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Rev. Dr. Shanta Premawardhana is the president of OMNIA. Prior to assuming this post he was the Director of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation at the World Council of Churches (WCC) a worldwide fellowship of 349 Protestant and Orthodox churches/denominations based in Geneva, Switzerland.

He founded the Chicago Ashram of Jesus Christ, a Christian community with an outreach to South Asian immigrants, and served for fourteen years as senior pastor of Ellis Avenue Church on the south side of Chicago.

Additionally, Dr. Premawardhana has served as the Associate General Secretary for Interfaith Relations at the National Council of Churches of Christ in New York. During his time with the WCC, Dr. Premawardhana specialized in helping global church bodies articulate comprehensive theological bases for interreligious dialogue and cooperation relevant to contemporary contexts. Specifically, he spearheaded a joint initiative between the Vatican, World Evangelical Alliance and the WCC, seeking agreement on a code of conduct for Christian witness.

He was also a significant contributor to the Accompanying Churches in Situations of Conflict project, which encourages churches to stand in solidarity with other churches facing religious persecution. His primary task on the project was to bring religious leaders from such contexts to dialogue tables to seek together ways of resolving conflicts and finding means of reconciliation.

Dr. Premawardhana completed his seminary education in Sri Lanka and India and earned his graduate degrees from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where he earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in Religion.

He has published numerous articles on religion, interreligious dialogue and Christian mission. His most recent edited work is *Religious Conversion: Religion Scholars Thinking Together* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015) features essays by renowned religion scholars engaging in a cutting edge theological method of Thinking Together across religious traditions. Prior to that he co-edited with Ariane Hentsch Cisneros *Sharing Values: A Hermeneutics for Global Ethics* (Globethics.net, 2011) focuses on the principles of sharing values across cultures and religion and the applications of interfaith dialogue.

Shanta currently serves as a member of the governing board of the National Council of Churches USA, and a member of the board of trustees of the Parliament of the World's Religions.

In recognition of his ministry, the Academy of Parish Clergy named him 1998 Parish Pastor of the Year, and the Islamic Society of North America awarded him the Interfaith Unity Award in 2007.

Dr. Premawardhana is originally from Sri Lanka and currently lives in Chicago, IL.



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205 W Monroe Street, Suite 300
Chicago, IL 60606

P: 312-726-1200 | F: 312-726-0425

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