

MEDIA RELEASE



WORLD'S LARGEST INTERFAITH GATHERING ANNOUNCES 2009 PROGRAM LINEUP

CHICAGO (August 12, 2009) – Chicago-based Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions has begun confirming programs scheduled for its fifth global conference scheduled Dec. 3 – 9, 2009 in Melbourne, Australia. The Parliament's theme of *Make a Difference: Hearing Each Other, Healing the Earth* will offer over 500 programs distributed among seven major subthemes. 8,000 to 10,000 participants are expected to attend.

Programs throughout the seven-day event will include concerts, performances, exhibits, debates, seminars and workshops, as well as conference-wide plenaries offered by pre-eminent major speakers. The seven subthemes of the 2009 Parliament include:

- Healing the Earth with Care and Concern, featuring programs with Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, Christopher Key Chapple, Anne Marie Dalton and the Australian Conservation Foundation.
- Indigenous People, featuring programs with Wande Abimbola, Oren Lyons, Leo Killsback and Dr. Joseph Suina.
- Overcoming Poverty in an Unequal World, featuring programs by the United Nations, Shumei International, Caritas Australia and Danielle Strickland.
- Securing Food and Water for All People, featuring Dr. Tom Kramer and Heng Sure.
- Building Peace in the Pursuit of Justice, featuring Constantino Pinto, Vjekoslav Saje, Mr. Will Richard, Davidovic Sena, Petar Obradovic and David Krieger.
- Creating Social Cohesion in Village and City, featuring Chi Kwang Sunim, Gerardo Gonzalez, Commander Ashley Dickinson and Inspector Kerryn Hynan.
- Sharing Wisdom in the Search for Inner Peace, featuring His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Esther Kister, Dr. Helen Szoke, Cardinal George Pell and Her Holiness Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati.

Other major speakers at the Parliament include Professor Joy Murphy Wandin, AO, Professor Akbar Ahmed, Sister Joan Chittister OSB, Reverend Tim Costello, Ms. Dalia Mogahed, Uncle Bob Randall, His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Venerable Dharma Master Shin Tao and Ms. Lally Lucretia M. Warren.

In addition to the major subthemes of the Melbourne Parliament, the Council has compiled a roster of thematic clusters focusing on issues of particular relevance. Participants will find a broad range of co-themes such as: Youth and Interfaith Dialogue, Islam, Sacred Sites, Chaplaincy, HIV/AIDS, Women's Leadership, Science and Religion, Interfaith Education and Media.

Since 1993, Parliament of World's Religions has convened every five years in a major international city – Chicago (1993), Cape Town (1999) and Barcelona (2003). The Parliament of the World's Religions 2009 will take place at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, designed to achieve the first six green star environmental rating, making it one of the greenest convention centres in the world and is supported by the State Government of Victoria, the Commonwealth Government of Australia and the City of Melbourne, as well as individual, religious and corporate donors.

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