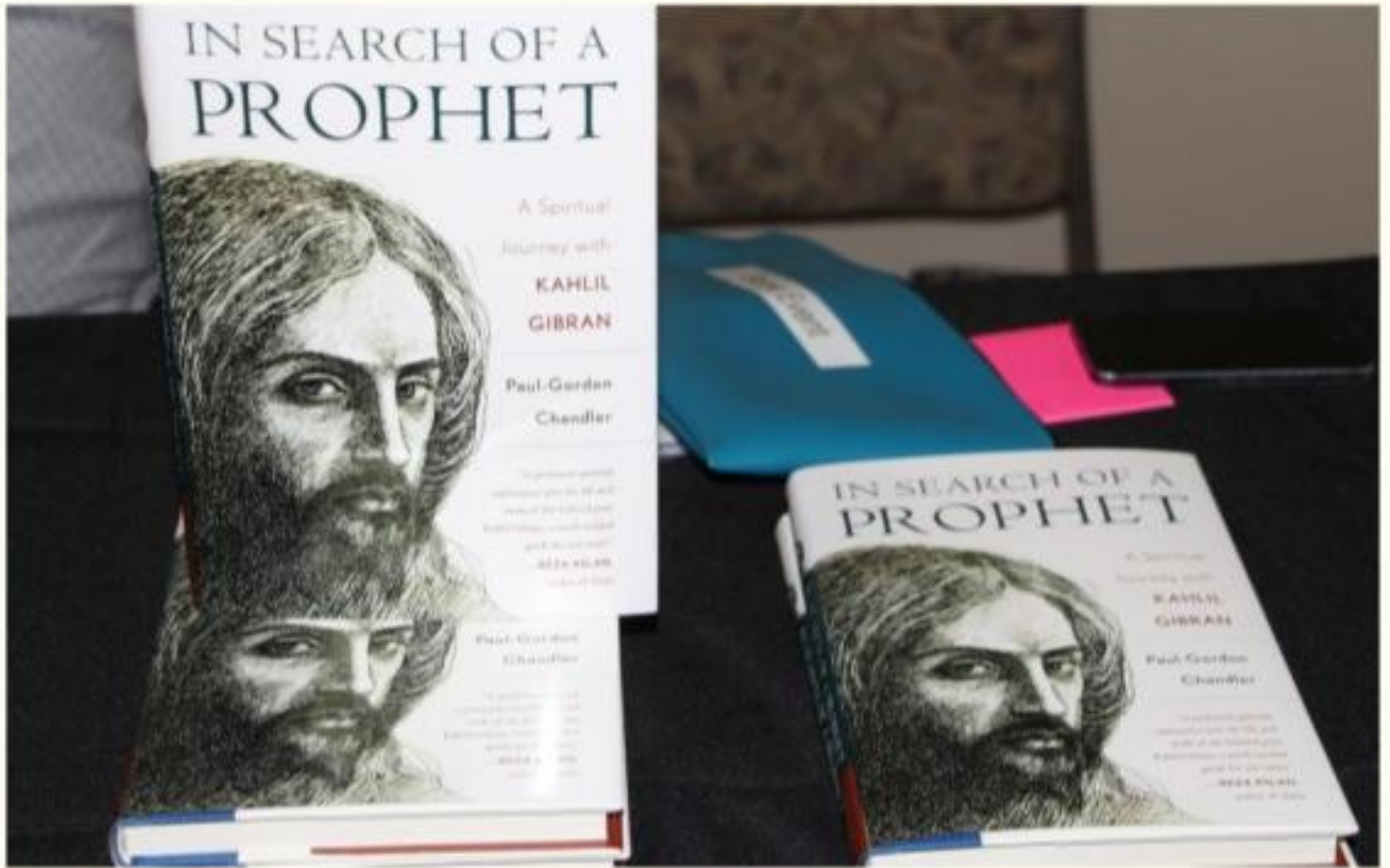


IV. THE GIBRAN CHAIR CULTURAL EVENTS AND LECTURES



I. IN SEARCH OF A PROPHET: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY WITH KAHLIL GIBRAN

WITH REV. PAUL-GORDON CHANDLER
SEPTEMBER 2017
COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND

The George and Lisa Zakhem Kahlil Gibran Chair for Values and Peace organized an event about Gibran Kahlil Gibran on the occasion of the newly published book: "In Search of a Prophet: A Spiritual Journey with Kahlil Gibran", authored by Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler.

On Wednesday, September 27, 2017, the Dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS), Dr. Gregory Ball, welcomed audience members to the University and introduced them to the College's three Peace Chairs: The Gibran Chair for Values and Peace directed by May Rihani, The Baha'i Chair for World Peace directed by Hoda Mahmoudi, and the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development directed by Shibley Telhami, who was in attendance.

On the subject of the three Peace Chairs, Dean Ball said: "One of the important things about the Peace Chairs is that they provide a vehicle to challenge students in a secular university setting concerning some of the biggest questions we face today." "Each of these questions" he continued, "relates to our values and how we treat others; what is required to generate a peaceful society, and what our responsibilities to others are."

Dean Ball highlighted that the Gibran Chair aims to bring Gibran's work- his vision, thoughts, and writings- to the forefront in a scholarly manner and to present them in a modern context.

The Director of the Gibran Chair, May Rihani, then framed the event in her opening remarks. Ms. Rihani stated that Kahlil Gibran is the third best-selling author in the world after Shakespeare and Lao Tzu and that Gibran's book

"The Prophet" to date has been translated into a large number of languages.

Director Rihani captured the essence of the lecture by saying, "Gibran truly believed that all human beings are brothers and sisters regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity. He believed in what I call the Oneness of Humanity." She further expressed that the Gibran Chair's programs are inspired by Gibran's vision and "that is why we study cultural pluralism; examine common ground among different civilizations; research how to deepen cross-cultural understanding; reflect on how to transcend the barriers of East and West; and revisit poetry, literature, and art as connectors within our Global Village." She continued to say, "today's lecture by Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler fully falls within this framework."

Rev. Chandler began his presentation by reminding his audience of two things. First, that Gibran's work should be "savored" and not "absorbed too quickly". He said, "The profundity and the style of his writing necessitate a contemplative approach to his work where you savor them little by little, relishing them as the treasures they are." He continued, "You can not move through the journey quickly. For me, it's been a long captivating journey to discover."

Second, Rev. Chandler noted that sometimes something written long ago becomes seemingly more relevant than it was during its own day. "And now more than ever", Rev. Chandler said, "there's a need to hear voices to call us to unity and to respect, to inspire to look deeply and generously in our thinking and actions toward the Other, whoever the Other is." Kahlil Gibran, to Rev. Chandler, would be just that voice of guidance for us.

To write "In Search of a Prophet", Rev. Chandler savored Gibran's work chronologically at the locations where Gibran had written them. Additionally, he read biographies and visited museums and monuments from Bsharri, Lebanon to Mexico City, Mexico.

Rev. Chandler stated that Gibran consistently succeeded at "drafting poetic invitations to journey toward the depths of one's self, exploring the rich reservoir within."

Regarding that, he quoted Gibran's "The Prophet," "Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing."

As Director May Rihani said in her opening remarks, "By revisiting Gibran's work, Rev. Chandler brings him to life for us, shedding new light on this famous writer and social change advocate."

After the lecture, Rev. Chandler and the audience engaged in a dynamic and thought-provoking question and answer session. Questions from the audience came from scholars on Gibran's work and others who were not as familiar with his life and legacy.

Following the Q&A, a book-signing session took place as well as a reception. ■



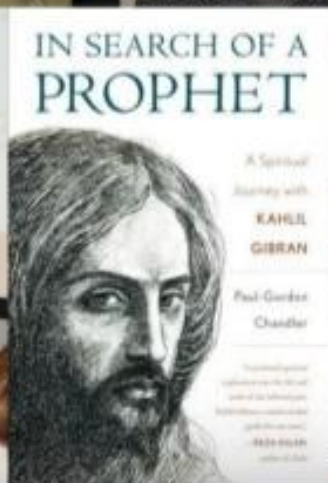
Dr. Fatemeh Keshavarz during the lecture's Q&A session



Dean Gregory Ball, Rev. Paul Gordon Chandler, Dr. May Rihani, and Ambassador Carla Jazzar



Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler and Director May Rihani



Director May Rihani and Assistant to the Director Mona Rezvani with the BSOS Student Ambassadors