



Bridging the Secular Divide: Religion and Canadian Public Discourse

Speaker Biographies

Mark Adler

Member of Parliament for York Centre; Co-Chair of the All-Party Interfaith Fellowship

Mark Adler is a Member of Parliament for York Centre. He is also the Co-Chair of the All-Party Interfaith Committee, the Co-Chair of Canada-Russia Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Chair of the Canada-Kazakhstan Parliamentary Friendship Group. He sits on the finance and transport committee of both groups.

Dean Ellen Aitken

McGill University

Ellen Aitken is the Dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University, where she is also an Associate Professor of Early Christian History and Literature. Having been ordained as an Episcopal priest since 1986, Prof. Aitken is widely recognized as a leader in both scholarly and ecclesial communities.

Julia Beazley

Policy Analyst, Canadian and International Poverty, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Julia Beazley is the Policy Analyst of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. She works on issues of domestic and global poverty, homelessness and human trafficking. She also serves as the Chair of Advocacy for StreetLevel: The National Roundtable on Poverty & Homelessness.

Dr. Andrew Bennett

Ambassador of Religious Freedom, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Andrew Bennett is a public servant and academic with an extensive educational background in history, political science, and religious studies. He is the Ambassador of the Office of Religious Freedom in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. He has also held roles as Professor and Dean at Augustine College in Ottawa, as a Scholar Expert on the Americas Desk with Oxford Analytica and as a Researcher with the University of Edinburgh's Institute on Governance where he focused on the process of devolution in Scotland.

Hon. Bill Blaikie

The Knowles-Woodwoth Centre for Theology and Public Policy

Bill Blaikie is an United Church Minister who served in the House of Commons from 1979 to 2008. He retired as the Dean of the House of Commons and Deputy Speaker. In 2007 he was voted Parliamentarian of the Year in a poll of his peers conducted by McLean's Magazine. From 2009 to 2011 he was the Minister of Conservation in Manitoba. He is currently Director of the Knowles-Woodsworth Centre for Theology and Public Policy and adjunct Professor of Theology at the University of Winnipeg.

Balpreet Singh Boparai

World Sikh Organization of Canada

Balpreet Singh is legal counsel for the human rights group World Sikh Organization of Canada. He is regularly consulted on Sikh issues in Canada and is a contributor to the Ottawa Citizen's weekly "Ask the Religious Experts" section. Balpreet Singh regularly works with various government agencies and employers on human rights and accommodation issues.



McGill

**Tony Blair
Faith Foundation**

Dr. Spencer Boudreau

McGill University

Spencer Boudreau is an Assistant Professor at McGill University. His research interests include religious education in public and private schools as well as religion in the public sphere. He has published articles on religious education in the schools of Quebec and diversity in education of religion.

Dr. Patrice Brodeur

University of Montreal

Patrice Brodeur is an Associate Professor as well as the Canada Research Chair on Islam, Pluralism and Globalization at the University of Montreal. He is the co-author of the book *The Pluralist Paradigm: Democracy and Religion in the 21st Century* (University of Scranton Press, 2006) and *Religion as a conversation starter: Interreligious dialogue for peacebuilding in the Balkans* (Continuum Press, 2011, paperback). His research interest include the perceptions of 'self' and the 'other' as well as the relationship between religious study and the application of religion.

Dr. Janet Epp Buckingham

Trinity Western University

Janet Epp Buckingham is an Associate Professor at Trinity Western University and the Director of the Laurentian Leadership Centre, an Ottawa-based, live-in, extension program for upper-year university students focusing on public policy. She is a lawyer with expertise in religious freedom both in Canada and internationally. She is currently working on a book on the history of religious freedom in Canada.

Geoffrey Cameron

Baha'i Community of Canada

Geoffrey Cameron is Principal Researcher with the Baha'i Community of Canada. He was previously a senior policy advisor in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and a lecturer in politics at St Catherine's College, University of Oxford. Geoffrey has degrees from Trent University and the University of Oxford, where he studied as a Commonwealth Scholar. He is co-author of *Exceptional People: How Migration Shaped Our World and Will Define Our Future* (Princeton, 2011).

Dr. Daniel Cere

McGill University

Daniel Cere is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at McGill University. He specializes in religion, law and public policy. His research focuses on issues of religion and family law, religious freedom and human rights. He also serves as the Co-Director for the Newman Institute of Catholic Studies.

The Reverend Dr. James Christie

University of Winnipeg

James Christie is a Professor of Dialogue Theology in the Faculty of Theology of The University of Winnipeg, and the Director of The Ridd Institute for Religion and Global Policy in the Global College of U/W. He is Past President of The Canadian Council of Churches; Secretary General of the World Religious Leaders' Summit in 2010; a member of the Manitoba Multifaith Council; and a founding member of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation.

Bruce Clemenger

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Bruce Clemenger is the President of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. He has served on the board of the Salvation Army Ethics Centre in Winnipeg, as an adjunct faculty member of Tyndale University College and Seminary in Toronto, and at Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C. Bruce speaks and writes on religion, culture, ethics and politics, and is regularly interviewed by both secular and religious media.

Joe Comartin

Member of Parliament for Windsor-Tecumseh

Joe Comartin is a Canadian lawyer and politician. He joined the New Democratic Party in 1969 and is the current Member of Parliament for Windsor-Tecumseh. He was the Opposition House Leader and in 2012 he was elected Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons.

Paul Donovan

Principal, Loyola High School

Paul Donovan is the principal of Loyola High School. He has also served as a teacher, vice-principal, and head of the religion department at Loyola High School.

Lorna Dueck

Context with Lorna Dueck

Lorna Dueck is the executive producer of Context with Lorna Dueck, a weekly, half-hour TV program that examines news and current affairs from a Christian perspective. She also writes commentary regularly on faith and public for The Globe and Mail. In 2012, Lorna was awarded the Queen Diamond Jubilee Medal for her extensive contribution to the Canadian society.

Natasha Fatah

Former host of Promised Land on CBC Radio

Natasha Fatah is a Canadian journalist and documentary producer. She is also the former host of Promised Land on CBC Radio One, a documentary show in the summer of 2010 that presents stories and struggles faced by Canadian immigrants and refugees.

Dr. Gerald Filson

Baha'i Community of Canada

Gerald Filson is the Director of Public Affairs for the Baha'i Community of Canada. He has served as Chair of the Canadian Network on International Human Rights, was co-chair of the Mosaic Management Group of Vision TV and is currently the Chair of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation. In recent years Gerald has visited India twice yearly leading a video project assisting community transformation efforts.

Dr. Victor Goldbloom

The Centre for Israeli and Jewish Affairs

Victor Goldbloom is the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and former CEO of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews. In 2000, Dr. Goldbloom was made a Companion of the Order of Canada and he has been recognized by the Vatican for his promotion of Catholic-Jewish relations.

Rabbi Lisa Grushcow

Temple Emmanu-El-Beth Sholom

Rabbi Lisa Grushcow is Senior Rabbi at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in Montreal. She is a Canadian who was born in Ottawa and raised in Toronto. She received her B.A. from McGill University in 1996, and was subsequently named a Rhodes Scholar and spent three years at Oxford. She obtained a Master of Philosophy degree in Judaism and Christianity in the Greco-Roman World and then a D. Phil. with a thesis on "Rabbinic Interpretations of Sotah". She was ordained a rabbi in 2003 at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City, and was senior Associate

Rabbi at Congregation Rodeph Sholom.

Joe Gunn

Citizens for Public Justice

Joe Gunn serves as the Executive Director of Citizens for Public Justice, an ecumenical organization that for 50 years has promoted justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The Reverend Dr. Karen Hamilton

The Canadian Council of Churches

Karen Hamilton is the General Secretary for the Canadian Council of Churches, the broadest ecumenical body in Canada that represents 25 different Christian traditions. She has authored a number of award-winning books on Scripture and is committed to speaking on topics of inter-faith dialogue, Bible usage with churches as well as local and global justice.

Rebekah Hart

The Work that Reconnects

Rebekah Hart is completing her Master's degree in Drama Therapy, and has a background in environmental studies, body-centered psychotherapy and dance. An Engaged Buddhist practitioner and popular educator, Rebekah has trained with Joanna Macy, and has been facilitating workshops in The Work that Reconnects for over ten years. These creative, experiential workshops support individuals to acknowledge the feelings they carry about the state of the world, while building a sense of community and active empowerment.

Alia Hogben

Canadian Council of Muslim Women

Alia Hogben is the Executive Director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, a national organization whose goals are the equality, equity and empowerment of Canadian Muslim women. As a social worker she has worked with diverse social service agencies, and has taught at a community college. She writes a regular column for the Kingston Whig Standard on Islam, women and other related topics. Queen's University has conferred a doctorate in divinity on Alia, and last year she was honoured with an Order of Canada.

Mike Hogeterp

Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue

Mike Hogeterp is the Director of the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue in Ottawa. In Mike's tenure, the Centre for Public Dialogue has focussed on pluralism, international food security, Canada's mission in Afghanistan, and Indigenous rights in Canada. Mike is an executive member of the Commission on Justice and Peace of the Canadian Council of Churches, a former member of the board of Citizens for Public Justice, and a regular participant in KAIROS program work.

Hon David Kilgour

Former Member of Parliament

David Kilgour is the Co-Chair of the Canadian Friends of a Democratic Iran and a Director of the Washington-based Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD). He is a former MP for both the Conservative and Liberal Parties in the south-east region of Edmonton and has also served as the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa, Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific and Deputy Speaker of the House.

Anne Leahy

*Ambassador of Canada to the Holy See
2008-2012*

In her 40 year Canadian diplomatic career, Anne Leahy was Ambassador to Russia, Poland and some African countries. Her experience includes human rights advocacy at the Embassy in Moscow in the 1980's, coordinating governmental contributions to the largest youth event held in Canada, World Youth Day 2002 and co-chairing the donor countries group to the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region of Africa. At the Holy See, she organized a conference on 'Religion and the Public Square in Canada'.

Archbishop Christian Lépine

Archbishop of Montreal

Christian Lépine is the current Archbishop of Montreal. He studied theology at the University of Montreal and in Rome, where he was awarded a licentiate in dogmatic theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University. He served as secretary to Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte from 1996 until going in 1998 to work at the Secretariat of State and later at the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. In 2011 he was named Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal and Titular Bishop of Zabi.

Hon. John McKay

*Member of Parliament
for Scarborough-Guildwood*

John McKay is the Liberal Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Guildwood. He served as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance in the Paul Martin government and is currently the Liberal Party's Critic for Defence. He has successfully passed two private members' bills including the Better Aid Bill and is currently working on a bill regarding financial transparency in the international extractive sector called "The Sunshine Bill."

Rizwan Mohammad

Canadian Council of Muslim Women

A graduate student of Islamic Thought at McGill University and a Research Associate at Carleton University's Centre for the Study of Islam, Rizwan is currently completing coordination of the Common Ground Project: an experiment in faith-based culturally competent civic engagement led by youth across Canada from 2011 to 2013. The project is an initiative of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women with financial support from the Government of Canada.

Joycelin Ng

National Student Forum

Joycelin Ng is the Director of the National Student Forum, an initiative with the National Prayer Breakfast. This ecumenical event, held under the auspices of the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons, strives to assemble outstanding young leaders interested in discussing their faith with Canada's leaders. Joycelin is also a political and has organized forums for Parliamentarians, human rights leaders, and artists on topics ranging from religious freedom, public life and ministry.

Dr. Imam Abdul Hai Patel

Canadian Council of Imams

Abdul Hai Patel is the Director of Inter-Faith Relations at the Canadian Council of Imams and has been serving as Imam and Community Leader for 43 years in Canada. He has previously served as the Coordinator of the Canadian Council of Imams as well as a Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission between 1999 and 2005. Imam Patel is also the President of the Ontario Multifaith Council and a member of Interfaith Advisory Committee of Corrections Canada.

The Reverend Dr. David Pfrimmer

*Waterloo Lutheran Seminary at
Wilfrid Laurier University*

David Pfrimmer is the Principal Dean at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. For more than twenty years, he has worked on a wide range of public policy issues from ecumenical and multi-faith perspectives. His recent work has focused on the historical contribution of ecumenical and multi-faith organizations to the building of a Canadian civic community and the public theology necessary to support a role for faith communities in the future.

Louise Profeit-LeBlanc

Canada Council for the Arts

Louise Profeit-LeBlanc is the Coordinator of the Aboriginal Arts office in the Canada Council for Arts. This work is primarily one of strategic initiatives to promote, engage and ensure Aboriginal Arts are better served by the Council. She has also co-founded both the Yukon International Storytelling Festival and the Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry. Since arriving in the south she has travelled extensively both nationally and internationally and has become a strong advocate of reconciliation through the arts.

Lori Ransom

*Senior Advisor for the
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*

Lori Ransom is an ordained elder of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and member of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation who has worked in support of Canada's Indigenous peoples throughout her career. She is presently a Senior Advisor responsible for relations with churches and other faith communities for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Lori co-chaired the Mission and Power theme study group for Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Together centenary mission conference.

The Reverend Diane Rollert

Minister of the Unitarian Church of Montreal

In 2006, Diane Rollert became the 11th settled and first female minister of the Unitarian Church of Montreal since its founding in 1842. She completed her studies in parish ministry at Harvard Divinity School in 2005, after careers in the online information industry and education. She was the Canadian Unitarian Council's 2011 Confluence Lecturer, focusing on post-secularism, and served as minister to the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines while on sabbatical in 2012.

Arvind Sharma

McGill University

Arvind Sharma is the Birks Professor of Comparative Religion at McGill University. His research interests include comparative religion, Hinduism and the role of women in religion. He has written numerous books that are widely used in teaching of comparative religion including *Women in World Religions* (1987) and *Our Religions* (1993).

Dr. Imam Hamid Slimi

Canadian Centre for Deen Studies

Hamid Slimi is the Chairman of the Canadian Centre for Deen Studies, current Chairman of the Canadian Council of Imams, President and Founder of Faith of Life Network and Imam of the Sayeda Khadija Centre. Dr. Slimi serves as a consultant on national and international issues that are related to religion and spirituality, Interfaith relations, Islam and Islamic Law.

Dr. Margaret Somerville

Samuel Gale Chair in Law, McGill University

Margaret Somerville holds professorships in both the Faculty of Law – where she holds the Samuel Gale Chair – and the Faculty of Medicine. She was the founding director of the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law and she plays an active role in the development of applied ethics. Professor Somerville has consulted for international organizations such as the WHO, UNAIDS, the UNHRC in Geneva, and law reform commissions in Canada and Australia. She is the author of *The Ethical Canary: Science, Society, and the Human Spirit* (2000) as well as other books. In February 2013, she was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Peter Stockland

*Publisher, Convivium;
Past Editor-in-Chief, Montreal Gazette*

Peter Stockland is Senior Director, Publications and Media with Cardus, and publisher of Convivium. Prior to joining Cardus, he was vice-president of English-language magazines for Readers' Digest Magazines Canada Ltd. He is a former editor-in-chief of The Gazette newspaper in Montreal, a former editorial page editor of the Calgary Herald newspaper and has worked as a journalist throughout Canada during his 30-year career in the media.

Susanne Tamas

Baha'i Community of Canada

Since 1997, Susanne Tamas has served as Director of Government Relations on behalf of the Baha'i Community of Canada. She was first elected to membership on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Canada in 1998, and continues in that service. Susanne has represented the Baha'i Community of Canada human rights related policy dialogue, with an emphasis on freedom of religion or belief.

Douglas Todd

Columnist, The Vancouver Sun

Douglas Todd is one of the most decorated writers on religion and diversity in North America. Writing for The Vancouver Sun and Religion News Service in Washington, D.C., he has won 32 national and international journalism prizes. His blog, The Search, receives more than half a million views a year. He is the editor of Cascadia: The Elusive Utopia – Exploring the Spirit of the Pacific Northwest. In 2012 he was elected a founding director of the International Association of Religion Journalists.

Father John Walsh

Roman Catholic Priest, former host on CJAD, lecturer at Concordia University

Roman Catholic priest, author, editor, regular columnist, radio talk-show host on CJAD, lecturer at Concordia University. He is the recipient of multiple awards from the Jewish and Muslim communities and also recipient of the Martin Luther Legacy Award. He shares with a rabbi and an Imam the blog faithblender.com. He obtained a Licentiate in Sacred Theology (U de M), a Licentiate in Sacred Scripture (Rome) and a Diploma from Hebrew University (Jerusalem).

Dr. Daniel Weinstock

McGill University

Daniel Weinstock is the professor of Ethics, Law, and Public Policy at the Faculty of Law of McGill University. He was the Founding Director of the Research Center in Ethics at the University of Montréal, a position he held between 2002 and 2011. He has published over 100 academic papers on a wide range of topics in moral and political philosophy and has served on a number of governmental committees and task forces.