is an accomplished public speaker and serves on the board of Directors for the Atkinson Foundation and Toronto Environmental Alliance.



**Nuzhat Jafri** is the Executive Director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) where she leads initiatives focused on the equality, equity and empowerment of Canadian Muslim women. She is active in interfaith outreach and served as the Canadian Communications Manager for the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions. She is also the Principal of Fair Practices Consulting, a management consulting firm specializing in equity, inclusion, diversity, human rights and accessibility. Nuzhat was the first and only Executive Director of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) from 2007 to 2017. Nuzhat led legislation and policy development, human resources and communications functions in various Ontario government ministries and agencies. She has also directed diversity and equity initiatives at Scotiabank and at the Bank of Montreal. Nuzhat also served as the former President of CCMW and was a long-time national board member and volunteer with the Council. She also serves on the board of directors of The Pluralist Foundation and has served as chair and member of several other non-profit boards, including the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, ACCES Employment, and South Asian Family Support Services.



**Dr. Catherine Jarvis** is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Co-Director of Public Affairs for the Montreal-Ottawa region. She sits on the Executive Committee of the Christian Jewish Dialogue of Montreal and organizes their annual Interfaith EcoAction Event. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at McGill University and practices at the CLSC Cote Des Neiges, where she works with a diverse population of immigrants and teaches undergraduate and postgraduate students. She and her husband, Dr. G. Eric Jarvis, are the parents of 4 children.

## MEET THE PRESENTERS



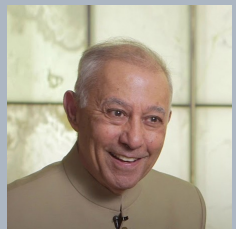
**Dr. G. Eric Jarvis** is Associate Professor of Psychiatry & Director of the Cultural Consultation Service and First Episode Psychosis Program at the Jewish General Hospital. His clinical work involves the psychiatric evaluation and treatment of immigrants and refugees. His research interests include religious interventions in mental health care, the process of cultural consultation, and the history of psychiatry. Dr. Jarvis serves as the Co-director of public affairs for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Montreal-Ottawa region with his wife, Dr. Catherine Jarvis.



**Chaplain Kate Johnson** was “in and out of prison” as a social worker and a chaplain for 20 years alternating ministry on the inside with work in a variety of not-for-profit settings. She was appointed as chaplain to Queen’s University in 2013. Her Quaker faith informs her passion for interfaith dialogue and individual spiritual development.



**Maureen Scott Kabwe** is a retired United Church of Canada minister, with over 20 years in ministry with the UCC First Nations Circle and Kahnawake United Church, having graduated from the Francis Sandy Theological Centre. Originally a social justice educator with a Training For Transformation focus, Maureen in retirement has become involved in her local community of faith in ministry-building and future visioning, choir, and Church in the World events. She has also been part of the Forum for Inter-cultural Learning and Leadership Board and programming, especially events in the Montreal/Quebec context (Celebrons nos Diversites). She has taught secondary English in Zambia, and has a MA from McGill in Religion and Philosophy in Education (the uncanny in art and experience: a critical pedagogy of transformation).



**Chander Khanna** has served as Vice Chair to the Parliament of the World’s Religions -Toronto 2018, as the Ontario Community Coordinator for the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and as a Board Member of the Toronto Area Interfaith Council and the National Committee on Hindu-Catholic Dialogue. He is also a former Vice President of the Hindu Institute of Learning and a member of the Spiritual Committee of the Association of Himalayan Yoga Meditation Societies International. He is also a lifelong student of Eastern Philosophical traditions.



**Dr. Ronald A. Kuipers** is President of the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS), an interdisciplinary graduate school of philosophy and theology affiliated with the Toronto School of Theology. He is Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at ICS and a cross-appointed faculty member at the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies, University of Toronto. An internationally recognized expert on the work of the American philosopher Richard Rorty, Dr. Kuipers’ scholarship focuses on Pragmatism, Critical Theory, and the role of religion in the public sphere. Through his work as Director of ICS’s Centre for Philosophy, Religion, and Social Ethics (CPRSE), Dr. Kuipers has become a national leader in community-based research and knowledge mobilization. Among other books and articles, he is the author of *Richard Rorty* (2013) in Bloomsbury Press’s Contemporary American Thinkers series, and *Critical Faith: Toward a Renewed Understanding of Religious Life and its Public Accountability* (2002).



**Dr. Mary Jo Leddy** is widely recognized for founding Romero House in 1991, and for her ongoing work with refugees there. She spent thirty years as a member of the Roman Catholic Sisters of Our Lady of Sion and, in 1973, she was the founding editor of the Catholic New Times. She is author of several books, the latest of which is entitled *The Other Face of God: When the Stranger Calls Us Home* (Orbis 2011). Leddy received her Ph.D. from the University of Toronto along with several honorary doctorates from other institutions. She is currently a Senior Fellow at Massey College in the University of Toronto and a board member of PEN Canada and Massey College. Leddy has received the Human Relations Award of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, the Ontario Citizenship Award, and is a Member of the Order of Canada.



## MEET THE PRESENTERS



**Dr. Solange Lefebvre** is one of Canada's leading public intellectuals writing about secularism and the role of religion in society. She holds the Research Chair for the Management of Cultural and Religious Diversity in the Institute for Religious Studies at the University of Montreal, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. She is also the director of an interdisciplinary project sponsored by the Québec Ministry of Immigration, Inclusion and Diversity and by the Research Fund of Quebec: Society and Culture. The project is called The Process of Radicalization Leading to Violence (RLV): Perceptions of the Quebec Population, and the Influence of Both Traditional Mass Media and New Social Media.



**Matthew Legge** is the peace program coordinator at Canadian Friends Service Committee, the peace and social justice agency of Quakers in Canada. He has been tracking and writing about synthetic biology since 2013. Matthew participated in multiple rounds of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's online forums on synthetic biology and was on the planning committee for a conference on synthetic biology co-hosted by the Canadian Council of Churches and World Council of Churches in 2017. Matthew has worked in the nonprofit sector for the last 13 years, and is the author of *Are We Done Fighting? Building Understanding in a World of Hate and Division*.



**Esther Maloney** loves stories. She has over ten years of experience as a theatre and film actor, director, writer and producer. Esther is the founder and director of Illumine Media Project, which creates films and episodes for and with diverse young people and their families in neighbourhoods across Toronto. She is completing her Master of Arts in Education at the University of Toronto with a focus on media, youth and cultural production.



**Branka Marijan** leads the research on the military and security implications of emerging technologies at Project Ploughshares. Her work examines ethical concerns regarding the development of autonomous weapons systems and the impact of advancements in artificial intelligence and robotics on security provision and trends in warfare. Branka holds a PhD from the Balsillie School of International Affairs.



**Steve McDonald** is Director of Policy and Strategic Communications at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). In this capacity, he serves as a spokesperson for the Jewish community in the national media, conducts extensive writing and research, and plays a key role in CIJA's policy development process. Prior to joining CIJA, he spent ten years working in politics. During this time, he served in the office of a Member of Parliament, on various political campaigns, and as a consultant and federal lobbyist for a private sector firm, Crestview. His work entailed a broad span of activities – including drafting proposed ethics legislation, training Members of Parliament and their staff in communications, conducting polls for political parties and corporations, and advocating policies to government officials on behalf of clients. The parliamentary newspaper *The Hill Times* twice named him as one of Canada's "Top 100 Lobbyists" – one of the few members of the list under the age of 30 at the time.



**Rev. Dr. Jason McKinney** is a theological educator, a community-based Anglican priest, and a long-time resident of Parkdale, Toronto. His work, like his life and family, is rooted in Parkdale, where he helps lead the Jeremiah Community and serves as a missionary (i.e. neighbourhood priest) for the church of Epiphany & St Mark. He is an adjunct professor of theology at Trinity College at the U of T. Jason sits on the board of the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust, around the Parkdale People's Economy Neighbourhood Planning Table, and co-chairs the interfaith working group.

## MEET THE PRESENTERS



**Dr. John Milloy** is the Director of the Centre for Public Ethics and Assistant Professor of Public Ethics at Martin Luther University College. He is also the inaugural Practitioner in Residence in Wilfrid Laurier's Political Science Department and a lecturer in the Master of Public Service Program at the University of Waterloo. From 2003 to 2014, John served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for the riding of Kitchener Centre, holding a number of cabinet portfolios. John's political experience extends to the federal scene where he worked for several senior Cabinet Ministers in the mid-90s, as well as spending five years in the office of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.



**Muneeb Nasir** is the President of the Olive Tree Foundation, an endowment foundation and granting agency; Co-Chair of the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee, which fosters open dialogue, mutual respect, and cooperation between Christians and Muslims; and the Managing Editor of the online Canadian Muslim magazine, *IQRA.ca*



**Giuliana Natale** serves as the Director of the Inclusion and Religious Freedom Division within the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms, and Inclusion at Global Affairs Canada. The Division is responsible for the development and implementation of Canada's international policies and advocacy efforts related to freedom of religion or belief as well as the promotion of pluralism, respect for diversity, and inclusion. Giuliana also serves as a focal point for faith or belief communities and other members of civil society in Canada seeking to advance respect for human rights abroad. Prior to joining Global Affairs Canada, Giuliana served as Chief of Staff to the Foreign and Defense Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister, within the Privy Council Office of Canada. Giuliana also served for several years within the Department of Canadian Heritage, including as acting Director for International Relations where she was involved in the development of Canada's international cultural policy which focused on the promotion of cultural industries and the advancement of cultural diversity as a critical component of inclusive policies related to social development and economic growth.



**J. Cody Nielsen** is Founder and Executive Director of Convergence and Multifaith Coordinator at the University of Guelph. Cody previously served as Expert in Residence for Religious, Secular, and Spiritual Initiatives at NASPA and is former President of the National Campus Ministry Association. Cody's passion is the integration of higher education with religious, secular, and spiritual identity diversity work. Cody is a PhD candidate in Higher Education Administration at Iowa State University and holds master's degrees in Mental Health Counseling from the University of Northern Iowa and Divinity from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C. He offers consultation for universities regarding strategic thinking around religious, secular, and spiritual identity.



**Peter Noteboom** has been with the Canadian Council of Churches since 1999, beginning as Associate Secretary, Justice and Peace where he provided staff support and accompanied the members of the Council in their work in justice and peace as well as biotechnology and the life sciences. In 2011 he became the Deputy General Secretary with additional responsibilities in finance, administration, and organizational restructuring. He has a post-graduate diploma on Dialogue and Negotiation from Simon Fraser University, has done postgraduate studies on Christian Political Theory at the Institute for Christian Studies, has a Master of Arts degree in European Studies from the Catholic University of Leuven, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy and business administration from Dordt College, Iowa.

## MEET THE PRESENTERS



**Dr. Borna Nouredin** is a faculty member in the School of Computing and Academic Studies at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. He received his PhD and MASc from the University of British Columbia in 2010 and 2003, respectively, in electrical engineering, and his BEng in computer engineering from the University of Victoria in 1994. He has worked as a software developer, manager, consultant, entrepreneur and educator in North America, Europe and Southern Africa for over 25 years. He has also organized international conferences and currently serves on non-profit boards overseeing various educational and community service efforts locally and internationally.



**Dr. David Novak** received his AB from the University of Chicago; and from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America he received his MHL degree and his rabbinical diploma. He received his PhD in philosophy from Georgetown University. Since 1997, he has been the J. Richard and Dorothy Shiff Professor of Jewish Studies and Philosophy in the University of Toronto. During 1989-96 he was the Edgar M. Bronfman Professor of Modern Judaic Studies in the University of Virginia. Novak is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (F.R.S.C.) and a Fellow of the American Academy for Jewish Research. He is President of the Union for Traditional Judaism, Vice-President of the Institute on Religion and Public Life, and Consulting Scholar of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions of Princeton University. In 2017 he delivered the Gifford Lectures in the University of Aberdeen. He is married to Melva Ziman, and they have two children and four grandchildren.



**The Honourable Bob Rae** is among Canada's most prominent political figures, as former Premier of Ontario and Interim Federal Leader of the Liberal Party. He is currently Canada's Special Envoy to Myanmar, Senior Fellow to the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, and a partner at Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP. He has been named Queen's Council, appointed to the Privy Council of Canada, and is Companion of the Order of Canada.



**Dr. Michael Ruse** is a renowned and influential philosopher of science, a self-described atheist who has sought to reconcile science and religion. He is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Guelph, and is a Professor of Philosophy at Florida State University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



**Nil Sendil** is an organizer at the Workers' Action Centre, working on the Ontario-wide Fight for \$15 & Fairness campaign, which is led by a coalition of anti-poverty activists, health providers, labour groups, students, faculty, and faith leaders. Nil specializes in communications and digital engagement. She holds a Master of Political Science degree from the University of Toronto, where her research focused on organizing strategies.



**Dr. Anna Su** is Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law. Her research interests is in law and religion, and the law and history of international human rights. She is the author of *Exporting Freedom: Religious Liberty and American Power* (Harvard University Press, 2016).



## MEET THE PRESENTERS



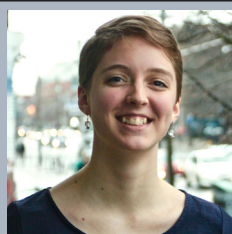
**Ahmet Tamirci** is the National Director of the Intercultural Dialogue Institute which aims to advance social cohesion through engagement, education and contributing to the development of ideas on dialogue and community building. His work is geared towards eliminating false stereotypes, prejudices and unjustified fears through direct human communication. He is an active member of Turkish community and serves as vice-president of Anatolian Heritage Federation. Additionally, he is part of National Influencer program at Canadian Armed Forces, a member of RCMP Diversity Council and Advisory Recruitment Council of OPP. Ahmet was also a member of steering committee of the Parliament of World's Religions which takes place in Toronto in November 2018.



**Dr. Tracy J. Trothen** is a professor of ethics at Queen's University, jointly appointed to the School of Religion and the School of Rehabilitation Therapy where she teaches in the graduate Aging and Health Program. She is an ordained minister in The United Church of Canada, a certified Supervisor-Educator in Clinical Spiritual Health (CASC), and a Registered Psychotherapist (CRPO). Trothen is the author of several publications on human enhancement technologies including her recent book, *Spirituality, Sport, and Doping: More than Just a Game*, and coedited anthology, *Religion and Human Enhancement: Death, Values, and Morality*. She serves on the Canadian Council of Churches' Faith and Life Sciences Working Group.



**Dr. Emo Yango** is currently a field staff with Canadian Baptist Ministries based in Toronto. He had previously worked in urban Japan, inner city Toronto and conflict zones affecting Muslim communities in the Philippines. His current work is centred around capacity building (includes peace building, community development and organizing, interfaith relations, race relations and theological education) using an intercultural framework in both grassroots and organizational contexts. His doctoral and graduate degrees are in Missiology and Intercultural Studies, with concentration in hermeneutics, cultural anthropology and postmodern theological studies. He has published chapters for several books and articles for journals.



**Danielle Yett** is Communications Coordinator at the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS). She is also an Animator for the Canadian Interfaith Research Centre for Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE), and Communications Coordinator for the Canadian Interfaith Conversation (CIC). Danielle is also currently pursuing her Master of Philosophy degree at ICS, with a special interest in the reformational philosophical work of Calvin Seerveld and aesthetics of the everyday.



**Sadia Zaman** is the CEO of Inspirit Foundation. Before joining Inspirit, Sadia was Managing Director, ROM Canada at the Royal Ontario Museum where she focused on digital content and Indigenous narratives. Before the ROM, Sadia commissioned documentary and current affairs projects from across the country as Director of Original Program Development, CBC News and Centres. She also led Women in Film and Television-Toronto (WIFT-T), a not-for-profit that supports the training and advancement of women in the screen-based industry. Sadia began her career as a journalist, creating hundreds of hours of original, critically acclaimed current affairs and documentary content for Vision TV, CBC and TVO. She has won dozens of awards for her journalism, and has been honoured for her leadership. She sits on many juries and advisory committees and is often asked to speak about media, diversity, gender and leadership issues.



## **CHARTER VISION**

January 2013

updated November 2016

Deep in the life of Canada and Canadians is the identity and practice of religion. The Charter Vision of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation (CIC) represents the desire to advocate for religion in a pluralistic society and in Canadian public life. We, the members of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation, want to promote harmony and religious insight among religions and religious communities in Canada, strengthen our society's moral foundations, and work for greater realization of the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion for the sake of the common good and an engaged citizenship.

### **Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is founded on principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law, and that everyone has the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion. The principle of religious freedom is embedded also in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### **Issues of the Common Good and Harmony in Society**

Beginning from positions of deep respect and a deep acknowledgment of pluralism, we also want to address together issues of concern to the common good of all. We have already been working together on addressing poverty, caring for the Earth, and investing in peace.

We also recognize the particular moment we are in, one of working for greater truth and reconciliation between Indigenous peoples in Canada and later arrivals of Canadians. This situation calls us to deeper understanding of past wrongs and shared future hopes for living in harmony together. Engaging issues involves both a speaking inwardly to one another and a speaking outwardly to society and the public.

### **Local and Canadian**

Our preference is for favouring and supporting local interfaith relationship building and collaboration. We also want to facilitate the engagement and bringing together of religious communities in Canada on the issues of the day. Each of these dimensions, local and Canadian, would be incomplete on their own.

### **Relationships**

Overall, we see this as a process of organic development of relationships, not primarily a structural organizational development. Nevertheless, as part of civil society we have an obligation to participate in the issues of the day. When acting together we may also make common cause with other groups.

### **Acting Together**

The Canadian Interfaith Conversation will cooperate whenever possible with existing interfaith initiatives, and may also sponsor and facilitate participation and engagement in interfaith events and initiatives locally, regionally, and nationally. Unless explicitly given the authority by all Conversation Participants, the Canadian Interfaith Conversation will not speak or advocate in the name of the organizations or persons who are on its Participants list. Likewise, Participants in the Canadian Interfaith Conversation are not bound to participate in all of the collaborative efforts that may emerge from the conversation held among the Participants; each Participant is free to join, as they are able, the various activities to which the conversation may lead.

Ordinarily decisions will be made within a Conversation meeting. Where decisions need to be made between meetings, proposals will be communicated through email. Participants will be asked to respond indicating consent or dissent. No response will be considered as consent to the proposal.

We work with a consensus model of decision-making. Those who do not agree with projects and plans that receive the agreement of the majority of Participants in a meeting will be asked to detail and clarify their alternate view in writing within 15 days, so that the dissenting view can receive full consideration. This will give time to recognize the reasons behind a dissenting view and, thereafter, reach full consensus, proceed with the reservation and permission of the dissenter or abandon the project or plan in question.

Conversation Participants are expected to pay an annual fee to help support the ongoing activities of the Conversation. Individuals who are interested in the Conversation, but do not represent a particular organization, are welcome as regular Observers; although they may be consulted at times on Conversation initiatives, their agreement is not required to authorize such initiatives.

### Leadership: Chair and Secretariat

The leadership of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation rotates from one faith community to another. Ordinarily the leadership will rotate every three years. The Chair prepares and leads meetings. The Secretariat provides administrative and communications support to facilitate the function of this Canadian Interfaith Conversation.

A small Executive Committee will be formed composed of representatives from two to three Eastern and Western traditions to facilitate cooperation.

### Participation

Those who are drawn to this Charter Vision are invited to participate. This is an open, voluntary conversation. Each faith community is invited to work out and define, internally when appropriate, their own participation and accountability. All who participate are committed to being on the journey together.

This may result in the participation of multiple voices from a given faith community. The values behind this Charter Vision define the participation; an honest, open dialogue and clarity of purpose is important so that the safety and security of the Conversation is preserved.

### Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law...

**Article 2.** Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- (a) Freedom of conscience and religion;
- (b) Freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media communication;
- (c) Freedom of peaceful assembly
- (d) Freedom of association

### The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Article 18.** Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

### Contact List

The Secretariat keeps a contact list of Participants and Observers.

To see a list of current Participants in the Canadian Interfaith Conversation, check the Participants section of our website:

[www.interfaithconversation.ca](http://www.interfaithconversation.ca)

This conference has been organized under the auspices of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation



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