



DARFUR: A Call To Action Lessons from faith leaders



Participant Biographies

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, a Turkish-born priest who represents the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) in Washington, is President Elect of the National Council of Churches USA, serving from Jan. 1, 2006 to Dec.31, 2007.

The President Elect will automatically assume the council's presidency from January 2008 to December 2009.

Vicken Aykazian was born in Siirt, Turkey, in 1951. He studied theology at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem and was ordained a deacon in 1968 and later a celibate priest in 1971. In 1992, His Holiness Vasken I, Catholicos of All Armenians at Holy Echmiadzin in Armenia, ordained him a bishop.

Archbishop Aykazian, who holds a Ph.D in history and is working on a second Ph.D in theology at Catholic University in Washington, is an active ecumenist. In addition to his contributions to the NCC as a member of the Governing Board, he has been active in the World Council of Churches as a member of the Mission and Evangelism Unit, the Orthodox Task Force and the Central Committee.

Dr. Ingrid Mattson is president of the Islamic Society of North America and Director of Islamic Chaplaincy and Professor at the Macdonald Center for Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, CT.

Dr. Mattson earned her Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the University of Chicago in 1999. Her research is focused on Islamic law and society; among her articles are studies on slavery, poverty and Islamic legal theory.

Dr. Mattson was born in Canada, where she studied Philosophy at the University of Waterloo, Ontario (B.A. '87). From 1987-1988 she lived in Pakistan where she worked with Afghan refugee women. In 2001 Dr. Mattson was elected Vice-President of the Islamic Society of North America.

Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ was installed as the Fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee on Thursday, March 13, 1997 at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Pensacola. Bishop Ricard moved from the Archdiocese of Baltimore where he served as Auxiliary Bishop since his Episcopal Ordination on July 2, 1984. During his twelve years in Baltimore, Bishop Ricard served as Urban Vicar and Regional Bishop with responsibility for parishes in the city of Baltimore.

He currently serves as chairman of the ad-hoc committee for the Church of Africa as a part of the International Justice and Peace/Social Development and World Peace department of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bishop Ricard is also chairman of the Board of Trustees for the National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC).

Bishop Ricard was born February 29, 1940 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Bishop Ricard was raised a family of eight children with three brothers and four sisters. He completed his theological training at St. Joseph's Seminary in Washington, DC and was ordained to the priesthood on May 25, 1968.

Since ordination, Bishop Ricard continued his studies receiving a Masters Degree from Tulane University in New Orleans in 1970 and a Doctoral Degree from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, in 1983.



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Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks has been Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth since September 1, 1991, the sixth incumbent since 1845.

Prior to becoming Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Sacks had been Principal of Jews' College, London, the world's oldest rabbinical seminary, as well as rabbi of the Golders Green and Marble Arch synagogues in London. He gained rabbinic ordination from Jews' College as well as from London's Yeshiva Etz Chaim.

Rabbi Sacks was educated at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he obtained first class honours in Philosophy. He pursued postgraduate studies at New College, Oxford, and King's College, London. In September 2001, the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred on him a doctorate of Divinity in recognition of his first ten years in the Chief Rabbinate.

He was awarded a Knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in June 2005. The Chief Rabbi is a frequent contributor to radio, television and the national press. Each year before Rosh Hashanah he delivers a message to the nation on BBC Television.

Rev. Gloria E. White-Hammond, M.D. has been the Co-Pastor of Bethel AME Church in Boston, MA since 1997 and a pediatrician at the South End Community Health Center since 1981.

Dr. White-Hammond has worked as a medical missionary in several African countries including Botswana, Cote D'Ivoire and South Africa. Since 2001, she has made seven trips into war-torn southern Sudan where she has been involved in obtaining the freedom of 10,000 women and children who were enslaved during the two decades long civil war. In 2002 she co-founded My Sister's Keeper, a humanitarian women's group that partners with women of Sudan in their efforts toward reconciliation and reconstruction of their communities. In February 2005, Dr. White-Hammond traveled into Darfur to listen and learn from female victims of genocide in Internally Displaced Persons camps.

Rev. White-Hammond is a member of the Board of Trustees of Brigham and Women's Hospital, the Board of Overseers for the Tufts University College for Community and Public Service and the Board of Christian Solidarity International (Zurich).

She was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology from Boston University, a Doctorate of Medicine from Tufts Medical School and a Master of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School.