

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

Media Release

Interchurch Center, Suite B ■ 0245 SW Bancroft Street ■ Portland, Oregon 97239
phone (503) 221-1054 ■ *fax* (503) 223-7007 ■ *Web site* www.emoregon.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Nov. 10, 2010

CONTACT: Jan Elfers, (503)221-1054
jelfers@emoregon.org

Who is our neighbor? Imagining beyond our borders Interfaith community discusses provocative issue at 2010 Collins Lecture

Who is our neighbor? What “borders” do we create between people: geographic, cultural, religious, economic, political? How can we live together respectfully in diverse communities? On Thursday, Nov. 18, these questions will be explored at the 2010 Collins Lecture, “Who Is Our Neighbor: Imagining Beyond Our Borders.” The lecture will be held at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary of the downtown First Baptist Church, 909 SW Eleventh Ave., Portland, Ore. Two keynote lectures will be followed by a moderated question and answer period.

The current national debates about immigration reform, the migration of people, and cultural and religious diversity provide a rich context for discussing these questions from a religious perspective. How we choose to face these challenges has crucial implications for our shared future.

The Collins Lecture keynote speakers will be the Rev. Dr. S. Wesley Ariarajah, a Methodist minister and professor at the Drew School of Theology, and the Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC) and an ordained Assemblies of God pastor. Ariarajah and Rodriguez bring both their personal histories and experience and their professional expertise to the topic.

Ariarajah was the deputy general secretary of the World Council of Churches’ (WCC) and the leader of the WCC’s Council for Interfaith Dialogue for ten years. He has given lectures, conducted seminars and led conferences in many parts of the world. Ariarajah draws on a wide range of personal experiences as a child, student and Methodist pastor in Sri Lanka, where over 90 percent of the people are Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim. Together with his later years working for the WCC in interfaith dialogue and as a student of Hinduism, Ariarajah brings unique insights into the topic of cultural and religious pluralism. He joined the faculty of the Drew University School of Theology and its Graduate School as Professor of Ecumenical Theology in 1997.

In his role as president of the NHCLC, Rodriguez heads America’s largest Hispanic Christian organization, the Hispanic National Association of Evangelicals (HNAE), with 25,434 member churches. HNAE frames comprehensive immigration reform as a “moral imperative.” As the leading spokesperson for Hispanic Evangelicals,

MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ American Baptist Churches of Oregon ■ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ■ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church ■ Church of the Brethren ■ Community of Christ
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ■ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon ■ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ■ Greek Orthodox Church ■ Presbyterian Church (USA)—Presbytery of the Cascades
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) ■ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church ■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

Rodriguez has been a featured speaker in White House and Congressional meetings on Hispanic American issues and justice concerns. He recently met with President Obama, urging the president to address the moral and spiritual dimensions supporting immigration reform and asking for immediate action. Rodriguez has been featured in several news outlets and was interviewed by Bill Moyers in 2008 about faith-based politics and immigration. His nonpartisan commitment enables Rodriguez to meet with both sides of the aisle, contextualizing the nexus between church and society.

The registration fee for the 2010 Collins Lecture is \$10 per person. For more information or to register, download a registration brochure at www.emoregon.org or call EMO at (503) 221-1054.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies—congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.