

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF INTERFAITH COOPERATION

Parliament Annual Report | 2020

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OUR MISSION

The Parliament of the World's Religions was created to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions in order to achieve a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

To accomplish this, we invite individuals and communities who are equally invested in attaining this goal.

OUR VISION

The vision of the Parliament of the World's Religions is of a just, peaceful, and sustainable world in which:

- Religious and spiritual communities live in harmony and contribute to a better world from their riches of wisdom and compassion.
- Religious and cultural fears and hatreds are replaced with understanding and respect.
- People everywhere come to know and care for their neighbors.
- The richness of human and religious diversity is woven into the fabric of communal, civil, societal and global life.
- The world's most powerful and influential institutions move beyond narrow self-interest to realize common good.
- The Earth and all life are cherished, protected, healed and restored.
- All people commit to living out their highest values and aspirations.

OUR APPROACH

The Parliament of the World's Religions seeks to promote interreligious harmony, rather than unity. The problem with seeking unity among religions is the risk of loss of the unique and precious character of each individual religious and spiritual tradition; this understanding is key to our framework. Interreligious harmony, on the other hand, is an attainable and highly desirable goal. Such an approach respects, and is enriched by, the particularities of each tradition. Moreover, within each tradition are the resources (philosophical, theological, and spiritual teachings and perspectives) that enable each to enter into respectful, appreciative and cooperative relationships with persons and communities of other traditions.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR COO



Dear Friends,

In 2020 and beyond, the Parliament maintains its flexibility to adapt to the ever changing landscape while simultaneously honoring the legacy of its significant history. As we move into a new year, the Parliament remains a staunch aggregator and generative voice among global institutions and individuals of conscience.

In this report, you will read about the incredible and diverse range of programming we were able to provide to the interfaith community in 2020. We are committed to building on our 2020 work and creating new programming in 2021. We rely on the generosity of our donors to support new programs and our ongoing operations. A donation to the Parliament is a commitment to helping us fulfill our mission of building a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. Help us to expand our impact and grow our programs, so we can continue our legacy and service to the interfaith movement.

As we close 2020 and begin our work for 2021 and beyond, we are asking you to give what you are able: \$50, \$100, \$500, or more. Give online at: www.parliamentof-religions.org/donate, or mail a check to us at 70 E. Lake Street, Suite 230, Chicago, IL 60601.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to interfaith work and your remembrance of the Parliament. As we move into a new year, we extend our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephen C. Avino'.

Stephen Avino
Chief Operating Officer

OUR PROGRAMS

COUNTERING WAR, HATE & VIOLENCE



Under the leadership of **Countering War, Hate & Violence** task force chair, Bruce Knotts, the Parliament continued to foster relationships with movements and communities working toward peace and against the ravages of war, hate, and violence. In 2020, the task force highlighted the critical role faith and spiritual communities must play in the prevention of violence against and support of the LGBTQ+ community. In a series of webinars featuring experts from diverse communities, activists shared lessons and recommendations. A special working group focused on Latin American LGBTQ+ justice was organized.



JUSTICE



The pursuit of justice and a more equitable world are key tenets of the Parliament's mission. In 2020 our organization prioritized virtual engagement as a means to better address critical issues facing our communities, including economic disadvantages made worse by the COVID-19 crisis and racial discrimination and racial violence experienced by communities of color. A critical success of 2020 was the launch of ***This Perilous Moment***, the **Hiroshima/Nagasaki Accord** and a special remembrance broadcast featuring former Soviet Union President **Mikhail Gorbachev** and former US Secretary of State **George Shultz**.



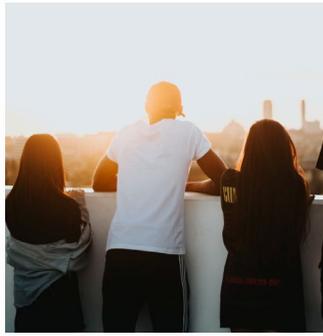
INTERFAITH CLIMATE ACTION



A core activity of the **Climate Action Program** is convening our global network to catalyze and facilitate engagement and action. With partners on six continents representing dozens of faith traditions, the Climate Action Task Force under the leadership of task force chair, David Hales, and Director of Climate Action, Joshua Basofin, yielded immense success in 2020. Global partnerships with organizations like UNEP made possible the publication of the **FBO Action on the SDGs: Progress and Outlook Report** and **Faith for Earth - A Call for Action**.



THE NEXT GENERATION



Fostering intergenerational conversation and a platform for young voices in the global interfaith movement, the **Next Generation Task Force**, led by co-chairs Carl Murrell and Nitin Ajmera, developed a monthly webinar series focused on engaging intergenerational voices on topics ranging from *nuclear disarmament*, the *Sustainable Development Goals*, *girl child empowerment*, and *protecting the rights to education of children* in times of crisis. Monthly programming is slated to continue in 2021 as the Parliament focuses on building partnerships and relationships with youth around the world.



THE UNITED NATIONS



The Parliament is proud to be an active affiliated NGO to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UN-DPI). Living into its mission to engage guiding institutions around the world, the Parliament activates an annual **United Nations Task Force** to facilitate participation across several annual activities at United Nations, to align the efforts of the Sustainable Development Goals, and advocate for interfaith perspectives and actions in programming around the world. Under the leadership of task force chair, Audrey Kitagawa, the UN task force organized in person and virtual programs with the UN.



TOWARDS A GLOBAL ETHIC



The historic document, *Towards a Global Ethic* (An Initial Declaration), a statement of the moral commitments shared by the world's religious, spiritual, and cultural traditions, was a significant outcome of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions. Expanded in 2018, this living document continues to guide the vision and work of the Parliament. An enthusiastic Global Ethic Task Force carries on the work of promoting conversation about the *Global Ethic* and showing how it can help resolve the moral conflicts and ethical dilemmas of individuals and communities. Among its project—using the Global Ethic to teach religious and ethical literacy in public high schools is among programming in the works for 2021.



WOMEN'S DIGNITY



The Parliament's **Women's Task Force** (PWTF) continued its advocacy for the dignity of women across religious and spiritual traditions in 2020. The task force was led by co-chairs Dr. Elizabeth Ursic and Dr. Dolly Dastoor, who continued to foster the relationships established in Toronto as part of the 2018 Parliament. 2018 Women's Assembly keynotes were engaged in the observance of Women's History Month and the progress in the *1,000 Women in Religion Wiki Project* continued in partnership with the Women's Caucus at AAR, engaging editors with bi-annual Edit-a-thons.



UN WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



Continuing the promotion and observance of **UN World Interfaith Harmony Week**, made possible through the support of a grant from the John Templeton Foundation, the Parliament engaged global organizers and was represented in international celebrations of this critical UN week. In Chicago, our team organized an interfaith fair at the historic Chicago Cultural Center, and organizers from Cape Town to New York, from Toronto to Jerusalem, and countless other communities shared in their *love of good, God, and neighbor*.



OUR IMPACT



80+

PROGRAMS

VIDEOS & MORE



100+

COMMUNITIES

ENGAGED



503,826

VIRTUAL

IMPRESSIONS

A YEAR IN REVIEW

JAN

2020: The Paradigm of Cooperation



FEB



JOIN THE COUNTDOWN TOWARD



World Interfaith
Harmony Week
UN Official Observance - 1st Week of February



UN WIHW Chicago Interfaith Fair

Celebrate UN World Interfaith Harmony Week with US!

Learn more at ParliamentOfReligions.org/WIHW/

PARLIAMENT
OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS



MAR

Women's History Month



APR



Responding to COVID-19

MAY

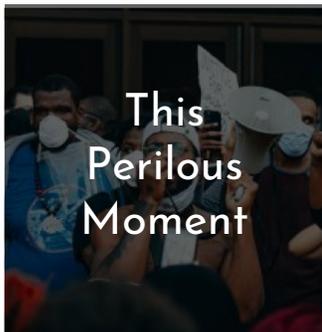
PARLIAMENT
OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

Inspiration & Hope Broadcast

PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS
WORLDWIDE INTERFAITH RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

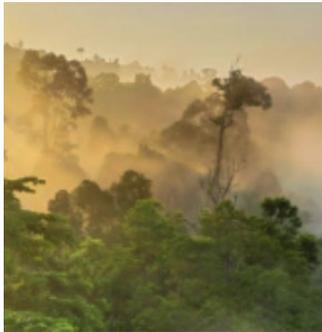


JUN



**WORLD
UNITY
WEEK**
20-27 JUNE 2020

JUL



AUG



SEP

Faith-Based Organizations Action on the SDGs Report



OCT



NOV



DEC



OUR LEADERSHIP

The Board of Trustees of the Parliament provides the corporate direction to assure that the Parliament fulfills its mission. Within this broad authority, there are particular responsibilities and

expectations, the most fundamental being that each Trustee has an abiding conviction that the mission and goals of the Parliament of the World's Religions have tremendous positive potential for the world.

2020 MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Audrey Kitagawa
Dr. Bhadra Shah
Bruce Knotts
Carl Murrell
Rev. Charline Manuel

Chris Peters
David Hales
Ven. Dhammadipa Sak
Dianne Dillon-Ridgley
Dr. Dolly Dastoor

Prof. John Pawlikowski
Rabbi Michael Balinsky
Dr. Michael Reid Trice
Michael Terrien
Nitin Ajmera

Renee Mehrra
Imam Saffet Catovic
Dr. Sagina Hanjrah M.D.
Swami Ishatmananda
Dr. Tarunjit Butalia

2020 BOARD OFFICERS



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Audrey E. Kitagawa



Vice-Chair of the Board
Bhadra Shah



Vice-Chair of the Board
Carl Murrell



Secretary
Rabbi Michael Balinsky



Treasurer
Nitin Ajmera

The work of the Parliament is made possible by the steadfast and heartfelt dedication to our mission from members of the Board of Trustees, Staff, and task force members.

PARLIAMENT TASK FORCES

Climate Action Task Force

Chair in 2020: David Hales

Global Ethic Task Force

Co-Chairs in 2020: Dianne Dillon-Ridgley
& Charline Manuel

Justice Task Force

Chair in 2020: Michael Balinsky

Countering War, Hate, & Violence Task Force

Chair in 2020: Bruce Kottts

UN Task Force

Chair in 2020: Audrey Kitagawa

Women's Task Force

Chair in 2020: Dolly Dastoor

Indigenous Task Force

Chair in 2020: Chris Peters

Next Generation Task Force

Co-Chairs in 2020: Nitin Ajmera
& Carl Murrell

2020 PARLIAMENT STAFF



Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Stephen Avino



Director of Climate Action
Joshua Basofin



Development Associate
Emma Pittsley



**Communication &
Program Manager**
Miriam Quezada



**Principal Investigator &
Project Director: Global
Ethic Project**
Myriam Renaud



Staff Accountant
Jesse Smith

2021 BOARD OFFICERS



Chair of the Board

Nitin Ajmera is a senior management professional and practitioner of the Digambar Jain tradition. He is Chief Accounting Officer at Town Sports International. He also teaches at Drexel University. He has been associated with the Jain Center of America-New York and Jain Samaj of Long Island in many capacities ranging from a teacher in Jain Sunday School, committee chair, to the President.



Vice-Chair of the Board

Dr. Dolly Dastoor is a widely published research clinical psychologist and specializes in the assessment of dementias, most recently was Clinical Administrative Chief at the Program in Dementia with Psychiatric Comorbidity at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute in Montreal and Asst Prof in Psychiatry, McGill University. She has been active in women's organizations, especially Zonta International and attended CSW meetings in Vienna and New York. She is past President of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec and of FEZANA and currently the Editor-in-Chief of the FEZANA Journal since 2005.



Vice-Chair of the Board

Dianne Dillon-Ridgley serves on the Climate Action Task Force and newly established Global Ethic Task Force. She is committed to establishing the "Age of Sustainability" facilitating the changes needed in our social architecture, democratizing institutions, expanding human rights for gender, ability and racial equity, breaking down barriers and opening minds and doors-creating new language and frames to catalyze society. She is currently the Executive Director of the Women's Network for a Sustainable Future.



Secretary

Dr. Renee Mehrra is a tenacious broadcaster with a burning passion for accurate and compelling storytelling and the host of the long-running television program, who has a doctorate in Public Health has been consistently singled out by the Asian Indian community as one of the most prominent broadcast journalists in the tri-state area. Her signature show- "Renee Report" has delivered top-notch quality content to its audience in an informational and entertaining style for several years.



Treasurer

Imam Saffet Abid Catovic is a United States Muslim Environmental Leader of Bosnian-Anglo descent. He is one of the first GreenFaith Muslim Fellows and is Co-founder and Chair of the Green Muslims of New Jersey (GMNJ). He is a founding board member of the Islamic Society of North America's (ISNA) Green Masjid Task Force. He is a member of the Drafting Committee of the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change and a founding member of the Global Muslim Climate Network (GMCN). He serves as the Imam and Muslim Chaplain at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

The work of the Parliament of the World's Religions is made possible through the ongoing support of donors, members, and foundation grants.

MEMBERSHIP

**Sustaining, Cornerstone, and Organization members receive a benefit of public acknowledgement.*

Sustaining Members

Jack Bomar
Paul Chaffee
Helen Cooluris
Larry Greenfield
Manohar Grewal
Isabelle Gunning
David Hales
Adrienne Hirt
Naresh Jain
Bruce Knotts
Jay Lee
John Joseph Mastandrea
Charles McDonald
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Covenant of Unitarian
Universalist Pagans

FEZANA

Vedanta Centre of Sydney

GRANTS

H.C. Gemmer Family Christian Foundation
Institute for Ecological Civilization (EcoCiv)
John Templeton Foundation
The Wadher Family Foundation
United Nations Environment

H. C. GEMMER FAMILY CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION



The Wadher Family Foundation

TOWARD **ECOLOGICAL**
CIVILIZATION

Network  for Good®

amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

 **mightycause**



JOHN TEMPLETON
FOUNDATION

SUPPORT OUR WORK

2021 is just around the corner, as the Parliament commemorate the successes of 2020 amidst times of global crisis and social unrest, we invite you to commit to the future of the global interfaith movement by supporting the work of the Parliament of the World's Religions.

BECOME A PARLIAMENT MEMBER

- i** A membership at the Parliament provides individuals and organizations a unique opportunity to support the Parliament and enjoy exclusive member-only content. Learn more at ParliamentOfReligions.org/Membership

ROUNDUP APP

- i** Did you know you can donate your spare change from your credit or debit card purchases through the **Roundup App**. Learn more at roundup.app/p/parliamentofworldreligions

OTHER WAYS TO DONATE

- i** Did you know that you can support the general operations of the Parliament through a general donation or choose to support a restricted fund for our ongoing programs? Learn more at ParliamentOfReligions.org/Donate

FOUNDATION GRANTS

WILL OR TRUST

STOCK DONATIONS

CORPORATE GIVING

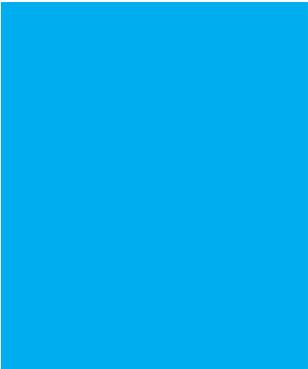
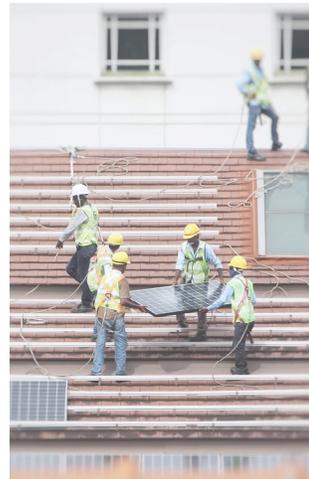
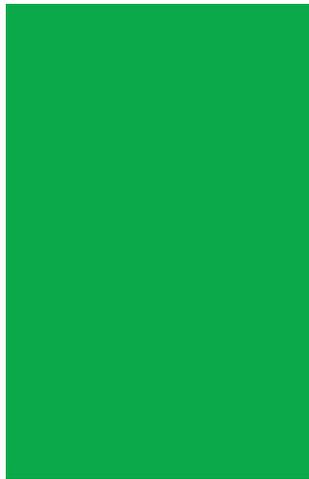
AMAZON SMILE

DONATION

DID YOU KNOW?

A large percentage of family and private foundations provide funding through an “invite only” process. When you share the work of the Parliament with your network, you increase the likelihood that these foundations will learn about and invest in the future of the interfaith movement.

Want to recommend the Parliament to a foundation in your network? Connect with our Development Associate today at emma@parliamentofreligions.org



CONTACT US

70 E. Lake St. Suite 230
Chicago, IL 60601
United States

www.ParliamentOfReligions.org
info@parliamentofreligions.org
312-629-2990

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