

Bob Sherman

Bob Sherman has worked as a senior policy analyst at the Ontario Human Rights Commission for over four years. His main focus has been to advise organizations on making human rights change, including improvements related to all prohibited grounds of discrimination. In his preceding job, he spent almost five years working to improve the accessibility for people with disabilities of the court system and other services at the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. Prior to that, he worked in human rights-related areas in the Ontario Public Service, including workplace discrimination and harassment prevention; accommodation of the needs of employees with disabilities; employment equity; and equitable recruitment practices. He has provided advice and training to organizations, managers, human resources practitioners and human rights investigators. Previously, he served as a human rights investigator at the Canadian Human Rights Commission and worked in labour relations and recruitment with the federal government.

Charles Hermelink

Charles Hermelink serves as the Coordinator for Mission Canada's Cultural Language Group, the very diverse international aspect of PAOC ministries within Canada. We are a country of immigrants, and becoming ever more so as we continue to grow. While Toronto has long been called the most multicultural city in the world, that characteristic is increasingly true for many of Canada's metropolitan areas. Mission Canada's Cultural Language Group brings together leadership from the various PAOC Districts as they collaborate and resource one another, working together to see a strengthening and synergy amongst leaders and congregations of all ethno linguistic backgrounds. We also help new and recent immigrants desiring to start churches with the practical realities and legal requirements they need to minister in Canada. As we look toward the future, we must also consider how we can facilitate even more new ethno linguistic groups seeking covering and partnership in our Fellowship, or those desiring to plant a new work to reach a cultural language group in Canada. Do you lead a cultural language group? Are you seeking covering and guidance? Do you have a cultural language group in your area, and feel the Spirit compelling you to reach them? We're here to help you.

Dr. Mohammed Baobaid, PhD

Dr. Baobaid, PhD, earned his doctoral degree from the institute of Psychology at the University of Erlangen Nurnberg in Germany and is currently the Executive Director and founder of the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration in Canada (MRCSSI). Dr. Baobaid has been instrumental in initiating research elements in works related to violence prevention including family violence and youth violence. For 30 years he has conducted research to identify challenges of working with victims of family violence and developing culturally appropriate responses to family and youth violence in Yemen and Canada. The research helped identify and build bridges across diverse Muslim and mainstream cultures, which has contributed to greater mutual understanding and increased social inclusion while at the same time increasing safety and respect for victims of domestic violence in Muslim families. In addition, he has been able to connect research with developing culturally integrative family violence prevention and intervention strategies.

Farhan Iqbal

Articulate and powerful, Farhan is the Imam of Bai'tul Islam, one of the largest mosques in Canada. He graduated in Islamic Theology and Comparative Religions from the Ahmadiyya Institute of Islamic Studies in 2010. He served as a Missionary of Islam in the USA and Ghana. Farhan represented Islam in various interfaith events in Canada. He routinely hosts a live phone-in Islamic radio program as well as hosted programs on Ahmadiyya Muslim International television.

Habeeb Alli

Habeeb Alli graduated from Queens College, Georgetown, Guyana, and currently resides in Toronto, Ontario. He is currently the Community Development Manager at IDRF and has been involved with the Syrian crisis since it has started. Habeeb has also been involved in the Abraham Festival in Peterborough in sponsoring Syrian refugee families. He is also an active member in the Council of Imams, an author and poet. Habeeb also volunteers at different events in the community.

Johnson Prathipati

Johnson is a volunteer Pastor at Maple Community Church in Maple, Ontario and also works for Christian Horizons as a Direct Support Professional. He has a Masters in Divinity (in Missions) from Tyndale College and Seminary, Toronto. Johnson passionately engages and dialogues with other faith groups, especially with the Muslims. Johnson has been instrumental in organizing many Christian-Muslim Dialogue Symposiums with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the GTA and assists many churches in this regard. Johnson is happily married to a wonderful wife with 3 young children.

Peter Goodspeed

An award winning newspaper reporter with thirty-nine years of experience, Peter Goodspeed worked as a foreign correspondent, a war reporter, an editor, a manager, a feature writer and a political reporter. He spent three years as the Foreign Editor for the Toronto Star daily newspaper and served as a Bureau Chief and foreign correspondent in Washington, Johannesburg and Hong Kong. He reported from 63 different countries, while covering 22 different conflicts, including the Falklands War, the U.S. invasion of Grenada, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, wars in Africa, Central America, the Middle East and Asia and the Second Gulf War in Iraq. He won a National Newspaper Award (Special Projects 2000) and was one of the last Southam Journalism Fellows at the University of Toronto. He worked for 15 years as a Senior Reporter, International Affairs, for the National Post; was awarded the Dateline Hong Kong Fellowship for 2005 and received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Brock University in April 2012. In 2013-2014 he held the Atkinson Foundation Journalism Fellowship in Public Policy and produced a year-long study on Canadian refugee policy and the Syrian crisis which was published in the Toronto Star. He is now retired and works as a volunteer with Lifeline Syria.

Punita Lumb

Punita Lumb currently works for Centennial College as their Global Citizenship & Equity Research and Education Strategist. Before this role, she facilitated courses in the field of Adult Education for Brock University. Punita has spent over 10 years in the field of education including working as a teacher for elementary, middle and high schools. She received her B.A. from York University in 2001, her B.Ed. from OISE in 2008, and her Master's in Education from Brock University in 2014. Her thesis work focused on higher education, diversity and inclusion for which she was awarded a Graduate Studies Award from the Canadian Association for Teacher Education (CATE). Punita plans to continue her work and contributions to the field of social justice in education.

Rabbi Ronald Weiss

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Rabbi Ronald Weiss received his undergraduate degree from Brandeis University; a Masters degree in Jewish Education and Rabbinic Ordination from Yeshiva University. He was a pulpit rabbi for twelve years, serving congregational communities in Binghamton, New York and Longmeadow, Massachusetts. Rabbi Weiss moved to Toronto in July, 1994, where he serves as the Director of Chaplaincy Services at Jewish Family and Child Services. As mandated by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, he is responsible for overseeing the spiritual and religious care received by Jewish patients in 41 hospitals, Jewish residents in 55 long-term care facilities as well as Jewish inmates in 26 Ontario correctional institutions on the Federal, Provincial and Municipal levels. Rabbi Weiss represents the Jewish community on the Canadian Multifaith Federation, on which he served for many years as a member of its Executive Board. He is the only rabbi in Toronto to carry a badge - serving as a Chaplain-at-large for the Toronto Police Service; as well he is an advisor to the York Region Police Service and works with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Rabbi Weiss is the chaplain of the Jewish Hospice Program and provides spiritual care and counselling to the terminally ill in the Jewish community.

Renu Mandhane, Chief Commissioner, OHRC

Renu Mandhane is the former Executive Director of the International Human Rights Program at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law. She has an LL.M in international human rights law from New York University, and is a recognized expert. Renu sits on the Canada Committee of Human Rights Watch, and has appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada and the United Nations. She has also trained Canadian and foreign judges through the National Judicial Institute of Canada. Renu has worked at several domestic and international organizations to advance women's human rights, and has represented survivors of domestic and sexual violence and federally sentenced prisoners. Renu was appointed Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission in October 2015.

Shaheen Azmi, Director, Policy, Education Monitoring & Outreach, OHRC

Shaheen Azmi has been at the Ontario Human Rights Commission since 1999. He has held various positions at the Commission including as Manager of the Mediation Office and for the last seven years as Director of Policy, Education, Monitoring, and Outreach. He has worked on or supervised the development of a number of key Commission Policies including the Policy and Guidelines on Competing Human Rights and the Policy on Preventing Discrimination Because of Creed. In addition, he has led the Commission's development of human rights organizational and sector change initiatives and partnerships. Prior to coming to the Commission he obtained his PHD in Social Work from the University of Toronto, where his focus was on challenges of diversity and equity in human services, particularly as it affected racial and religious minorities in Canada.