

All lectures are in Orchestra Hall. Note special time for morning lectures.

## Seeking Peace in a Multi-Faith World

### INTERFAITH

**10 a.m., Monday:** Personal Testimonial Presentation with Bishop Ivan Abrahams

Bishop Ivan Abrahams describes himself as being part of a young, impatient and restless generation who passionately believed that they were going to see freedom from the pariah apartheid state in their lifetime and worked towards that end. A 2003 feature article in *Challenge Magazine* refers to him as, “the Bishop from the streets of fire” or as he claims, “a graduate of the University of the Streets.” In this program, he will share the many contours of his faith journey, what it means to have the blood of the indigenous African and settler community coursing through his veins and how this assisted him in being a change agent, bridge builder and reconciler. His family’s forced removal from their ancestral home shaped his quest for justice and provided the metaphors, cultural touchstones and prism through which he views the world. Bishop Abrahams will speak about his ministry that is weighted on the side of peace and justice to build a better and more caring humanity, as well as his appointment as the youngest bishop in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (membership of 2.2 million) and his leadership role in civil society, ecumenical organizations and the global church. See <http://youtu.be/FeUGhMQmLJQ>, a video on the Church Land Redistribution Project headed by Bishop Abrahams.

Bishop Abrahams has served as a minister in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) since 1977. He holds the distinction of being the youngest Superintendent Minister and Bishop in the MCSA. He has served as chairperson of many civic and ecumenical organizations, including The South African Church Leaders Forum, Southern Africa – United States Centre for Leadership and Public Values, Civil Society Forum and South African National Religious Leaders Forum. He also served on the executive committees of The South African Council of Churches, The Namibian Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. From 2003-2012, Bishop Abrahams served as Presiding Bishop of the MCSA. During his tenure, he provided prophetic leadership, which ushered in a new era of the church’s collaboration with national and international non-governmental agencies in the fight against HIV/AIDS and poverty. His capstone achievement was the formation and successful completion of the Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary. In addition, Bishop Abrahams has served the World Methodist Council in various capacities since 1986. He is a graduate of Rhodes University, The University of Cape Town, The University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and Pacific School of Religion.

**10 a.m., Tuesday:** “Only the truth shall set you free.” A South African Truth & Reconciliation Perspective with Bishop Ivan Abrahams

Jesus’ teaching on the “truth shall set you free” is more than just a statement, but a paradox one has to grapple with to find meaning. In 1995, South Africa found itself reconciling the lion and the hare (Maluleke 2009) through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Human rights abuses in South Africa can be traced to the 17th century when the country imported slaves from Indonesia and the Malaysian archipelago (the presenter traces his matriarchal lineage to this era). The abuses reached their climax between 1948-1994, when draconian apartheid laws were imposed to black South Africans. Apartheid, which controlled every facet of life for black people, was said to be ordained by God. Many people in South Africa and beyond believe that the TRC process, which eschewed the concept of retributive justice in favor of restorative justice, is a model to be emulated and adopted for post-conflict reconstruction. The TRC was mandated to assess the nature, causes and extent of gross violations during apartheid. Both perpetrators and victims/survivors of gross human rights violations were brought together to face each other. This program will examine the TRC process, a national and symbolic healing ritual and public confessionals, which brought a measure of healing, but more importantly some critical questions are raised: To whose benefit was the TRC? Can there be true reconciliation without reparation? Were faith communities complicit in the process and how do we move forward?

**10 a.m., Wednesday:** Toward a Theology of Migration with Bishop Ivan Abrahams

Migration is as old as human history. The bible presents many people who migrated to other destinations because of different political, socioeconomic or theological factors. Migration is a fact of life which cannot be reversed regardless of policies of nation-states to stem the tide. This movement is transforming communities around the world. The 21st century has been referred to by many scholars as “the age of migration” that has serious implications and impacts everybody. While there is an unfettered movement of capital and commodities, the mobility of people are severely restricted under neoliberal globalization and can be considered as a modern day form of slavery.

The presenter will argue that migration presents the churches in North America with some amazing missional challenges and opportunities. He goes further to claim that the issue of migration is a “Kairos Moment,” a moral imperative for all faith-based organizations. Churches that have a comprehensive theology of migration and who welcome and accompany immigrants have not only been blessed with qualitative and quantitative growth but have been enriched and radically transformed. The current flood of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to Europe and North America offer the church an opportunity to share the hopes, dreams, tears and challenges of marginalized people. The presenter challenges the churches to translate their many Conference statements and forums on migration into grass roots actions.

**10 a.m., Thursday:** Birthing a New Spirituality on Deeper Wisdom: The Role of Groups & Individuals within & without Religious Structures with Bishop Ivan Abrahams

The concept of spirituality is governed by our images of a Divine Being inherited from a time long past. If, for instance, we hold fast to a Divine Being that has a despotic claim of allegiance, our dominant spirituality, our relationships and self-understanding will follow that image. On the other hand, if we perceive the Divine Being promoting the values of respect, human dignity, love and life, this would more likely shape our worldview. Many people have abandoned and are abandoning the spirituality and ethics of their forebears, arguing that it is archaic. There seems to be skepticism and disenchantment with institutionalized religion and a perception that religion is bad and spirituality is good. The popular term, “secular spirituality,” is a contradiction in terms and an oxymoron that requires critical interrogation. In this presentation, Bishop Ivan Abrahams will draw from his experience as Chairperson of the South African Religious Leaders Forum and work in the interreligious sector to where and how a new spirituality is being birthed in South Africa. He will argue that a radical contemporary spirituality needs to promote diversity, inclusiveness and dialogue, deepen an understanding of the Divine empowering person for “this life” rather than “life beyond” and celebrate the Divine revealed in everything. He will also challenge the religiosity and spirituality of organized religions. The presentation will conclude that any spirituality that addresses the false dualism between the sacred and the secular, that celebrates shared values, offers vision, direction and purpose to daily living should be welcomed and embraced.

### PEACE WITH JUSTICE: REFUGEES

**1:30 p.m., Monday:** The UNHCR – A Global Organization with Larry Yungk

The number of persons fleeing persecution and seeking protection has reached record levels, with more than 60 million persons displaced worldwide. Larry Yungk from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN’s Refugee Agency, will provide an overview of what the UN, the U.S. and the international community are doing to address this crisis, including the process of resettlement. Over the last year, refugee resettlement has been in the headlines, but it still remains misunderstood and mysterious to many Americans. This lecture will help participants better understand the long and complex process that refugees must navigate to go from persecution to reaching safety and starting new lives in the U.S.

Yungk is the Senior Resettlement Officer for the UNHCR’s Regional Office in Washington, D.C., which covers the U.S. and the Caribbean. His work with refugees began in 1980, when he joined the International Rescue Committee in Washington, D.C. assisting Ethiopian and Afghan refugees. Yungk later worked with Catholic Charities of Washington and at Georgetown University. In his current position, he helps to coordinate UNHCR’s global resettlement policies and programs with those of the U.S. resettlement program. He has contributed to the development of UNHCR’s global resettlement policy, including the drafting of UNHCR’s Handbook on Resettlement. He also oversees UNHCR’s resettlement program for refugees located in the Caribbean region that includes 27 countries. A frequent presenter on resettlement and refugee topics at national and state refugee conferences, Yungk has also appeared on broadcast media including NPR, BBC and “Dateline NBC,” as well as various print media. Yungk earned his bachelor’s degree in history and political science from Baldwin Wallace University and holds a master’s degree in government from the University of Maryland.



**1:30 p.m., Tuesday:** The Role of the Bureau of Population, Refugees & Migration in Refugee Resettlement with Barbara Day

In this lecture, participants will gain an understanding of the worldwide scope of historical and current refugee situations; the involvement of governments, international and non-governmental organizations in protecting refugees overseas and in preparing refugees for resettlement to the U.S.; and the role of the U.S. government, non-governmental organizations, state and local governments and volunteers in resettlement. In addition, suggestions for individuals interested in participating in local efforts to support refugees resettling to their communities will be shared.

Barbara Day is the Domestic Resettlement Section Chief in the Office of Admissions, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) at the U.S. Department of State. She plans and manages the bureau’s program for initial reception and placement of refugees admitted to the U.S. and oversees the Cultural Orientation Technical Assistance program for overseas and stateside cultural orientation. Before joining PRM, Day was Vice-President for Resettlement at Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. Prior to that, she served as Director of Refugee and Immigration Programs at Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota. Day has been an English-as-a-second-language teacher and program manager, matching grant program coordinator, job developer, sponsorship developer, volunteer program coordinator, accredited immigration legal services counselor and consultant to local, state and national refugee programs. She created and implemented the first immigration legal services program and fee-for-service interpreter service in her home state of South Dakota, and was a founding member of her local and state volunteer literacy programs. She taught five years in Hong Kong and the Republic of Palau.



**1:30 p.m., Wednesday:** The Work of Community Refugee & Immigration Services – A Resettlement Agency with Angie Plummer

The U.S. Refugee Program has emerged as headline news in recent media coverage. During this lecture, participants will learn how refugee resettlement works. What is a refugee journey like before coming to the U.S.? How are they referred to the U.S. refugee program? Why do they go to a particular geographic location? Attendees will also learn about the demographics of who is coming. In addition, specific services provided by one Central Ohio resettlement agency, Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS) and stories of refugees CRIS has served will be presented. This lecture will include recent developments as a result of the presidential executive orders, the impact on families and resettlement infrastructure, and the local community response.

Angie Plummer is the Executive Director of CRIS, a non-profit organization serving refugees and immigrants in Central Ohio. She has been with CRIS since 1998, and started as a volunteer lawyer. She became Executive Director of the agency in 2003. Plummer is a graduate of the University of Dayton, where she majored in international studies and minored in German, and is a graduate of The Ohio State University College of Law. She is admitted to practice law in Ohio and admitted by the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio. Prior to working for CRIS, Plummer worked for the State of Ohio and in private practice. She lists as her professional accomplishments the participation in resettlement to Columbus of more than 7,500 refugees and the successful resolution of many family reunification and asylum cases.



**1:30 p.m., Thursday:** A Refugee’s Story with Bol Aweng

Bol Aweng will share his life story as one of the Lost Boys of Sudan. Aweng was born in Jonglei, a region in Southern Sudan, and left his village at the age of 6 in 1987 as a result of the war. He was one of 35,000 wandering children that became known as the Lost Boys of Sudan. Without his parents, he walked for thousands of miles to seek refuge in Ethiopia and Kenya. Many of the boys died from starvation, wild animals, swollen rivers and gunfire during the journey. During this time, he developed his skills as an artist, without instruction from others. After 14 years as a refugee, he was resettled to Nashville and then attended The Ohio State University where he graduated with a degree in fine art in 2009.

As an artist, Aweng paints from imagination, observation and memory. Most of his work is about Africa. Aweng primarily paints with oil, acrylic on canvas, paper and river rock. Many of his paintings tell the story of the Lost Boys, which he calls “The Journey of Hope.” In addition, Aweng with a fellow Lost Boy, worked to establish the Buckeye Clinic in South Sudan.

