

# Prominent Religious Leaders and Women's Rights Advocates Discuss Scripture's Influence on Gender Equality

*The G20 Interfaith Forum is gathering experts from religious, human rights, and peacebuilding sectors to discuss how sacred texts can both hurt and help women.*

PROVO, UT, USA, August 14, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [G20 Interfaith Forum](#), the world's leading organization focused on the intersection of faith and policy, is gathering experts from the religious, human rights, and peacebuilding sectors to discuss how sacred texts can both hurt and help women.



Azza Karam, Secretary-General of Religions for Peace, said the webinar's theme, highlighting the equality of women in scripture, has the power to change societies for the better.

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*Dr. Azza Karam*

“All holy scriptures, over time, have become subject to certain interpretations that defy the essence of Divine Mercy and infinite Compassion,” Karam said. “We need to read the words of the Divine with the lens of the most marginalized among us.”

Speakers at the webinar will include:

- Dr. Azza Karam, Secretary-General of Religions for Peace
- His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel, Metropolitan

Elder of Chalcedon, Board of Directors at KAICIID and Moderator at Religions for Peace

•Sharon Rosen, Global Director of Religious Engagement at Search for Common Ground

•Audrey E. Kitagawa, President of the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation

- Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance
- Rachel Rose Nelson, Executive Director of the Freedom Business Alliance

Rosen highlighted the main theme that the gathered experts will discuss, emphasizing how scripture has been used to subordinate women when it can actually empower them.

“Religions both reflect and influence sociology and culture,” Rosen said. “Their sacred texts reflect how much they are embedded within patriarchal systems that have subordinated women over millennia. Yet those same texts also advance gender equality through the value systems they uphold. Highlighting religious texts and interpretations that promote the advancement of women can go a long way towards building more caring, just, and equal societies for us all today.”

Nelson and Saraswatiji gave specific examples of how different religious texts support gender equality:

“In the Book of Proverbs a woman is said to be worth more than rubies. Yet today, a woman’s sense of worth is clearly under assault. From Hollywood to Haiti, Madison Avenue to Malaysia, sex sells while exploitation and abuse abound,” Nelson said. “Though policies may evolve, unless our most deep-seated beliefs about the identity and purpose of women change, gender equality will never be fully realized. It’s time to examine and refresh outdated interpretations of the sacred texts that shape our core beliefs and have the power to transform society from the inside out for the flourishing of all humankind.”

“In the Hindu tradition, women are considered an embodiment of the Divine Mother Goddess. It is a religion that worships and reveres the Goddess in all Her forms,” Saraswatiji said. “It is essential that our religious and spiritual beliefs and tenets translate into direct actions and policy decisions of equality, empowerment, rights and protection for women and girls in our societies. It is not enough for faith to be relegated to books and houses of worship; it must infuse and inform every aspect of our lives.”

Kitagawa emphasized the far-reaching power of religion and faith to influence societies for better or for worse, concluding that more gender-sensitive interpretations of sacred texts would be a huge step for women’s rights worldwide.

“Many of the 84 percent of the world’s population are adherents of some faith tradition, and often seek solace, guidance and community through their respective religious affiliations,” Kitagawa said. “Many traditional religious institutions have patriarchal histories and attitudes that are reinforced and practiced within the community’s cultural norms, and as expressions of important values of their religion. Adhering to these attitudes and practices have often been equated to one’s degree of religiosity, so trying to create change to diminish patriarchal influence can be seen as a challenge to an adherent’s religious identity and fidelity. Religious scholars, leaders and adherents have important roles to play in expanding feminine affirmative

perspectives and producing gender sensitive commentaries and interpretations of sacred texts that uphold justice and call out gender inequity and injurious practices.”

The virtual meeting will take place on Aug 17, 2021 from noon to 1 pm EDT. [Register](#) for the [free webinar](#) at [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_RTm1QNaVRVaVIDJ2OJ4WHQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RTm1QNaVRVaVIDJ2OJ4WHQ)

### About the G20 Process

The Group of Twenty, or G20, is the premier forum for international economic cooperation, bringing together the leaders of Earth’s most prosperous economies. Collectively, G20 members represent around 80 percent of the world’s economic output, two-thirds of the global population and three-quarters of international trade. Throughout the year, representatives from G20 countries gather to discuss financial and socioeconomic issues as well as broader humanitarian issues targeted by the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

### About the G20 Interfaith Forum

The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks global solutions by collaborating with religious thought leaders and political representatives to help shape the overall G20 agenda. It draws on the vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs play in world affairs, reflecting a rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values. Through its extensive network of networks, it helps prioritize key global policy goals and point toward practical means of implementation at every level of society.

For more information, please visit [www.g20interfaith.org](http://www.g20interfaith.org).

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