



## Powering Pluralism Network: Religious Leadership Cohort Members



### **Dr. Saba Ayman-Nolley**

*President, Hyde Park & Kenwood Interfaith Council*

Dr. Ayman-Nolley is a member of the Baha'i community and president of Hyde Park & Kenwood Interfaith Council (HPKIFC). HPKIFC is the oldest interfaith council in the country, spanning over 100 years, and its mission is to address hunger, homelessness, and joblessness in its community—with a focus on issues of social justice.



### **Rev. Dawnesha Beaver**

*Director of Business Operations and Strategy*

*New Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church*

Rev. Dawnesha K. Beaver, MPH, MAT serves as the Director of Operations and Strategy at New Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles, CA. As one of the youngest members of the Senior Leadership Team, Rev. Beaver is an experienced and successful non-profit leader with more than 10 years of experience driving superior operations and overall performance. Over the course of her career, she has launched initiatives, policies, and programs to champion the cause for equality and justice for underserved communities in health literacy and access, education, housing, transportation, employment, and community planning and investment.



### **Rev. Dr. Reginald Blount**

*Pastor, Associate Professor*

*Arnett Chapel A.M.E. Church, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary*

Rev. Dr. Reggie Blount is the Pastor of Arnett Chapel A.M.E. Church in Chicago, IL. He also serves on the faculty of Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary as Associate Professor of Formation, Leadership and Culture and teaches in the area of Christian Education, Congregational Leadership and Youth and Young Adult Ministry.



### **Father Jon Chalmers**

*Associate Pastor, Executive Vice President*

*Prince of Peace Catholic Parish, John Carroll Catholic High School*

Fr. Jon Chalmers passionately believes that love of God and love of neighbor have a constitutive relevance in the Church, especially in the ability of education and healthcare to nurture health, healing, and holiness. As the former President of Holy Family Cristo Rey and Pastor of the Prince of Peace Catholic Parish, he has particular interests in how the past informs the future, the conversation between nature and culture, and redemptive responses to social challenges. A graduate of the University of Alabama, Harvard, and Yale, he is also formed by old roads, wilderness trails, and learning from his family.



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### **Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Cohen**

*Professor of Rabbinic Literature, American Jewish University*

Aryeh Cohen is a rabbi and scholar who serves as a professor of Rabbinic Literature at American Jewish University. His scholarship focuses on the Talmud, Jewish ethics, and social justice.



### **Rabbi Shoshanah Conover**

*Senior Rabbi, Temple Sholom of Chicago*

Rabbi Shoshanah Conover is only the 8th Senior Rabbi Temple Sholom has had during its 152-year history. Rabbi Conover's responsibilities at Temple Sholom of Chicago reflect her passions: learning and teaching inspiring (and challenging) texts, leading dynamic and engaging spiritual experiences, serving as pastoral counselor, and finding ways to improve our world through the guidelines of our faith.



### **Cheryl Cook**

*CEO, Avodah*

Cheryl Cook is the Chief Executive Officer of Avodah. With close to 30 years of experience working across the Jewish community as a leader, fundraiser and manager, Cheryl is helping to develop the next generation of Jewish social justice leaders. Cheryl has overseen some of the organization's most successful national growth strategies, including expansion of the leadership programs to new cities, the creation of innovative models to elevate Jewish justice voices, and bringing educational resources and conversations into the Jewish community to strengthen our work on poverty & social justice in the United States.



### **David H. Crawford**

*President, McCormick Theological Seminary*

David H. Crawford is President of McCormick Theological Seminary: a diverse, ecumenical, progressive, Reformed, 191- year-old institution affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, USA, coupling rigorous academic work with leadership training and focusing on issues of social justice in a multicultural, urban context.



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### **Barbara Gholar**

*Co-Chairperson, Interfaith Council of Monrovia*

I'm Barbara Gholar from Monrovia, Ca a member of the Baha'i Faith and Co-Chairperson of the Interfaith Council of Monrovia. As an Interfaith Council we work closely with the city with activities including our different Faith Traditions, such as Race Unity Day, National Day of Prayer, and World Religion Day.



### **Rev. Dr. Zina Jacque**

*Pastoral Staff, Alfred Street Baptist Church*

Rev. Dr. Zina Jacque is a retired pastor of the Community Church of Barrington, an American Baptist Church focused on developing within to serve without. She currently serves as a member of the pastoral staff at Alfred Street Baptist Church.



### **Rev. Hannah Kardon**

*Teaching Pastor, Urban Village Church*

Hannah is the Teaching Pastor of Urban Village Church - an innovative, multi-site, LGBTQ-celebrating, anti-racist, deeply in love with Jesus Christian community in Chicago. UVC Pastors recently published their first book study *Finding Peace in an Anxious World* through the United Methodist Women, and worship and hold devotionals regularly on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube @uvchurch.



### **Malik Johnson**

*Director of Prison Outreach, Masjid al-Rabia*

As the Director of Prison Outreach for Masjid al-Rabia, Malik communicates with incarcerated communal members via mail or phone, responding to requests for pen pals, religious doctrine and rulings, and Islamic materials. He enjoys meeting new people and engaging in different cultures. Malik believes the key to cultivating a community of caring individuals is "to practice being unapologetically honest with ourselves and love one another, especially in our differences."



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### **Brie Loskota**

*Executive Director, Former Religion & Society Program Fellow*

*The Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion*

Brie Loskota is the former director of the University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture and now serves as the Executive Director at the Martin Marty Center at the University of Chicago. Her research focuses on how religions change and make change in the world. She is also the co-founder and senior advisor to the American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute and serves as the implementation partner for the United States Institute of Peace's Generation Change program.



### **Rabbi Michelle Missaghieh**

*Rabbi, Temple Israel of Hollywood*

Rabbi Michelle Missaghieh has served as Associate Rabbi of Temple Israel of Hollywood (TIOH) since 1996. She enjoys teaching people of all ages and empowering them to participate in Jewish living. She takes special interest in working with individuals for conversion, creating environments where TIOH members gather for intergenerational neighborhood Shabbat dinners, and others where members connect to discuss issues of aging, parenting or preparing for end of life issues.



### **Jenan Mohajir**

*Senior Director of Special Projects, Interfaith America*

Jenan Mohajir is an educator, a storyteller, and a believer in building relationships across the lines that separate us. Jenan currently serves as Senior Director of Leadership at Interfaith America, where she oversees the creation and implementation of programs that invest in development of alumni and student interfaith leaders, including the annual Interfaith Leadership Institute (ILI).



### **Nadiah Mohajir**

*Founder & Executive Director, HEART Women & Girls*

Nadiah Mohajir is the Executive Director of HEART, a national nonprofit working to promote sexual health literacy and sexual violence prevention in Muslim communities.



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### **Lisa Notter**

*Development Officer, Hands of Peace*

Lisa Notter served as the former Vice President for Advancement for Chicago Theological Seminary, a graduate school of theology, where she oversaw a staff of six and was responsible for strategic initiatives, alumni/church engagement and communication, foundation giving and grant administration, stewardship and donor relations, annual giving, and advancement operations. She currently serves as the Development Officer at Hands of Peace.



### **Ronak Patel**

*Outreach Volunteer*

*BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Los Angeles*

BAPS is a spiritual, humanitarian, civic and charitable organization that strives to serve communities, uplift families, and unite society.



### **Daniel Schwartz**

*Executive Director, Faith in Action Alabama*

Daniel Schwartz is Executive Director of Faith in Action Alabama, a statewide multiracial, multifaith faith-based community organizing nonprofit that seeks to honor God by dismantling systemic racism to create pathways of opportunity for all Alabamians. Faith in Action Alabama strives to serve as a vehicle that further develops the leadership capacity of grassroots individuals and communities to advocate for their core concerns.



### **Rev. Melissa Self Patrick**

*Pastor, Executive Director*

*United Methodist Church (North Alabama), Birmingham Holocaust Education Center*

Rev. Melissa Self Patrick is a UMC pastor currently working as the Executive Director, Birmingham Holocaust Education Center, which is dedicated to teaching the history of the Holocaust and empowering teachers, students, and community members to apply the lessons of the Holocaust to create a more just and accepting community.



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### **Joumana Silyan-Saba**

*City of Los Angeles, Civil and Human Rights Department*

Joumana is an accomplished public leader, with a career spanning 16 years of policy development, civic engagement, and peacebuilding. Through her extensive work in the City of Los Angeles she advanced inter-group relations, religious pluralism, police-community engagement, and social cohesion. She is a passionate, culturally sensitive, civic-minded professional, who has engaged in cultivating strategic partnerships, and committed to bringing about social change and improving relations among institutions and the constituencies they serve.



### **Tahil Sharma**

*Regional Coordinator for North America, United Religions Initiative*

Tahil Sharma is an interfaith activist based in Los Angeles who was born to a Hindu father and a Sikh mother. Following the Oak Creek, WI shooting of a Sikh temple in 2012, Tahil became involved in efforts for interfaith literacy and social justice and has been doing this work professionally for the past eight years.

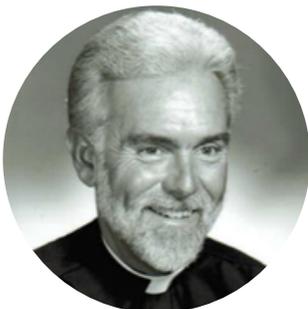


### **Kim Schultz**

*Coordinator of Creative Initiatives*

*InterReligious Institute at Chicago Theological Seminary*

Our society has a long history of normalizing Christianity as the preferred or normal way to be an American. We counter this false and harmful notion at CTS through our course work and degree programs. The IRI serves as our means to engage the public as we work to reshape the public square, such that people of all religions and people of no particular religion have equal space and voice



### **Rt. Rev. Alexei Smith**

*Ecumenical and Interreligious Officer*

*Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles*

Rt. Rev. Alexei Smith has served as the Ecumenical and Interreligious Officer for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles since the year 2000.



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### **Rev. Dr. Najuma Smith-Pollard**

*Program Director*

*Cecil Murray Center for Community Engagement at USC*

*Rev. Dr. Najuma Smith-Pollard is the Founding Pastor of Word of Encouragement Church and Program Director of the Cecil Murray Center for Community Engagement at USC. Rev. Najuma is grateful to combine her twenty plus years in ministry with her professional work; to serve as a Faith Leader & Activist in her community. Rev. Najuma is a frequent speaker and panelist for conferences related to Civic Engagement, Faith Leadership, The Black Church, Women's Empowerment, Women In Ministry, Sexual Violence Awareness, and Personal Development.*



### **Dr. Najeeba Syeed**

*Associate Professor of Muslim and Interreligious Studies*

*Chicago Theological Seminary*

Najeeba Syeed, J.D., is Associate Professor of Muslim and Interreligious Studies at Chicago Theological Seminary and director of Bayt Rahma, a center for healing justice. She is recognized as a leader in peacebuilding and social justice-based research and twice received the Jon Anson Ford Award for reducing violence in schools and in the area of interracial gang conflicts and was named Southern California Mediation Association's "Peacemaker of the Year" in 2007. Professor Syeed received the 2017 Scholar-Activist Award from Auburn Seminary. Her peace and justice work has been the subject of news reports and documentaries as well such as this film which aired on NBC *Waging Peace: Muslim and Christian Alternatives*. In 2020 her co-edited book (with Heidi Hadsell) *Critical Approaches to Interreligious Education: Experiments in Empathy*, a project supported by the Henry Luce Foundation was published.



### **Ashfaq Taufique**

*President Emeritus, Birmingham Islamic Society*

Ashfaq Taufique is President Emeritus of Birmingham Islamic Society (BIS), which provides worship and social services to the Muslim community of Birmingham, AL. In addition, BIS actively participates in the interfaith community along with serving their community through Habitat for Humanity, a free food pantry at their center, and a soup kitchen.



**RELIGION & SOCIETY**

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### **Roohi Younus**

*Co-Founder, Principal, R&R Strategists*

Roohi Younus, co-founder and principal at R&R Strategists, has been consulting with nonprofit organizations for over 11 years. She is currently the Program Manager and Facilitator for the Community Collaboration Initiative, an action-based research project based out of Indiana University's Lilly School of Philanthropy. Roohi also co-founded MUSE Bookings, a speaker and artists bureau that provides booking services to American Muslims.



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## Powering Pluralism Network: Religious Literacy Cohort Members



### **Laura Tavares**

*Program Director, Organizational Learning and Thought Leadership  
Facing History and Ourselves*

Facing History and Ourselves is a global education non-profit. We use lessons of history to challenge teachers and students to stand up to bigotry and hate. Our approach to humanities education helps young people become more equitable, engaged, and responsible decision-makers who will build more just and inclusive societies.



### **Hicham Tiflati**

*Regional Director (Quebec), The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy*

Hicham is a researcher and a practitioner who has been working with the Muslim community for over a decade. He is a humanities professor at John Abbott College and a chargé de cours at Bishops University. He has taught Arabic and Islamic studies for many years and has been working closely with families and close friends of Canadians who joined ISIS.



### **Asma Uddin**

*Fellow for Religious Freedom*

*Religion & Society Program, The Aspen Institute*

Asma T. Uddin is a religious liberty lawyer and scholar working for the protection of religious expression for people of all faiths in the U.S. and abroad. Uddin has worked on religious liberty cases at the U.S. Supreme Court, federal appellate courts, and federal trial courts.



### **Amanda Vigneaud**

*Policy and Research Specialist*

*United States Agency for International Development*



## Powering Pluralism Network: Religious Literacy Cohort Members



### **Nathan Walker**

*Managing Director, The Foundation for Religious Literacy*

Rev. Dr. Nathan C. Walker is the executive director of 1791 Delegates, managing director of The Foundation for Religious Literacy, and founder of ReligionAndPublicLife.org. He has published five books, including The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Education, and he teaches First Amendment and human rights law at Rutgers Honors College.



### **James Walters**

*Senior Lecturer in Practice, Department of International Relations  
London School of Economics*

James Walters is founding director of the LSE Faith Centre and LSE Religion and Global Society. Since opening in 2014, the center has developed programs to promote religious literacy, interfaith leadership, and a better understanding of religion-related conflict among the LSE's diverse student body, in government and among wider global publics.



### **James Wellman**

*Professor and Chair, Comparative Religion Program  
University of Washington*

James Wellman is Professor and Chair of the Comparative Religion Program in the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington. In 2017, he received a Five-Year Term Professorship in Global Christianity; this professorship supports his recent initiative to create a Center of Global Christian Studies in the Jackson School. He is also the director the new Carnegie grant on Cross Cultural Religious Literacy. His areas of expertise are in American religious culture, history, and politics. He also works on and teaches in religion and global issues, particularly related to religious violence, human security, and US foreign policy.