

## ELETRICE Parliament Review -1



The journey and path God has chosen for me has lead me to Melbourne Australia to the Parliament of the World's Religions. I started my journey in Los Angeles when I meet up with two friends Bernie and Fern from Miami and Jamaica who flew into LA for a few days before going to Australia. Since God is behind all that I do I was not surprised to find out that

we were on the same plane going to the Parliament. The flight that we were on was the first ever flight for V-Australia Airlines going from Los Angeles to Melbourne. So as we entered the flight they handed us t-shirts and goodies to celebrate their inaugural flight. It was a very good flight with lots of empty seats for us to stretch out and lounge for the over 14 hour flight.

November 29, 2009

Upon arrival to the airport all was well with me at check-in bags, passport, visa all checked out and I was on my way. It was not so smooth for my two friends. It seemed that they arrived at the airport with two bags and a carry on each. The first adventure started with finding out that the two free luggage limits came with its own set of limitations which were that they had both had to equal no more than 70 lbs. On domestic flights we are use to a 50 lb limit per bag. Well come to find out if you go over the limit there is a fee of \$100 and they also weigh the carry on bags which can be no more than 25lbs. This was very shocking and caused much confusion for Bernie who had 100 lbs of free UFBL literature to distribute at the Parliament. So you could imagine the look on her face when they told her it would be an additional \$200.00 to take this literature with her. She had a total of 100 extra lbs of literature in a total of two bags. So we ended up consolidating the literature from one of the bags into the other 5 bags and paying a total of \$100 extra. Then we were on our way.



Our airport adventure with the bag situation resolved!

November 30, 2009

The flight was good I slept the entire way, waking only to eat and use the facilities. It was great. Upon arrival it was kind of wired to realize that I had just bypassed a day. I left Los Angeles on Sunday, November 29, 2009 and arrived in Melbourne on Tuesday, December 1, 2009. I thought where did Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup> go how could I just miss an entire day? Not sure how it works but it does.

December 1, 2009

Today is my rest day, upon arrival from the airport there was transport to the hotel and then it was sleep, sleep and more sleep. After about 10 hours I awoke to meet up with friend for a later snack and dialogue on the fact that we were actually in Australia that we had been so bless to be here together and that we would never be the same again. Our journey into ourselves continues. Tomorrow the New Thought Conference where 8 independent New Thought groups will come together as one voice to be heard on the world stage. The UFBL will be represented by the Rev. Mary Tumpkin. It will be exciting.

*Reflection: As I thought of why I was making this trip and doing my prayer work on just what I wanted to bring to it and what I wanted to get out of it. I was talking to a good friend of mine who helped me to come to my mission statement and mantra for this trip. "I am a beacon of light shining brightly for all to experience. I am an individual expression of God in this moment and in every moment of my trip. I am God in expressing in every experience and for all to enjoy. I bring a unique expression of my connection to spirituality; I am open and receptive to all other expressions of God and their chosen connection to spirituality. I am grateful, I am life, I am love, and I am Eletrice.*

## **ELETRICE Parliament Review -2**

December 2, 2009



Today was the New Thought Delegation Pre-Conference it was the gathering of eight major New Thought organizations collaborating to participate as a unified force in the Parliament of the World's Religions 2009. This exciting evolution toward greater cooperation allows us to present ourselves as a unique movement on the international stage. The day was full of excitement and information.

We started with prayer and dedication to our combined purpose of life love and peace. Then we had a very warm welcome from the officials of Australia and then a lovely presentation from the Jeremy Donovan an indigenous aboriginal. He presented us with a prayer and traditional performance. It was delightful.



Then we embarked on the program which included prayers from each of the 8 organizations represented, a youth presentation, musical performances and the highlight dialogue w/questions and answers about New Thoughts commonalities and differences to the religions of the world. This dialogue would high light and help us to open up to the things we have in common with other religions and prepare us to be compassionate to our differences.

## The New Thought Delegation



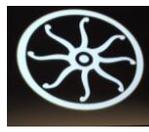
Program overview: Each of the New Thought leaders took a religion and compared it to New Thought for commonalities. This session was preparation for the Parliament in that it prepared us to be open and receptive to the many paths to God and the many expressions of those paths. We have more likenesses than differences from other religions; we are all on the search a search for God by what ever name we call it. We have an opportunity this week to focus on our similarities which is sure to bring us closer and open us

up to be receptive to the minor difference we encounter on our search. Please find below the points of commonalities we addressed for each of the world's religions selected.

## The New Thought and other Religious Practices



Hindu/Jainism



Judaism



Buddhism



Taoism



Islam



Sikhism



Baha'i

### New Thought & Hinduism, Jainism - James Trapp

- Truth is oneness – seek to reach the divine potential through practices
- Ahimsa – nonviolence practices the silence

### New Thought and Judaism – Ken Gordon

- Common belief in God and oneness with all life
- Belief that God exist and we are unique expressions of that God
- There can be only one infinite and we are all apart of it each person place & thing

### New Thought and Buddhism – Michael Beckwith

- Embarks on a search for the meeting of Life the ground of our being
- We are what we think –process of thought, perception, and experience
- Deep listening and taking action
- Recite interrupted embody oneness

### New Thought and Taoism, Confucianism – Frank zunMallen

- One indefinable source or essence
- This source is known by its it's attributes eternal principles
- CHI primal breath that expresses as each individual
- Healing through the power of the mind

### New Thought and Christianity – Barbara King

- Principle of faith
- Healing through faith

### New Thought and Islam – Kathy Hearn

- Invisible force-personal will
- Monotheism unity with God
- Peace one who totally surrenders to God
- Prayer is the answer to jihad-the struggle within between the ego and spiritual self

### New Thought and Sikiam - Mary Tumpkin

Equality of all people  
Potential always exceeds the appearance  
Spark of divinity of all things

New Thought and Baha’I – Jackie Atkins

- Nature of God - only one the creator
  - superior reasoning power
  - principle in action
- Nature of man - animal and spiritual
  - expression of the attributes of God

**Reflection:** *Today was a wonderful opening of the heart to the many different paths to God that have been developed and that apparently lead directly to God. I realized that there are many outer expressions being used today to get to the meeting place where man meets God. The prayers and presentations from the different leaders of groups and movements within New Thought and the comparison to the other religions gave me exactly what I needed to move into the Parliament of World Religions to be receptive to the possible difference and to know that no matter what the outer appearance of difference there maybe the similarities are so much more powerful.*

*“I came to a place where I could see God in every face and see that we all originate from the same source. Every person of every faith, religion, tradition, lifestyle and nationality is a child of God. I embrace every spark of divinity that I know is there within each person. We are members of the same spiritual family, we may not always agree but we are all bound together by the love of God. Like spokes on a wheel, no matter which direction each of us points, we all connect at the center. As I look into the faces of my spiritual brothers and sisters here at the Parliament, I see a light of God.”*

## **ELETRICE Parliament Review -3**

December 3, 2009

Today is the opening ceremony for the Parliament there is a spiritual buzz around the convention center with delegates from every religion imaginable. There are displays of religious practices going on in the halls as we prepare to open this event. The Parliament has recognized several faith groups that represent the worlds major religions and are giving those groups an opportunity the share with the world their religion and practices. The opening ceremony began with an opening presentation from the original habitants of this land know as the aboriginal people and a full orchestra and choirs. The evening then progressed with a prayer and blessings to the world from the selected religious groups. The recognized groups were Zoroastrian, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist Sikh, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Baha’i, Aboriginal, Shinto and Bells of Peace. There were also the traditional welcomes from Australia’s officials and dignitaries and several keynote speakers, it was quite an evening.



Opening Ceremony celebration!



December 4, 2009

Our first full day of the parliament which is divided into 6 sessions began with the first session of observances from diverse religious and spiritual traditions. This morning I had the pleasure to start the day out in the Jain traditions which included mantras and prayer songs. Then I made my way over to the morning ritual of the Yoruba faith which included more meditation and burnt offerings.

During the second session which is dedicated to intrareligious expression and sharing. Speakers within New Thought-A Religion of Healthy Mindedness discussed New Thought's Uniquely American contribution to the Arena of New Religious Community and the 7 Parliament subthemes and gave their answer to these issues. The themes are 1. Healing the Earth with Care and Concern, 2. Indigenous People, 3. Overcoming Poverty in an Unequal World, 4. Securing Food and Water for All People, 5. Building Peace in the Pursuit of Justice, 6. Creating Social Cohesion in Village and City, and 7. Sharing Wisdom in the Search for Inner Peace. The room was full and the emotion was high as the New Thought perspective on how to deal with the world's issues was shared with the Parliament.



Session three is dedicated to interreligious discussions where speakers from two or more traditions engage with each other seeking greater understanding. I found myself at a discussion on Globalization and Spiritual Values where the discussion got heated with a debate about how most nations need to globalize but have not been able figure out how to do it without compromising or rectifying their spiritual value system. Most nation have not been able to do it with any success and those who have chosen the side of values have found themselves still in the process of globalizing. It's a major challenge and the solution is being sought. In the contemporize world, excessive materialism has lead to corruption, sexism, erosion of values, disintegration of families, juvenile crime and so on. Societies of the world are shaken by religious and political conflicts, violence and terrorism, There is an urgent need to protect and preserve spiritual and moral values cherished by all religious traditions. Panel members discussed how religious people can work toward building tolerance in a globalized society, while simultaneously deepening their own faiths. The future of humanity rests in releasing the underlying spirituality and morality of all religions.

Session four is dedicated to engaging with other traditions considering the challenges of our many crucial topics and the resources to meet them. I found myself in the discussion on Reconciling Religious Values and the Universal Entitlement to Human Rights. There is a continuous debate between religious and human rights activities as to weather to petition congress to make the rights to religious values as a basic human right. The discussion shed light on the differing cultural conflicts that would be involved in such a bill.

Session five is dedicated to open space for a verity of activities we visited the Authors room where there was a book being presented by a Jamaican author Yasus Afari – Overstanding Rastafari Jamaica's Gift to the World and an Indonesian author Anand Krishna - One Earth One Sky One Humankind Celebration of Unity in Diversity



Author Yasus Afari



Author Anand Krishna



We ended the night with the last session with consisted of Communities Night: A Night of Hospitality in which the religious and spiritual communities of Melbourne offered their hospitality to people of all faiths and spiritual traditions at the conference to come together and share warmth and welcome at its local faith establishments. There were 22 different community events held all at the same time in and around Melbourne for the people of faith at the conference. We found our way to the New Thought Community Night event held at the Unity of Melbourne. It was a lovely service with singing and a lesson with testimony and prayer and sharing and thanking God that we could all be together here in Melbourne. There was food, laughter and thanksgiving and love.



Community Night at Unity of Melbourne

*Reflection: It was a very long day but full of adventure and love. Just walking the halls of the convention center is an adventure. There are faith groups dressed in their traditional garb doing performance, engaging in their traditional prayer rituals, waiting to see spiritual leaders, gurus, seers, performers, authors all searching and seeking and open. There is such a essence in the air, people may look different, pray different, speak different, express differently but we are all on the same path seeking to enrich our relationship with God and eager to address the worlds issues head on with the common goal of using our spirituality to solve them. We are all realizing that it is going to take all of our collective prayers, our collective consciousness, and our spiritual resources to move the world forward. The conclusion I received from the sessions I was lead to attend was that there is enough of everything need to solve the worlds global issues we just need a new perspective on how to use them. God is still available to us and no matter which method we use to turn to him/her the connection is open and available it's up to us to use it.*

## ELETRICE Parliament Review - 4

December 5, 2009

Today I began with the intrareligious session 'How a Profound Spiritual Theology can Overthrow Poverty'. As we know poverty affects every human being on earth, as well as the health of the earth itself. A spiritual solution to the problem of poverty would lift the burden of insufficient resources that are only available to privileged. Self-made material resources are made on the premise of lack or insufficiency of resources and competition for limited resources is unavoidable. This discussion was given by a Christian Scientist so in part I initality went to it as a tribute to my mother who connected to infinite wisdom and made the

choice to raise me and my sibling up in this teaching. But once I arrived I realized my own soul drew me here and I re-connected with the principles espoused by Christian Science. The principle of this discussion was that we need to shift our focus from the material to the spiritual.

It was presented that we need to shift our focus from the human and the self-made to the God-made image and likeness if we are going to dissolve the psychological necessity to steal from others.

The presented had us to play the game of musical chairs where there were four people and three chairs thus we are starting out with limitations in this game. The notion that there will never be enough for the four people, there will always be someone left out. We all know how the game goes they play the music and we all walk around the chairs until the music stops and sure enough there is always someone left standing, someone with no place to sit, someone left out, now while we all thinking the one that is left out is the loser it really is not the case because the others walking around the chairs are suffering also. They are on edge, competing with each other, pushing, shoveling, uptight, stressed you name it, all because there is not enough from the beginning. It was brought to our attention that this is a popular game played at children's birthday parties. This sense of not having enough and competition is being taught to our children at an early age and as metaphysician we know that the concepts from this game goes into their subconscious mind and plays out in their lives at some point later on. Now shouldn't we re-think that game? Well the presenter thought so.

So we played the game again this time the game began with more than enough chairs we started with one person walking around two chairs and instead of taking a chair away after each round a chair and a person was added. Thus having at all times during the game a surplus of chairs. As the participants walked around the chairs they were calm, friendly they expressed joy and excitement and were trusting in the law of equality – abundance for everyone. It was a lovely exercise that helped us to realize we don't have to create more resources we just have to change our perspective about what we have. There is a spiritual order in the universe and if we look at it from the perspective of God and not the perspective of man poverty would be nonexistent. Shirley Paulson – Christian Science Practitioner was the presenter.

I then went to a film 'Journey of the Universe' which focused on the current environmental crisis and the fact that it has its roots in humanity's divisions and the lack of planetary consciousness. That equates to our/humanity's inability to agree on just how to take care of the planet it is this confusion that is causing the crisis. This film reconnected us to our shared roots by providing the longest possible view of our common heritage. This film provided us with a scientific context for the critical nature of the present moment in human history. It also called on the faith traditions to join the ecological preservation band wagon and support the initiatives with our conscious awareness of God and his ability to impact our current situation. It sounded very much like New Thought's practices of being aware of our ability to impact our lives and the world through the power of thought or as Johnnie Colemon would say collective consciousness. Mary Tucker & John Grim - Executive Producers

Session three and four were spent in the large Expo hall with one hundred exhibition booths of vendor's booksellers, spiritual and service organizations were sharing information about their work. As you can imagine it took several hours to make my way from entry to exit and I had bags of free literature and tapes and posters and invitations to join and or experience the latest trends in faith expressions. I was on information overload by the time I made my way

to the exit. But I did have the opportunity to have a stress test at the Scientology booth, and a healing session from the Shinji Shumeikai booth, and participate in a Buddhist pray session at the Chung Tai Chan Monastery booth and of course I stopped by the New Thought booth and received the sweetest welcome with the most delicious chocolates imported from our very own Costco. I also made my way to the Visual Arts Presentations throughout the convention center which include a fantastic collection of work by international artists from various cultures and origins. There were live presentations, paintings and other visual displays of information and art from all around the world of faith seekers.



We ended this Parliament day with the evening International Plenary event which discussed the efforts to establish a United Nations Decade of Interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for Peace. The evening was a celebration of the exemplary work of a growing global movement that has cultivated dialogue and relationships among people from a diversity of the world's religions. There were speakers, musical presentations and awards.

*Reflection: There are 30 rooms available in this convention center for breakout sessions and there is the possibility of six sessions a day in each room, doing the math on any given day during this Parliament one has 180 sessions to choose from. When I first received the program bible as it has become known as, I thought how will I choose? Thought the Parliament has 7 featured subthemes there are so many areas of interest within each subtheme. I had to do my prayer work and wait for guidance because I was interested in everything. Realizing that I could physically be in only one place at a time I had to come up with some way of deciding. I was led to go back to my mission statement and mantra which focus on the spirituality in everyone and using our spirituality to change the world. So I focused on sessions that discussed spiritual values, globalization and the human spirit, reconciling religion and spirituality. This has helped me stay focused on a small enough aspect of this vast adventure that I am able to share in detail and depth the dialogue that will result in action and a contribution to change. The intensity seems to get greater as we move through the days here at the Parliament as if the spirit of acceptance is growing stronger with each passing day. The validity that each faith group brings to the table is creating a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to see the others side. This parliament has helped me admire all who has a faith practice different from the one I have chosen and has allowed me to accept that: we are all capable of making a difference in the world, we can be of service to others when we are guided by spirit, and that working together in a spirit of love is the key to solving the world's challenges. I am grateful to see and experience the different expressions and solutions to the world's challenges.*

## **ELETRICE Parliament Review -5**

December 6, 2009

The first order of business today was a session explaining the spiritual tradition of Scientology. It was an interesting presentation of the origin of Scientology and its practices. They consider themselves a religion and do have some religious services but from what I could ascertain it is more of a philosophy which happens to have a component which could be considered faith based or religious.

I learned the following: the Scientology religious philosophy contains a precise system of axioms, laws and techniques, exhaustively researched and documented as workable. As such,

it provides the individual with the ability to dramatically improve conditions, not only in his own life but in the world around him. It comprises a vast body of knowledge extending from certain fundamental truths, and prime among those truths: Man is a spiritual being endowed with abilities well beyond those which he normally envisages. He is not only able to solve his own problems, accomplish his goals and gain lasting happiness, but also to achieve new states of awareness he may never have dreamed possible.

In one form or another, all great religions have held the hope of spiritual freedom — a condition free of material limitations and misery. The question has always been, however, how does one reach such a state, particularly while still living amidst a frantic and often overwhelming society? Although modern life seems to pose an infinitely complex array of problems, Scientology maintains that the solutions to those problems are basically simple and within every man's reach. Difficulties with communication and interpersonal relationships, nagging insecurities, self-doubt and despair — each man innately possesses the potential to be free of these and many other concerns. Scientology offers a pathway to greater freedom. It sounds a lot like New Thought to me.

Then it was off to the session 'Religious Leadership in a Global Perspective' which discussed the satisfaction, expectation and trust that different communities worldwide have in their religious leaders. It sought to identify the qualities that people feel are most important to the vocation of a religious leader and it suggested what it is that the faithful of different religions are expecting of their leaders. The panel of leaders shared what their tradition is doing to implement practical solutions to the global leadership issues.

We ended the evening with the Sacred Music concert where world-class musician, vocalists and dancers performed some of the most sacred music and movement from many religious and spiritual traditions. There were performances by The Agape International Choir, Muslim singer Zain Bhikha and Ensemble, Contemporary Jewish music and songs, classic Indian dancers, Whirling Prayer Ceremony Bhai Kultar Sikh tradition and many more. It was an amazing night full of praise and worship in a diversity of displays of faith and love.



Agape Choir



Chamber Choir of  
St Francis Church



Naqshbandi Sufi Order



Yolgnu Clan sacred dance

*Reflection: For some spirituality is personal, quiet and contemplative, for others it is outward and active. But for all, spirituality implies a deeper involvement with oneself and the world and a more empathetic understanding of others. The quest for enlightenment and inner tranquility is a tread that runs throughout virtually every religious and spiritual tradition. At this Parliament a wide range of religious and spiritual traditions shared what spirituality means to them and how it affects individuals at a very personal level and the world at a global level. I am convinced that spirituality can provide the framework and be an asset in times of crisis. This week has changed my perspective on religion, spirituality and the world in which we practice our faith. I close with my mission statement and mantra for this trip. "I am a beacon of light shining brightly for all to experience. I am an individual expression of God in this moment and in every moment of my trip. I am God in expressing in every experience and for all to enjoy. I bring a unique expression of my connection to spirituality; I am open and receptive to all other expressions of God and their chosen connection to spirituality. I am grateful, I am life, I am love, and I am Eletrice.*

## **ELETRICE Parliament Review - 6**

December 7, 2009

Today I am leaving the Parliament to visit with family in Sydney. I will be in Australia for another few weeks. I must say this has been an adventure and I am grateful to have had the experience. I come away from the Parliament with some fresh ideas of how I might use my faith to be a part of the solution to the world's challenges. I plan on getting involved with the interfaith organizations in my area and educating those within my faith tradition on our responsibility to participate in the many activities that involve faith discussions and dialogue. I plan on making a difference in the coming years until the Parliament meets again and I plan on having something to report to all faith traditions which I have been introduced to at this Parliament. Thankfully, Eletrice

December 9, 2009

Although I had left the Parliament I made sure to capture information on the closing ceremony with the Dalai Lama to share with all of you, see below the correspondence I received from fellow blogger, D. Andrew Kille.

Dalai Lama challenges Parliament attendees to action



In a bit of unmistakable irony, the first sign that the Dalai Lama would soon be present at the Parliament of the World's Religions was the presence of metal detectors at the entrances to the Melbourne Convention Center. That this man, who probably more than any other embodies a spirit of peacemaking and global unity, might provoke someone to violence says much about the brokenness of our world, and the distance we have yet to travel.

The Parliament drew to a close today after six days of plenary sessions, workshops, celebrations, music, and dance. The closing session included greetings from world religious leaders, music from a hip-hop Hare Krishna group, the Australian Girls Choir, and stirring solos on Oud and cello by Joseph Twardos and Michael Fitzpatrick. The haunting sound of the didgeridu provided a background for Tenzin Choegyal's Tibetan flute, and Australian Music Ambassador Dya Singh was joined by an ensemble of musicians for a grand finale of world music.

Indigenous people at the Parliament presented a statement of concerns to the assembly, followed by comments by Uncle Bob Randall, a Yankunytjatjara Elder and Traditional Owner of Uluru (once known as Ayer's Rock). Other speakers included Robert Doyle, Lord Mayor of Melbourne and the Hon. James Merlino, Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs.

The Dalai Lama challenged those who had attended the Parliament to work to ensure that the gathering had not simply been a social occasion. He urged them to draw closer together to make love and compassion real and to implement the dreams and possibilities that had been discussed there. He spoke of the need for a strong secularism- not a secularism that denies the importance of religion, but one which respects the practitioners of all religions and of none. Beliefs may differ, he said, but the core practices of love and compassion are common in all traditions.

Outgoing Chair of the Parliament Rev. Dr. William Leshar introduced his successor, Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid of Chicago, a radio producer and former Chairperson of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago. Mujahid invited all to take the next step in implementing their goals by joining Peace Next, a social networking site developed by the Parliament.

### **Closing Ceremony with the Dalai Lama**

