

Faith Leaders and AI Policy Experts Say Education Must Protect What Machines Cannot Replace

The free webinar will be held Thursday, August 13, 2026, at 12 PM EDT (10 AM MDT / 9 AM PDT / 5 PM BST)

“

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Dr. Medlir Mema

SALT LAKE CITY, UT, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As schools worldwide race to adopt artificial intelligence, the [G20 Interfaith Forum](#) (IF20), in cooperation with the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation, is convening a public theologian, an AI governance scholar, and a family policy director to press a harder question than how quickly AI can teach: what learning is actually for. “AI and Education,” the seventh installment of IF20’s eight-part AI and Human Flourishing webinar series, takes place August 13 at 12 PM EDT.

The panel arrives as AI tools spread rapidly through classrooms, promising personalized instruction that adapts to each student’s pace and relief from the administrative load that pulls teachers away from mentoring. Those gains come bundled with unresolved concerns about equity, student data privacy, and over-reliance on automated systems—and, the panelists argue, with a deeper question about what schools are optimizing for in the first place.

Political scientist Medlir Mema, director of the AI Ethics and Governance Institute (AEGIX), warned that the technology’s promise depends entirely on what educators decide it is meant to serve. “AI has extraordinary potential to expand what is possible in education,” Mema said, “but we must remember that our goal should not be to make students more efficient versions of machines.” Education, he added, must keep cultivating the distinctly human capacities to imagine, question, create, exercise judgment, and find meaning—capacities he said depend on relationality, embodiment, friction, and agency, and should never be surrendered to what he described as the hollowness and sycophancy so evident in AI models.

Rev. Dr. Marian Edmonds-Allen, a public theologian and founder of FaithWise.ai, framed the same disruption as an opening rather than a threat. "AI is forcing us to ask what learning is actually for," Edmonds-Allen said. "This is an exciting moment: we can help students become more intentional about why and how they learn, and use AI not as an answer machine, but as a learning machine."

Policy director Noah Torres, who leads the Family Success Project at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, will bring a regulatory and child-protection lens to the conversation, drawing on his work on AI regulation, child online safety, and the family understood as the first space of education.



IF20

The free webinar will be held Thursday, August 13, 2026, at 12 PM EDT (10 AM MDT / 9 AM PDT / 5 PM BST). Dr. Marianna Richardson, IF20 Director of Communications, will moderate. Register at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oSp0FMD8Rfm5GfznAWutrg

Speakers will include:

Dr. Marianna Richardson (Moderator) — Director of Communications for the G20 Interfaith Forum and adjunct professor of management communication at Brigham Young University's Marriott School of Business, where she serves as editor-in-chief of the Marriott Student Review. She sits on the International Advisory Council for the International Center for Law and Religious Studies and is faculty advisor for the Measuring Success Right podcast. She holds a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University and a doctorate from Seattle Pacific University.

Rev. Dr. Marian Edmonds-Allen — Public theologian, peacebuilder, and values-based strategist working at the intersection of artificial intelligence, ethics, faith, and human flourishing. She is the founder of FaithWise.ai and Co-Director of the AI & Spirituality Initiative within the Neurospirituality Lab at Mass

General Brigham, as well as Executive Director of Parity, a nonprofit devoted to religious freedom, pluralism, and human dignity. Her work develops practical frameworks that help individuals and institutions engage AI thoughtfully while strengthening moral agency, critical thinking, and human connection. She speaks internationally on AI ethics, covenantal pluralism,

and values-centered approaches to technology.

Medlir Mema, Ph.D. — Political scientist, educator, and civic innovator working at the intersection of AI governance, public policy, and community engagement. He is director of the AI Ethics and Governance Institute (AEGIX), a steering committee member of IEEE's Global AI Systems Flourishing Initiative, and a founding member of Utah Common Ground and the Utah Multifaith AI Council. He also serves as Executive Director of Organized Intelligence and as a Senior Fellow at Faith Matters. His work focuses on how emerging technologies shape democratic institutions, public trust, and societal outcomes, with an emphasis on ethical governance and human-centered policy.

Noah Torres — Policy Director of the Family Success Project at the Texas Public Policy Foundation in Austin, where his work spans family law, child welfare, artificial intelligence regulation, child online safety, and human services reform. His recent research focuses on ensuring that new digital technologies promote integral human development and respect the dignity of every person, particularly within the family as the first site of education. He holds a B.A. in politics and theology and an M.A. in politics from the University of Dallas and is an advocate in the canonical courts of the Catholic Church.

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.

About the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation

The International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation is a platform for international scholars, religious and faith leaders, activists, and humanitarians advancing a purposeful and hopeful vision for humanity, founded on the highest ethical and culturally informed perspectives. The Academy charts new pathways toward peace, equality, justice, and a healthy, sustainable world through collaboration among people of diverse cultures and faith traditions. Grounded in enduring cultural and spiritual traditions from around the globe, it convenes an international coalition of thought leaders, scholars, and activists whose cooperative engagements inspire advocacy and meaningful transformation. Its International Advisory Council identifies priorities for global peace and well-being that encourage inquiry and inspire action.

For more information, please visit www.g20interfaith.org.

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