

# Susanna Wesley Foundation Annual Conference

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Elm Grove, University of Roehampton

## Biographies (in alphabetical order)



**Dr Munyurangabo Benda**

Dr Munyurangabo Benda is a Tutor at the Centre for Black Theology at the Queen's Theological Foundation in Birmingham. While studying law, the genocide against the Tutsi broke out in Rwanda and it led him to study theology to ask what a person seeking to do right ought to do when the foundations of law and order have been shattered. His PhD thesis from the University of Manchester used postcolonial analysis to critically compare the agency of Muslim and Christian communities in the genocide of 1994.

His current research interests in Theology revolve around the various intersections between active/practical faith and the public/political sphere.



**The Revd Dr Jo Cox-Darling**

The Revd Dr Jo Cox-Darling is a Methodist minister and practical theologian. She researches congregations in the midst of transition and creative change and is interested in questions of mission through the lens of leadership, innovation, and culture. She is the author of *Finding God in a Culture of Fear: discovering hope in God's kingdom* (BRF, 2019).



**Bill Crooks**

Bill Crooks is an artist and lifelong doodler with a background in international and community development. He has cartooned and illustrated for the charity and private sector and is currently working on anti-human trafficking and modern slavery issues. He also frequently facilitates therapeutic art workshops with asylum seekers and refugees and is passionate about enabling others to discover their creative gifts.

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**Tazim  
Fatima**

Tazim Fatima is College Engagement and Activities Officer at Southlands College, University of Roehampton. She is a former Teach for India fellow, a part of the global Teach for All network. Tazim is passionate about educational equity and has initiated various empowerment projects in underserved communities in India. At Southlands College, she has led the Spreading Kindness project and a social language learning initiative named London Life. She is committed to serving underprivileged sections of society and promoting peace and harmony worldwide.



**Rachel  
Griffiths**

Rachel Griffiths is a participative theatre-maker, working in socially engaged practice, using theatre as a way to enable communities, often those on the social margins, to articulate a message, or a story that they want to tell, using the Theatre of the Oppressed methodology of Augusto Boal.



**Dr Steven  
van den Heuvel**

Steven van den Heuvel, PhD, is Director of the Institute of Leadership and Social Ethics at Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven, Belgium, researching for a just and sustainable society. He leads the Hope Project, an interdisciplinary research project into the importance of 'hope', as a foundational human drive.

He is editor of *Historical and Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Hope* (Cham: Springer Open, 2020) and is co-editing the upcoming *Oxford Compendium of Hope* (2024). Find him too in two of our SWF podcast episodes ([here](#) and [here](#)).

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**Dr Elin  
Kelsey**

Elin Kelsey, PhD, is a leading spokesperson, scholar and educator in the area of evidence-based hope. Elin's work focuses on the reciprocal relationship between humans and the rest of nature, particularly in relation to the emotional implications of the narrative of environmental doom and gloom on children and adults. She is the author of *Hope Matters: Why Changing the Way We Think Is Critical to Solving the Environmental Crisis* (Greystone, 2020). Find her too in two of our SWF podcast episodes ([here](#) and [here](#)).



**Dr Oded Adomi  
Leshem**

Dr Oded Adomi Leshem is a political psychologist and peace activist who has been fascinated by the concept of hope for at least a decade. His interest in hope (and its absence) began in 2012 with his first experimental studies on hope inducement. Since then, he has published numerous articles and book chapters on hope and despair as political phenomena and lectured on hope to a wide range of academic and non-academic audiences. His new book *Hope Amidst Conflict* was recently published by Oxford University Press.

Oded teaches and conducts his research at the Hebrew University, where he serves as a Senior Research Associate. He is also Research Fellow at the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace.



**Dr Heather  
Major**

Dr Heather Major is Research Fellow in New Places for New People, Evangelism and Growth at Cliff College, a joint appointment with the Methodist Church in Britain where she is the lead researcher in the New Places for New People initiative. She holds a PhD in Practical Theology, Rural Church & Mission from the University of Glasgow and her research interests include rural mission and the place of lament.

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**The Revd Nicola Morrison**

The Revd Nicola Morrison is Chaplain to Southlands College and Methodist Chaplain to the University of Roehampton, where she has been since 2017. She has had hymns published in the US and UK, including for the Methodist hymn book *Singing the Faith* and, in collaboration with The Revd Jane Leach, Wesley House Principal, a hymn that celebrated both Southlands' 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Wesley House's 100<sup>th</sup> (2022). Nicola loves the collaborative, community nature of her chaplaincy role and is passionate about the enduring role of the Methodist ethos at Southlands College.



**Dr Emma Pavey**

Dr Emma Pavey is Creative Communications Manager at the Susanna Wesley Foundation, where she has worked since 2017. In her role, she curates space for conversation and ideas through hosting **podcast** conversations, designing **resources** based on SWF research projects, facilitating workshops and engaging in academic research. With a PhD in Linguistics and a ThM in Theology, her publications include *The Structure of Language* (CUP, 2010). In her spare time, she can be found renovating her ancient, leaky caravan, learning the baritone horn, and growing vegetables.



**Bevan Powell, MBE**

Bevan Powell, MBE, is Director for Inclusion for the Methodist Church and a member of the Racial Justice Advocacy Forum. He is a lifelong campaigner for race equality and human rights, and worked mainly in the Metropolitan Police Service. He was a founding member of the UK National Black Police Association and former Chair of the Metropolitan Black Police Association. In 1998 Bevan gave crucial evidence to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and helped to shape the language of 'Institutional Racism' and in 2007 was awarded an MBE for his contribution to policing. In 2014 he was elected Labour Councillor for the Golborne Ward, North Kensington.

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**Dr Lia Dong  
Shimada**

Dr Lia Dong Shimada is Senior Research Officer at the Susanna Wesley Foundation where she has worked since 2015. Her projects include editing the book *Mapping Faith: Theologies of Migration and Community* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2020) and collaborating with Theos Thinktank on the research project and report *Ashes to Ashes: Beliefs, Trends and Practices in Dying, Death and the Afterlife*. She established the Death Café programme at Brompton Cemetery, where her infant son is buried.