



Office of the Parliament of the World's Religions

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Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions

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Dear **(Insert name or organisation)**

On behalf of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, and its local partner, the Parliament of the World's Religions - Melbourne 2009, we invite you to participate at the upcoming Parliament of the World's Religions, to be held in Melbourne, Australia, December 3-9, 2009. We invite you to submit a proposal to the Program Committee for the 2009 Parliament to present a lecture, dialogue, workshop, panel discussion, religious or spiritual observance, workshop, training session or artistic performance.

The theme of the 2009 Parliament is *"Make a World of Difference: Hearing each other, Healing the earth."* This theme reflects a strong emphasis of this Parliament on the need to promote inter-religious dialogue and initiatives addressing global issues such as the environmental crisis and reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples. The Parliament is the largest interfaith gathering in the world held every five years and more than 8,000 people of faith, spirit, and goodwill are expected to attend.

The origins of the Council go back to the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in conjunction with the World Columbian Exposition, and marking the first time in history that East met West for interreligious dialogue. Chicago celebrated the centennial anniversary of the Parliament in 1993, with 8,000 people from diverse religious and spiritual traditions coming together to share their identities, to engage in dialogue, and to address the critical issues facing the world. On the basis of that event, the Council has since held Parliaments in 1999 in Cape Town, South Africa, and more recently, in 2004 in Barcelona, Spain.

For the 2009 Parliament, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions has chosen Melbourne as the host, in part, because of the systematic way Australian society seeks to foster social cohesion in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. The Parliament program will be covering broad issues of local relevance and global significance arising from consultations with local religious communities in Australia and internationally. These major subthemes will address global issues related to the environment, Indigenous peoples, religion and spirituality, poverty, peace building, and social cohesion.

All Program Proposals for the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions can be submitted by following the guidelines as specified in the Call for Programs Document which is available for download on our website www.parliamentofreligions.org. This document introduces the 2009 Parliament theme, sub themes, daily schedule, and defines the criteria for program selection. Program Proposals can be submitted using the online submission form by the end of February 2009.

Please note that traditionally all Parliament presenters are self-funded. We are deeply appreciative of the investment in time and resources that participants make. We are engaged in fundraising for the event, however our primary commitment is to funding Indigenous presenters. We hope that this will not prevent you from attending this particularly important global interreligious event, and if lack of funding is an obstacle, we'd like to be in conversation about fundraising possibilities.

Among the major speakers that have committed to date are: His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Nobel Laureate Mary Robinson, Fr Laurence Freeman, Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation, renowned spiritual and humanitarian leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Rabbi David Rosen of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, Faithkeeper Oren Lyons of the Turtle Clan, Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko of the Lutheran World Federation, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar of JUST Malaysia, Rev. Dr. Shanta Premawardhana of the World Council of Churches, Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne of Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka, and many more.

If you would like find more about the Parliament of the World's Religions please visit our website at www.parliamentofreligions.org . To discuss your topic in greater length please contact the Melbourne Program Director Prof Des Cahill at 9925 4981 or email des.cahill@rmit.edu.au or the Melbourne Program Associate, Petr Svoboda on office : +61 3 8622 4810 , email: petr@parliamentofreligions2009.org

It is our belief that there can be no peace in the world until there is peace among the religions. The eyes of the world will be on Melbourne in 2009 for this Parliament of the World's Religions, at a time when this task has never been more relevant and significant.

We will be grateful for your consideration of this invitation.

In peace,



Prof Des Cahill
Program Director
Parliament of the World's Religions, Melbourne 2009

On behalf of Prof. Des Cahill
Prof. Ismail Albayrak
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