

PRESS RELEASE

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Chicago, Illinois



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In a commitment to extending its reach to diverse religious and spiritual communities, the Board of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, at its October 24-25, 2010 meeting, elected seven new Trustees for a three-year term:

Anju Bhargava (Hindu)
Kirit Daftary (Jain)
Dr. Robert Henderson (Baha'i)
Mary Nelson (Christian)
Christopher Peters (Native American)
Dr. Anantanand Rambachan (Hindu)
Kuldeep Singh (Sikh)

(For more detailed bios, please see the attached)

The roots of the Council go back to the historic 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, hosted in conjunction with the World Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, marking the first time in history the traditions of East and West met for formal interreligious dialogue.

Chicago was the site for the centennial celebration of this event with the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, held in August of that year. Subsequent Parliament events have been held in Cape Town, South Africa in 1999, Barcelona, Spain in 2004, and most recently, Melbourne, Australia in 2009.

Parliaments of the World's Religions are the largest and most diverse interreligious gatherings in the world. 6,500 participants from over 80 countries representing over 200 religious, spiritual and traditional communities attended the most recent Parliament in Melbourne.

The Council is also establishing a network of locally based interreligious movements in over 70 cities worldwide.

The Council is governed by a board of 35 Trustees, with persons of Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Indigenous, Pagan, Sikh, Zoroastrian, and humanistic traditions.

For more information about the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions and its Board of Trustees, visit the website - www.parliamentofreligions.org

Or contact -
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BRIEF BIOS OF NEW TRUSTEES
COUNCIL FOR A PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

October 2010

Anju Bhargava (Hindu)

Anju Bhargava is a Strategic Business Transformation and Risk Management professional and management consultant. She has provided thought leadership in the public and private sectors, published papers and received many awards. She is the only Hindu American appointed to President Obama's Inaugural Advisory Council on Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and was the only Indian-American to serve in the Community Builder Fellowship, President Clinton's White House initiative. She is the Founder of Hindu American Seva Charities, which is now becoming a national movement for Hindu faith-based community service programs addressing social issues. For more than twenty years she has been a Hindu representative to the Interfaith Clergy Association of Livingston, New Jersey. An ordained pujari, she strives to combine philosophy and practice from a contemporary view and is active in Hindu education. She blogs "On Faith" for the Washington Post. She was a founding member of the New Jersey Corporate Diversity Network and is the President of Asian Indian Women in America (AIWA).

Kirit Daftary (Jain)

Kirit C. Daftary is a leader in the North American Jain community and is active in a number of organizations including the Jain Association of North America (JAINA) which he has served as president and the local Jain Center of North Texas of which he has also been the head. Currently, he is the President of Anuvibha of North America, a UN/NGO organization based in India and spiritually guided by Acharya Mahapragya Ji, the disciple of Acharya Tulsi. Kirit has a passion for the message of non-violence and the promotion of peace and harmony and is a frequent speaker including at universities. Since 2006, he has been associated with Parliament activities and was an Ambassador of the 2009 Parliament as well as active in the site selection process for 2009. He is a metallurgical engineer and received an M.B.A. and an M.A. from Wayne State University. He currently owns a successful import company dealing with India, China and Korea.

Dr. Robert C. Henderson (Bahá'í)

Robert C. Henderson is a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, the national governing body of the American Bahá'í community. He has extensive experience in the fields of business, government, and education. He co-founded Henderson Zorich Consulting, which specializes in management consulting and leadership and diversity training, with his daughter, Dr. Camille Henderson. His clients have included such Fortune 100 companies as Amoco, AT&T, General Electric, Hallmark, Mobil, United Technologies, and Xerox, as well as the Chicago White Sox. Dr. Henderson served as a Federal Commissioner of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission and designed and led meetings of California Supreme Court members, judges and lawyers to establish a California State Supreme Court Commission on Race and Ethnic Bias. Dr. Henderson's public speaking engagements are numerous; highlights include a plenary address given at the invitation of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to the international conference, "Educating Girls: A Development Imperative," and an address to an "Education Against Hatred" Seminar at Haifa University sponsored by the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity. He was invited by President Clinton's Advisory Board on Race to participate in the religious forum held in Louisville, Kentucky. Robert Henderson holds a doctorate in Education from the University of Massachusetts (1976). He has published several articles and books on management systems and in-service training programs.

Mary Nelson (Christian – Lutheran)

Mary Nelson has spent the last forty years working in faith-based community development on the west side of Chicago, seeking to carry out the asset based community development principles in concrete ways through her leadership of Bethel New Life, Inc. She received an MAT from Brown University and a PhD

from Union Graduate School. Her focus has been community based planning and development, and Bethel New Life, under her leadership, grew from an all-volunteer organization to a nationally recognized community development corporation. Mary transitioned in 2006 from the leadership of Bethel New Life into a senior associate/President Emeritus position. She is former chair of the Board of Mid American Leadership Foundation, Woodstock Institute and National Congress for Community Economic Development. She is on the national Boards of Sojourners (currently as Chair) and Christian Community Development Association. She has also had a number of government appointments. Mary has been teaching graduate university courses for over fifteen years and does workshops on community development and faith based community development all over the world. She is currently the coordinator of the Loyola University (Chicago) Institute of Pastoral Studies (IPS) Masters in Social Justice and Community Development.

Christopher Peters (Native American)

Christopher Peters (Pohlik-lah/Karuk) was born and raised on his people's territories in northwestern California. He is President and CEO of the Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development, a Native led Indigenous Peoples public Foundation which supports grassroots Indigenous communities in the Americas and beyond. For more than thirty-five years his work has focused on grassroots social justice organizing, protecting sacred sites, working for holistic community renewal, rebuilding traditional economies, and supporting cultural revitalization efforts. Chris is a well-known and leading advocate for the protection of Native American prayer places and ceremonial life with long experience and expertise on the legal aspects of these issues. He has fought on the frontlines of environmental justice struggles to protect aboriginal ecosystems from the devastating effects of clear-cut logging, dam development, mining, recreational development and the negative impacts that the nuclear industry and globalization has inflicted upon Indigenous Peoples and homelands. Chris has a B.S. degree from the University of California, Davis, and an M.A. degree from Stanford University.

Dr. Anantanand Rambachan (Hindu)

Anant Rambachan, an internationally known scholar of Hinduism, is Professor of Religion and Chair of the Department of Religion at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, where he has taught since 1985. A native of Trinidad, he received the M.A. and Ph. D. from the University of Leeds, England. He is the author of many books including *The Hindu Vision* (1992), *Gitamrtam: The Essential Teaching of the Bhagavadgita* [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993], and *The Advaita Worldview: God, World and Humanity* (2006). He has been active in interfaith programs with the World Council of Churches as well as the Vatican for twenty-five years as well as in the local setting in Minnesota. He is widely respected as a spokesperson for Hinduism and a bridge-builder between Hindus and other religious communities.

Kuldeep Singh (Sikh)

Mr. Kuldeep Singh has lived in the US since 1971 and "is probably known to and respected by nearly every Sikh in the United States," according to Tarunjit Singh Butalia. He is currently President of Sikh Youth Federation-USA, established in 1968. He was Chairperson (1998 -2001 and 2003 -2004) of the World Sikh Council-America Region, which is the representative body of Sikh Gurdwaras and other Sikh institutions in the USA. He actively participated in the formation of the World Sikh Council and in 1996 was unanimously selected as the founder-coordinator of the World Sikh Council-America Region. He has organized Sikh youth camps in the summer for the last thirty-seven years for Sikh youth from across the US and Canada. He is an able fundraiser within the Sikh community. He is a sought-after speaker and has spoken at nearly every national and international Sikh conference and seminars and also organizes many such events. He helped organize the Sikh presence at the Chicago 1993 Parliament and provided assistance in encouraging Sikhs from across the world to attend the Melbourne 2009 Parliament, at which he was a major speaker.