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Presenters Bios



Abdullah al-Ahsan is professor at the Department of History and Civilization, International Islamic University Malaysia. He graduated from McGill University, Montreal, Canada (M.A.), and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S. (Ph.D.). Dr. Ahsan has contributed many articles on the relationship between contemporary Islamic and Western civilizations. His works include: *The Organization of the Islamic Conference: Introduction to an Islamic Political Institution* (1988) and *Ummah or Nation: Identity Crisis in Contemporary Muslim Society* (1992). Jointly with Stephen B Young, he has recently published *Guidance for Good Governance: Explorations in Qur'anic, Scientific and Cross-cultural Approaches* (June 2008). His books and articles have been translated into Arabic, Bengali, Bosnian, Turkish and Urdu. He is currently working on *Muslim Nations in Contemporary History* and *Rise and Fall of Civilizations*.



Nimat Hafez Barazangi is a Research Fellow at the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Cornell University. Dr. Barazangi's scholarly work with Arab, Muslim, and non-Muslim organizations and individuals has been intertwined with her academic research and achievements.

Published over 45 research papers and two monographs:

Woman's Identity and the Qur'an: A New Reading, 2004, labeled by one reviewer as “the most radical book in the last 14th centuries of Islam,” and a co-edited volume: *Islamic Identity and the Struggle for Justice*, 1996.

B.A. Philosophy and Sociology, Damascus University, Syria; M.A. Educational Psychology, Teachers College, Columbia University; and Ph.D. Islamic and Arabic Studies, Cornell University U.S. Awards: Senior Fulbright Scholarship to Syria 2005-06 and 1995-97; U.N. Development Program TOKTEN Fellowships 1999 and 2002; Visiting Fellowship from Oxford University's Centre of Islamic Studies 1994; the Glock Award from Cornell University for her 1988 Ph.D. Dissertation “Perceptions of the Islamic Belief System: The Muslims in North America.”



Francis J. Beckwith is Professor of Philosophy and Church-State Studies, and a Fellow in the Institute for the Studies of Religion, at Baylor University. During the 2008-09 school year he is on the faculty of the University of Notre Dame as the Mary Ann Remick Senior Visiting Fellow in the Center for Ethics & Culture. A 2002-2003 Research Fellow in Politics at Princeton University, he currently serves on Princeton's James Madison Council. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from Fordham University and a Master of Juridical Studies (M.J.S.) degree from the Washington University School of Law, St. Louis.

Among his over one dozen books are *Return to Rome:*

Confessions of An Evangelical Catholic (Brazos Press, 2009), *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), and *Law, Darwinism & Public Education: The Establishment Clause and the Challenge of Intelligent Design* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

Hanina Ben Menahem holds the Montesquieu Chair in Comparative Law and Legal History, Faculty of Law, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Since 2000, he has spent the spring semester at Harvard Law School as Gruss Visiting Professor of Talmudic Civil Law. Among the books he has written or edited are the four-volume anthology and commentary *Controversy and Dialogue Halakhic Sources* (1991, 1993, 2002, 2005); *Judicial Deviation in Talmudic Law: Governed by Men, not by Rules* (1991) and *Authority, Process and Method in Jewish Law* (1998).

Peter Cumper is a Senior Lecturer in the Law School at the University of Leicester, England, where he teaches courses on Constitutional and Administrative Law, Human Rights Law and Law and Religion. He is the joint editor of *Minority Rights in the New Europe* (Kluwer, 1999) and has published on law and religion in several books as well as in a wide range of British and international journals. He has taught on law programmes organised by Loyola University Chicago, William Mitchell College of Law, and the University of Minnesota.



Michael J. Davis is the Centennial Teaching Professor of Law at the University of Kansas. He is an honor graduate of the University of Michigan Law School where he was Associate Editor of the Michigan Law Review. After working with a large D.C. firm, the Legal Services Program, and on Capitol Hill, he began teaching at Kansas in 1971. He was also General Counsel of the University for six years and Dean of the Law School for ten. He has been very active in the A.B.A. Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, leading many site evaluation teams and chairing both the Accreditation Committee and the Standards Review

Committee. He has been Of Counsel to a multistate law firm centered in Kansas City since 1989. Davis has taught a seminar on the first amendment religion clauses at Kansas for over twenty years, and has taught a comparative law and religion course in Ireland (2003), London (2007) and Istanbul (2008).



Debarati Halder is an advocate and legal scholar. She is presently a Research Assistant in the International Project on Cyber Bullying (funded by SSHRC, Canada) at the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, India. She received her LLB from the University of Calcutta and Master's degree in International and Constitutional Law from University of Madras. During the later part of law school and for about 5 years thereafter, Ms. Halder worked

at Surana and Surana, International Attorneys, Chennai, India, where she served as a Junior Attorney and then as an attorney. Her practice there included various areas of Civil Law, Debts recovery law, and Consumer Law. Her work has appeared in scholarly journals, including the Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law, ERCES online quarterly review, Indian Journal of Criminology and Criminalistics, Cyber law times and a book chapter in Schmalleger & Pittaro, *Crimes of the Internet* (Prentice Hall 2008). She has also published pieces in a variety of nonacademic magazines/newsletters, including the Cyber Law times and Articleco.com. Her research interests include Constitutional Law, International Law, Cyber Crimes and Laws, and International Criminal Justice. More about her can be seen in her website www.debaratihalter.co.nr.



Mark C. Modak-Truran is the J. Will Young Professor of Law at Mississippi College School of Law and was recently named the 2008 Mississippi College Distinguished Professor of the Year. He received both his M.A. and Ph.D. in Religious Ethics from The University of Chicago Divinity School. Dr. Modak-Truran also earned his J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law, where he was the Editor-in-Chief of the *Northwestern Journal of International Law and Business*, and his B.A. (magna cum laude) from Gustavus Adolphus College. He is the Co-Chair Elect of the AALS Section

on Law and Religion, and his research and writing focus on law and religion and legal theory. His recent publications include: *Beyond Theocracy and Secularism (Part I): Toward a New Paradigm for Law and Religion*, 27 *Miss. C. L. Rev.* 159 (2007-2008); *Symposium Introduction*, 27 *Miss. C. L. Rev.* 1 (2007-2008) (Symposium on Religion, Religious Pluralism, and the Rule of Law); *A Process Theory of Natural Law and the Rule of Law in China*, 25 *Penn. St. Int'l L. Rev.* 607 (2008); *Prolegomena to a Process Theory of Natural Law*, in 1 *Handbook of Whiteheadian Process Thought* 507-19, 533-36 (Michel Weber and Will Desmond, eds., Ontos Verlag, 2008); and *Secularization, Legal Indeterminacy, and Habermas's Discourse Theory of Law*, 35 *Fla. St. U. L. Rev.* 73 (2007). Dr. Modak-Truran is currently working on a book entitled *Beyond Theocracy and Secularism: A New Paradigm for Law and Religion*.



Joel A. Nichols is Associate Professor at the University of St. Thomas School of Law (Minneapolis). He holds degrees in law (J.D.) and theology (M.Div.) from Emory University in Atlanta, and also a B.A. from Abilene Christian University in Abilene, TX. Professor Nichols previously taught at Pepperdine Law School (2003-2007); practiced law in Washington, D.C. (2001-2003); and clerked for Judge Tjoflat on the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals (2000-2001).

Professor Nichols's scholarship focuses upon the intersection of law and religion—including human rights, constitutional law, family law, legal history, and the role of religion in public life. His articles have appeared in the *NYU Law Review*, *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, and *Journal of Church and State*, among others. He also serves on the board of directors for VIVA (North America), a Christian international human rights organization that cares for at-risk children throughout the world.



Paul B. Rasor, J.D., Ph.D. is Director of the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom and Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Virginia Wesleyan College. He received his Ph.D. in the study of religion (theology) from Harvard in 1999 and his J.D. from the University of Michigan in 1972. He also holds an M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School (1994) and B. Mus. from the University of Michigan School of Music (1968). He is an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister.

Paul's academic career includes 14 years as a full-time law professor, as well as 10 years teaching in theology and religious studies. He has published widely in both law and theology; his latest book is *Faith Without Certainty: Liberal Theology in the 21st Century* (Boston: Skinner House, 2005). Paul is a classical and a jazz trombonist, and has played with several symphony orchestras as well as small jazz combos.



Steven H. Resnicoff is a Professor of Law and Co-Director of DePaul College of Law's Center for Jewish Law & Judaic Studies (JLJS). Professor Resnicoff, who has received numerous awards for scholarship and teaching, held DePaul University's Wicklander Chair for Business and Professional Ethics in 2000-01. A graduate of Princeton College and Yale Law School, Resnicoff earned a rabbinic degree from the Rabbi Aaron Kotler Institute for Advanced Learning (Lakewood Yeshiva) and privately received advanced ordination (yoreh yoreh yadin yadin) from the world-renowned scholar, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, ob"m. He

has authored or co-authored more than 25 book chapters and articles dealing with a variety of Jewish law topics, including bioethics, professional ethics, commercial law and Jewish philosophy. Resnicoff's secular expertise is in the fields of bankruptcy, commercial paper, contracts and professional responsibility, in which he has authored or co-authored 4 books in addition to many book chapters and articles.



Jonathan Rothchild is Assistant Professor in the Department of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University. He is co-editor (and contributing author) of *Doing Justice to Mercy: Religion, Law, and Criminal Justice* (University of Virginia Press, 2007), and his work has appeared in the *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, the *Journal of Religion*, *Journal of Theological Studies*, and *Political Practices and International Order*. A past president of the Society of Christian Ethics, Pacific Section, Jonathan serves on the steering committee for the Paul Tillich section of the American Academy of Religion and on the board of directors of the North American Paul Tillich Society. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago Divinity School in 2004.

Abhinav Shrivastava is currently a student of law at NALSAR University, with an interest in Intellectual Property Law, Corporate Restructuring, Alternative Dispute Resolution and Environmental law. Considering that college commences immediately after high school, at the time of attending this conference I would be 21 years old, and would seek to build on the experience to further my varied interests. Aside from the law, I am an avid football fan and enjoy swimming, table-tennis and reading.