A Sampling of Major Speakers

We are assembling a set of speakers from all religious traditions from around the globe, including a fine array of speakers from Australia. A sampling of our major speakers includes the following:

Prof Wande Abimbola
Awise Awo Agbaye (World Spokesperson for Ifá and Yoruba Religion)

Born to Nigerian tradition bearers, and grounded in the ancient oral tradition, Wande Abimbola is a Babalawo or priest of Ifa, prolific author, and an academic authority on Yoruba religion which has over 70 million followers in Africa and the Americas. His programs at the Parliament will focus on healing the Earth and, as a result, healing the peoples of the Earth, and exploring the Yoruba principle of brotherhood and sisterhood of humans with all creation. More...

Ms. Margot Adler
Journalist, Author, and Radio Producer

Margot Adler has been a radio producer and journalist since 1968, pioneering live, free-form talk shows on religion, politics, women’s issues, and ecology. She lectures on Paganism and earth-centered traditions and leads workshops on the art of ritual, celebration, and song. She is the New York Bureau Chief for National Public Radio as well as a well-known correspondent on NPR’s All Things Considered and Morning Edition. She is also the host of Justice Talking, a national radio show on constitutional issues. Her most recent book is Heretic’s Heart: A Journey Through Spirit and Revolution. More....

Dr. Akbar Ahmed
The Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University

Akbar Ahmed will bring his world renowned insight into contemporary Islam to the Parliament’s dialogue; he is an inspirational speaker and prolific writer combining rare depth of knowledge coupled with political acumen and global vision. He is considered the world’s leading authority on contemporary Islam. More...

Sister Joan Chittister OSB
Founder and Executive Director of Benetvision

Joan Chittister, OSB is a noted national and international lecturer who focuses on women in church and society, human rights, peace and justice, and contemporary religious life and spirituality. In addition to being the executive director of Benetvision, a center for contemporary spirituality located in Erie, Pennsylvania, she is author of 22 books, including
Reverend Tim Costello
Chief Executive Officer of World Vision Australia

Tim Costello is a leading Australian voice on social justice issues, having spearheaded public debates on gambling, urban poverty, homelessness, reconciliation, and substance abuse. As CEO of World Vision Australia, Tim has insisted that the issues surrounding global poverty are on the national agenda. World Vision serves nearly 100 million people around the globe. Tim’s many awards include Victorian of the Year (2004), Officer of the Order of Australia (2005), Victorian Australian of the Year (2006), 2008 Australian Peace Prize and Australian Living Treasure.

Dr. Homi Dhalla
Founder and President, Cultural Foundation of the Zarathustra World

Dr. Dhalla is a leader and featured speaker in numerous international conferences focusing on the Zoroastrian view of peace, ecology, and inter-religious dialogue. He has been very active in the interfaith movement both at the local as well as the international level. He promotes interreligious dialogue and cooperation as a pathway to peace.

Mr. Hugh Evans
Founder and Director of the Oaktree Foundation and the Global Poverty Project

Hugh Evans’ Oaktree Foundation is a youth-led aid and development organisation, now established in the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, India and East Timor providing educational opportunities to more than 40,000 young people. In 2004, Hugh was awarded the Young Australian of the Year. He was a key leader behind the successful Make Poverty History campaign, including the concert involving major Australian artists as well as U2 front man, Bono. Currently, Hugh directs the Global Poverty Project to communicate the realities of extreme poverty and what we can do about it.

Fr. Laurence Freeman OSB
Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation, UK

Father Freeman, a Benedictine priest, will bring to the Parliament his wisdom as a highly regarded voice on the universality of meditation, speaking on the revival of Christian contemplation in modern times as a way to serve global consciousness, and what Simone Weil calls the ‘new holiness’. This deepening of authentic religious practice can fuel and sustain ethical engagement with the world.

Dr. Dipak Jain
Dean, Kellogg School of Management

A distinguished teacher and scholar, Dipak C. Jain has been dean of the Kellogg School of Management since July 2001. He brings more than 20 years of experience in management and education to his position at the school’s helm. Dean Jain’s areas of expertise include consumer behavior, data analysis, entrepreneurship and small business management, high-tech marketing, new product development, cross-cultural issues in global product diffusion, and forecasting models. He has published extensively and...
serves as a foreign affairs adviser for the Prime Minister of Thailand. More...

**His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso The XIVth Dalai Lama**  
*Tibetan Buddhist Leader, India*

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the head of state and spiritual leader of the Tibetan people. This Nobel Prize winning peace activist is known for his unswerving commitment to love, compassion and non-violence, and has moved the world with his spiritual teachings on "the universal religion of kindness." Since 1967, His Holiness has traveled and met with adherents, leaders and scholars in over forty-five countries and has authored or co-authored more than sixty books. More...

**Chief Oren Lyons**  
*Native American Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, USA*

Chief Lyons, Faithkeeper of the Onondaga Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy, is a powerful and passionate spokesperson for Indigenous human rights and spiritual perspectives. An environmental champion, he speaks around the world, is active at the United Nations, and is widely known through his writings. He is also proud of his earlier days as an All American Lacrosse player, a sport created by American Indians. More...

**Sri Swami Mayatitananda (Mother Maya)**  
*Spiritual Leader & Founder, Wise Earth School of Ayurveda*

Sri Swami Mayatitananda, affectionately called Mother Maya, is an embodiment of peace and wisdom. She is a renowned spiritual leader, revolutionary healer, and world-class educator. An authority in Vedanta and Ayurveda, her loving presence and extraordinary work in healing devastating disease and despair has touched and transformed the lives of thousands—filling a significant void in the world culture as a nurturer, healer, and educator. In 1981, Mother Maya founded the first school for Ayurveda Holistic Health education in the US—the Wise Earth School of Ayurveda in North Carolina—a non-governmental organization which continues to flourish today. More...

**Ms. Dalia Mogahed**  
*Senior Analyst and Executive Director, Gallup Center for Muslim Studies*

Dalia Mogahed provides leadership, strategic direction, and consultation on the collection and analysis of Gallup’s unprecedented survey representing the opinions of more than 1 billion Muslims worldwide. She also directs the Muslim-West Facts Initiative and is co-author of *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*. More...

**Professor Joy Murphy Wandin, AO**  
*Senior Aboriginal Woman of the Wurundjeri People, Australia*

Aunty Joy will offer a traditional Welcome to the Land, as is her right and traditional role as senior woman of the Wurundjeri People, the traditional owners of Melbourne. She will also offer her perspectives on current concerns for Aboriginal Australians. More...

**Dr. Chandra Muzaffar**  
*Political Scientist and Founder of JUST, Malaysia*
Dr. Muzaffar is a powerful advocate for human rights, a brilliant social critic and innovative thinker on our global crisis. He will offer insights into the world order and possibilities for a more just and sustainable future. He has edited and written over 18 books and hundreds of journal articles on Malaysian politics and international relations, including Religion and Governance, which explores how the values of diverse world religions impact on governance.

Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko
General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation and Convenor of the Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa

As its General Secretary, Ishmael Noko is the world leader of a historic Protestant denomination and thus in effect the CEO of a major international organization with great political responsibilities. He is the first African to hold this position; as convener of the important new initiative Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa he brings a profound understanding of the multi-religious African continent and is a key voice of Christian leadership.

His Eminence George Cardinal Pell
Catholic Archbishop of Sydney

Cardinal Pell served as Archbishop of Melbourne before his appointment as Archbishop of Sydney. His work in inter-faith relations has included attendance at the Asia-Pacific Interfaith Dialogue (originally established as the Australian-Indonesian summit on inter-religious dialogue and terrorism) in 2004, 2006 and 2007. On each occasion, he attended the Dialogue as part of the official Australian delegation led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Cardinal Pell’s long-standing commitment to ecumenism was recognized in 1998 with the conferral of the Grand Cross of Merit of the Order of Saint Lazarus, and his promotion to Ecclesiastic Grand Cross of St Lazarus, the Order’s highest ecclesiastical rank, in 2003. From 2001 to 2007 he served as the Order’s National Chaplain.

Uncle Bob Randall
Yankunytjatjara Elder and Traditional Owner of Uluru (Ayers Rock)

Bob Randall is one of the Stolen Generation of the Aboriginal people, taken from his family at the age of seven. Throughout his life, Bob has worked as a teacher and leader for Aboriginal land rights, education, community development and cultural awareness. In the early ’70s, Bob’s song Brown Skin Baby (They Took Me Away) became an anthem for the Aboriginal people. He is the author of two books: his autobiography Songman and a children’s book, Tracker Tjginji. He is also the subject of the recent documentary film Kanyini.

Rabbi Dr. David Rosen KCSG
International Director of Interreligious Affairs, AJC

Director of the American Jewish Committee’s Department for Interreligious Affairs and the Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding, Rabbi Rosen serves on the leadership of several international interreligious organizations. Formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland, he is the immediate past Chair of the IJCIC, the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, a broad-based coalition of Jewish organizations representing world Jewry to other religions. Among various awards and honors, Rabbi Rosen is the first Israeli and the first Orthodox rabbi to receive a papal Knighthood, conferred on him for his
contribution to Jewish-Catholic reconciliation. More...

**His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**  
Spiritual Leader of The Art of Living Foundation, India

His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a renowned spiritual leader and multi-faceted humanitarian whose mission of uniting the world into a violence-free family has inspired millions of people worldwide. The icon of non-violence and universal human values, Sri Sri seeks global peace through service and dialogue. In 1981, Sri Sri started the Art of Living Foundation, an international nonprofit educational and humanitarian organization. The Foundation, now active in more than 140 countries, offers educational and self-development programs designed to eliminate stress and foster a sense of well-being. More...

**Ms. Joanne Shenandoah**  
Grammy Award winning Native American Singer Songwriter

A Grammy Award and 11 Time Native American Music award winning artist, and Wolf Clan member of the Iroquois Confederacy, Joanne Shenandoah has fulfilled the promise of her Native American name, Tekaliwah-kwa (She Sings). "She's become one of the most acclaimed Native American recording artists of her time." (AP) Since emerging as an artist in 1990, she has performed at such high-profile gigs as Carnegie Hall, the White House, Kennedy Center, Earth Day on the Mall, Woodstock '94, the Parliament of the Worlds Religions in South Africa, Barcelona's famous Sagrada Familia in Spain, and Hwa Eom Temple in S. Korea, as well as at thousands of venues in the US. More...

**Jathedar Singh Sahib Giani Gurbachan Singh**  
Supreme Religious Authority of the Sikhs, India

Jathedar Singh Sahib Giani Gurbachan Singh, aged 60, is the current religious head of Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib, the supreme religious authority of the Sikhs, based in Amritsar, Punjab, India. He was appointed as Jathedar on 6 August 2008, after serving 37 years as a Sikh religious preacher. His last appointment was as Head Granthi of Sri Harmandir Sahib, also known as the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

**Dr. Karan Singh**  
Member of Parliament, Former Minister for Education and Culture, India

Karan Singh will speak from his perspective as an Indian politician, author, and diplomat on his interests in Hinduism, the environment, and the interfaith movement. His political leadership started at age 18 when as Crown Prince he was called to act as regent of Jammu and Kashmir state. More...

**Dr. M. Din Syamsuddin**  
President of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia

Din Syamsuddin leads Indonesia's second largest Muslim group and will speak on Islam and interfaith relations, as well as religious pluralism within a Muslim majority country, from his perspective as a scholar and a leader. More...
Venerable Dharma Master Hsin Tao  
Founder of Ling Jiou Mountain Wu-Sheng Monastery, and Museum of World Religions, Taiwan

The Venerable Dharma Master Hsin Tao is a Buddhist monk who has combined his religious practices with political and social activism. In addition to his daily monastic practices, Hsin Tao has focused on three issues: the promotion of peace; the encouragement of interfaith dialogue; and the preservation of the environment. Hsin Tao was born in Myanmar, Burma in 1948 to ethnic Chinese. At the age of four, he was left orphaned after his parents were killed by the Chinese Nationalist Army. At the age of nine, Hsin Tao was forced to become a child soldier in the Burmese guerrilla movement. Six years later, he fled to Taiwan to escape the invading Chinese. Exposed to the destruction of war and seeking spiritual guidance, Hsin Tao turned to Buddhism for answers. At the age of twenty-five, Hsin Tao became a monk spending the next two years fasting and meditating in a cave high atop Ling Jiou Mountain in northern Taiwan. Upon his emergence from the cave, Hsin Tao established the Wu Sheng Buddhist Monastery at the site of his meditation. In subsequent years, he has formed other organizations to promote a number of projects as well as to perform charitable services. More...

Ms. Mary Evelyn Tucker  
Co-Founder and Co-Director, The Forum on Religion and Ecology  
Senior Lecturer and Senior Scholar at Yale University

Mary Evelyn Tucker is a Senior Lecturer and Senior Scholar at Yale University where she has appointments in the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies as well as the Divinity School and the Department of Religious Studies. She is a co-founder and co-director with John Grim of the Forum on Religion and Ecology. Together they organized a series of ten conferences on World Religions and Ecology at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School. They are series editors for the ten volumes from the conferences distributed by Harvard University Press. More...

Mrs. Lally Lucretia M. Warren  
Chairperson, National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’i’s in Botswana

Ms. Warren, a nurse and midwife, began her involvement in interfaith activities two decades ago by being one of the organizers of local observances of World Religion Day. Since that time, she has led a wide variety of interreligious initiatives and has served as Chairperson of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’i’s in Botswana. She chaired a prominent session at the 2004 Parliament of the World’s Religions entitled “Strategies for Mainstreaming Gender into Peace Building and Inter-Faith Programs.” More...

Dr. Tu Weiming  
Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy and Confucian Studies, Harvard University  

Dr. Tu Weiming has been a Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy and Confucian Studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University since 1981. He was Director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute (1996-2008) and is currently interpreting Confucian Ethics as a spiritual resource for the emerging global community. His research interests are Confucian humanism, Chinese intellectual history, philosophies of East Asia and comparative religion. As a renowned international scholar and thinker, he is committed to the study of Confucian teachings in the modern age. More...