



## New Thought at the Parliament of the World's Religions Melbourne, Australia December 1-9, 2009

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# Executive Summary

## Overview

The 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions, hosted in Melbourne, Australia, will be an international interreligious gathering spanning seven nights and six days – from December 3rd to 9th - bringing together an estimated 8,000 to 12,000 persons.

Over seven days, delegates will choose from over 450 activities, including daily morning observances of many traditions, intrareligious and interreligious programs, models of engagement, symposia, performances, open space dialogue and exhibits. A Parliament is a place to come together to listen and commit. The entire program will evolve through 2008 as a result of interaction with religious and spiritual communities, as well as civic and corporate groups across Melbourne and Australia.

## Goals for New Thought as a Unified Movement

The organizations within New Thought are evolving toward collaborative models that have not been possible in the past. We are also reaching out beyond our own spiritual community to form relationships with other faith communities and to be of practical service to the world at large. Taken together, this trend toward greater internal cooperation and global outreach calls us to develop new strategies for presenting a unified identity on the international stage.

### **New Thought Legacy: Universal Purpose / Unique Identity**

It's in the "DNA" of New Thought to exemplify commitment to a larger purpose that is based in divine consciousness while preserving the unique gifts and free expression of our individual voices as communities within the whole. At the Parliament of the World's Religion in 2009, the family of New Thought organizations hopes to weave an experience of program, presence, and participation that allows us to honor that legacy by sharing our individual missions, and offering new models for spiritual activism as a unified community.



## **New Thought Coalition: Melbourne 2009**

Assn. for Global New Thought  
Assn. of Unity Churches  
Agape International  
Affiliated New Thought Network  
Hillside International Truth Center  
International New Thought Alliance  
Religious Science International  
United Centers for Spiritual Living  
Unity  
Universal Foundation for Better Living

## **Parliament of the World's Religions**

In our first series of teleconferences we focused on educating ourselves about the the goals articulated by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions in general and in relation to the 2009 event. We studied their mission and the main themes of the event. Please continue to keep these in mind as we continue planning our participation:

### **Make a World of Difference: Hearing each other, Healing the earth**

The 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions offers a unique and dynamic opportunity to address the pressing concerns of humanity from religious and spiritual perspectives.

We live in an age of enormous opportunity and challenge, of dire threat and of great potential. To survive and flourish as a human community, we must find ways to live and work together – East with West, developed North with developing South, men with women, elders with youth, religious with non-religious, traditional with post-modern. The decisions that we make and the actions we take as individuals, as members of diverse communities and as a global community will determine our future. We can make a difference. Our diverse religious and spiritual traditions are tremendous resources which can be shared and strengthened at the Parliament as we strive towards achieving reconciliation, overcoming poverty, creating social cohesion and building peace. The hope of a renewed world can emerge from this world of difference.

The obvious yet difficult first step in this process is to hear each other. Technology now enables communication from most points on the planet so we can no longer ignore our interconnectedness. Active listening and engagement builds respect for self and others. It gives us the insights we need



to right all our relationships, including our relationship with the earth and its life - of which we are an integral part.

The very survival of humanity depends on the state of our environment. Religious and caring people the world over are being called to respond to urgent environmental concerns. Healing the earth requires a change in mindset and in behavior so that sustainable patterns of life can be created. The earth is everyone's home so we are all in this together. The need to manifest our spiritual values is urgent.

In our differences lies great opportunity; we can make a world out of our difference. Hearing each other, we can move towards a more just, peaceful and sustainable future. Healing the earth is our common task: to heal is to set right and repair, to restore to health and spiritual wholeness. This is hopeful work.

The 2009 Parliament in Melbourne will address a number of crucial topics from religious and spiritual perspectives. These include:

- [Healing the Earth with Care and Concern](#)
- [Reconciling with the Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Overcoming Poverty in a Patriarchal World](#)
- [Creating Social Cohesion in Village and City](#)
- [Sharing Wisdom in the Search for Inner Peace](#)
- [Securing Food and Water for All People](#)
- [Building Peace in the Pursuit of Justice](#)



## **Service & Funding Support: Scholarships and Hosting of Indigenous People**

There is interest among Global New Thought organizations and their congregations in directly supporting elements of the Parliament event with service opportunities and financial resources.

The CPWR is hoping to bring 80 indigenous representatives from six continents to participate in the Parliament event, and perhaps to an Assembly gathering three before focused on the challenges facing aboriginal and indigenous peoples. Virtually all of these representatives will need financial assistance with airfare, accommodations, meals and registration.

From the general indigenous populations, they want to bring at least a total of 400 persons to the event, from 40 to 60 countries, who would not otherwise be able to attend without financial assistance. As you know, sometimes the people who most need to attend the Parliament, from whom everyone else attending most needs to hear from, are often the people least able to raise the necessary resources to attend.

Once there, they might be challenged or even overwhelmed by the cultural differences they confront, even in the most basic daily tasks they must accomplish. It was suggested by our NT coalition that we train and appoint some of our skillful delegates in the role of hosts; they would make sure that the rigors for indigenous people of making their way in a new culture, foreign language, food, transportation, etc. is lightened by having friends at hand who take responsibility for being their companions and provide extra support while there.

The CPWR will work with us to personalize our financial and relational support of these people, perhaps directly linking our supporting congregations with the persons or groups who would be receiving both scholarships, and host companions onsite.



## **New Thought Music Events**

Anchoring of sacred space and spiritual message with music is a trademark of New Thought. We would like to bring some of our music to the PWR in two ways:

- a. To be part of our programs
- b. As a separate proposal to be included in the evening plenary sessions which are mostly devoted to cultural and performance arts from the world's religious traditions.

## **Youth Participation**

We agree that we want youth from each organization to be included as part of the delegation and, possible, the program as well. That would be a task about which each group would meet, and decide on a strategy for independently. It was shared by Unity, for example, that their plan was to raise scholarships and select two young people from each region; this might be a good model for other NT organizations with similar regional structure, while other organizations not structured in this way could devise their own guidelines.

## **Combined Block of Exhibit Tables for New Thought Organizations**

The PWR in Melbourne will have an exhibit hall component of some kind. Our plan, it is unanimously agreed, would be to reserve a block of tables and adopt a common banner for the general area, also featuring our independent organizational identities, literature, programs and media. It would be housed under the name: GLOBAL NEW THOUGHT. Therefore, it would not refer to any one organization, but would identify the movement as a unified entity.

## **Inviting and Organizing Delegates**

New Thought churches in cities with major international airports will facilitate the coordination of delegates in their city. They might, for example, work with a number of churches/centers in smaller nearby cities to gather delegates together and combine lists for travel and logistics. That would allow us to travel from several major points together and arrive in Melbourne having secured our transportation and lodging as a series of groups when we arrive. Aside from the obvious convenience of such a plan, we would be drawing from all NT denominations and independents in a collective effort, rather than traveling exclusively with others within our own organization.

IF YOUR CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION IS INTERESTING IN BEING A COORDINATING HOST CITY, please contact AGNT: [Barbara@agnt.org](mailto:Barbara@agnt.org) or 805-563-7343



## **Logistics: Travel, Lodging, and Event Registration**

The CPWR headquarter office in Chicago, working with the host committee in Melbourne, has personnel and a website to manage most of the logistics of travel and lodging, as well as information about visas and security.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS -- HOW TO PROCEED:**

THE REGISTRATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS SUMMARY ON THE WEBSITE offers multi-cost-level lodging choices that our New Thought Delegation has already researched from among the longer list of venues. If there is a New Thought Host Center in your city, individuals and groups should contact it to request becoming part of a group reservation. To check for Host Centers in your city, go to [www.agnt.org/CPWR09.htm](http://www.agnt.org/CPWR09.htm). Remember--the advantage of group reservations (aside from the wonderful sense of community) is that they often include complimentary rooms with "X" number sold. Reserving with your New Thought Host Center will also allow you to find roommates, and other registrants seeking the same cost-level.

### **PWR EVENT REGISTRATION -- HOW TO PROCEED:**

THE REGISTRATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS SUMMARY ON THE WEBSITE offers registration costs and instructions reflecting comparisons between Australian and US currencies. THE DEADLINE FOR EARLY DISCOUNT HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO MARCH 31, 2009. If there is a New Thought Host Center in your city, individuals and groups should contact it to request becoming part of a group registration. To check for Host Centers in your city, go to [www.agnt.org/CPWR09.htm](http://www.agnt.org/CPWR09.htm). Remember--the advantage of group registrations (aside from the wonderful sense of community) is that they include one complimentary registration pass for every ten sold.

## **December 2, 2009: Pre-Parliament New Thought Delegate Conference**

Whether we host indigenous people, join with friends from other religions and countries who will attend the PWR, or gather within our own New Thought community, it will be of great value to have time before the PWR begins to set our intentional collective field and establish the consciousness and purpose we bring to Melbourne as a unified movement.

On December 2nd, We will hold a one day-conference for New Thought delegates preceding the PWR opening activities. The venue is in a beautiful area and the day-long event will include a buffet luncheon. Check the website for cost details. You may register on the website, [www.agnt.org/CPWR09.htm](http://www.agnt.org/CPWR09.htm), or as part of your local group by contacting its coordinator. An agenda for that gathering can be discussed over the coming months.

## **December 1, 2009: Local Tours in Melbourne**

THE REGISTRATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS SUMMARY ENCLOSED offers information on local tours and activities that the local PWR organizers will facilitate for the enjoyment of visitors. Once again, you should work through your local New Thought group, whether official host or informal coordinator, to sign up for tours and activities as a group.