



## **The 3rd Interfaith Leadership Forum**

### ***Building Interfaith Partnerships Beyond Racism and Religious Nationalism***

**February 24, 2022  
6:45 - 9:20 pm**

#### **About the Interfaith Leadership Forum**

Interfaith Leadership Forum (ILF) is a DMV area learning platform that aims to make the existing expertise, capacity and scholarship on interfaith engagement available to the use of clergy, educators, public servants and other interested individuals. The Forum is a partnership of the Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington, Rumi Forum, and Washington Theological Consortium.

ILF aims to promote pluralism by convening leaders of various religious, ethnic, racial, cultural and gender backgrounds to exchange ideas and generate an action-oriented agenda. It provides a venue where a diverse group of community leaders, scholars, clergy and public officials can engage in in-depth discussions on shared values and explore ways to harness them for social action. ILF is open to all individuals who are interested in advancing their interfaith literacy and serving the community as interfaith mobilizers in their professional or individual capacities.

#### **Objectives**

Interfaith Leadership Forum aims to strengthen interfaith relationships, literacy, and leadership by;

- Equipping one another with various models of dialogue with distinct ends.
- Experiencing deeper levels of interfaith encounter and dialogue
- Strengthening literacy about other's faiths and about one's own
- Overcoming prejudices and misconceptions about other faiths
- Eliciting social action through interfaith engagement

## **Purpose Statement for the 3rd Interfaith Leadership Forum**

### ***Building Interfaith Partnerships Beyond Racism and Religious Nationalism***

Religious nationalism is on the rise worldwide. Our program will explore the nature of global nationalism and its specific manifestation in the U.S., which primarily takes the form of White Christian Nationalism: the affiliation of being White and Christian with belonging and mattering. Our keynote speaker is an expert, who has been studying these topics for over thirty years. He will be followed by a panel of diverse faith leaders who will share their views on building interfaith solidarity beyond racism and religious nationalism. Participants in the program will have a chance to discuss and respond to what they have heard in small group dialogues. This program is a forum for people of faith to learn, become activated and feel equipped to respond together effectively.

#### **Opening Remarks (5 min.)**

Ori Z. Soltes

Professor of the Teaching of Jewish Civilization, Georgetown University

#### **Keynote (30 min.)**

##### **“The Capitol Insurrection and the Global Rise of Religious Nationalism”**

Mark Juergensmeyer

*Founding Director of the Orfalea Center of Global and International Studies at University of California Santa Barbara*

#### **Panel Presentations (60 min.)**

Moderated by Ori Z. Soltes

##### **“The Interfaith Imperative”**

Rabbi Jack Moline - *President, Interfaith Alliance*

##### **“Doctrine of Discover, Manifest Destiny and Christian Nationalism: Nothing New.”**

Charles Watson - *Director of Education, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty*

##### **"The Pro-Democracy Faith Movement"**

Maggie Siddiqi - *Senior Director, Religion and Faith, Center for American Progress*

##### **“Religious Liberty and the Shortfall of Advocacy”**

Simran Singh - *Vice Chairman, IRF (International Religious Freedom) Secretariat*

#### **Breakout Session (45 min.)**

- Main Points - A summary by the panelist (5 min.)
- Discussion round – Introduction and reflection by each participant (20 min. total)
- Action item round - Action item proposals by each participant (20 min. total)

## **Closing Session (15 min.)**

Moderated by Ori Z. Soltes

- Reporting of breakout sessions (3 min. each)
- Closing remarks

### **Breakout Session Ground Rules**

- Speak for yourself—from your own heart and experience.
- Avoid absolute statements and generalizations.
- Stay open to learning and growing from others, accepting different perspectives in a spirit of openness and curiosity.
- Listen with full attention to the other person's truth rather than evaluating their response or preparing your own response.
- Speak once until everyone has had a chance to share before speaking for a second time. (It's okay to pass)

### **Speaker Bios**

#### **Mark Juergensmeyer**

*Founding Director of the Orfalea Center of Global and International Studies at University of California Santa Barbara*

Juergensmeyer is distinguished professor emeritus of sociology and global studies and interim director of the Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and William F. Podlich Distinguished Fellow and Professor of Religious Studies at Claremont McKenna College. He is a pioneer in global studies, focusing on global religion, religious violence, conflict resolution and South Asian religion and politics. He has published more than three hundred articles and thirty books, including the recent *God at War* (Oxford 2020), the award-winning *Terror in the Mind of God* (University of California Press, 4th ed, 2017), and his co-edited *Oxford Handbook of Global Studies* (Oxford 2018).

#### **Rabbi Jack Moline**

*President, Interfaith Alliance*

Jack Moline is President of Interfaith Alliance. In a career spanning four decades, he has established himself as a powerful voice fighting for religious freedom for all Americans, regardless of their faith or belief system. As a rabbi, he has worked to create common ground between people of diverse religious and secular backgrounds. As an advocate, he has led efforts to protect religion and government from each other, promote marriage equality and especially, protect civil rights for people of all faiths and sexual orientations.

A native of Chicago, he holds the title of Rabbi Emeritus of Agudas Achim Congregation in Alexandria, Virginia, where he served for 27 years. Rabbi Moline is an adjunct faculty member of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Virginia Theological Seminary, educating future leaders in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith communities.

### **Charles Watson**

*Director of Education, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty*

Charles Watson Jr., a native of Millen, Georgia, is the director of education at BJC. His work is focused on expanding the base of support for religious liberty and engaging the next generation of advocates.

A graduate of The Citadel, Watson earned a Master of Divinity degree at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology. He previously served as the Children's Director of Buckhead Baptist Church in Atlanta and as a hospice chaplain resident, endorsed by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Watson is a veteran of the United States Air Force.

### **Maggie Siddiqi**

*Senior Director, Center for American Progress*

Maggie M. Siddiqi is the senior director of Religion and Faith at Center for American Progress. Her role is focused on advancing a progressive vision of faith and religious liberty and engaging a network of faith leaders.

Siddiqi previously served as the director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives for the El-Hibri Foundation, a philanthropic organization advancing inclusion of and within American Muslim communities. She also served as program director for American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) and founded its EnabledMuslim initiative, an online network providing support for individuals living with disabilities and their loved ones. Siddiqi served as Program Coordinator at the Islamic Society of North America's Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances in Washington, D.C., where she oversaw implementation of interfaith dialogue and community outreach programs and conducted outreach to government officials and stakeholders on issues of social justice.

### **Simran Singh**

*Vice Chairman, IRF (International Religious Freedom) Secretariat*

Simran Singh is a human rights activist and social entrepreneur. In 2021, the National Stop the Violence Alliance honored him as a man of "peace, charity, love, compassion, diversity, family, nonviolence and unity." In keeping with his Sikh faith, Simran engages on human rights broadly.

He is a lifelong Senior Fellow at the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute, a member of the Rumi Forum's Advisory Council, and a Fellow at the Royal Society of Arts. Simran was a Senior VP at Akal Global, the largest employer of retired American police officers in the world, and is the Chairman of the Advisory Board for EOR, a mission support firm for US intel, military and civilian agencies. Simran was honored to be the first ethnic European in history to sing at the Golden Temple, the holiest shrine of the Sikhs, and in 2021 opened the first all-encompassing interfaith events

in Guatemala and Costa Rica's history as Vice Chairman of the International Religious Freedom Secretariat.

### Interfaith Leadership Forum Partners



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