

# Phone a Friend – Parliament Summary

## What?

The Parliament of the World's Religions is the largest global interreligious event aimed at promoting interfaith dialogue and action. The 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions offers a dynamic opportunity to address the pressing concerns of humanity from religious and spiritual perspectives. Over 8,000 people of faith, goodwill and spirit will gather in Melbourne, Australia 3–9 Dec, 2009 to experience this unique event.

Every Parliament event is organised by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, a not-for-profit organisation based in Chicago, USA who employ a team of committed local staff to coordinate in the host city.

## The history of the event

The first Parliament was held in 1893 in Chicago. It was the first time that Eastern and Western religions and spiritual organisations had met for formal dialogue. One hundred years later a centennial event was planned for Chicago and this became the modern day Parliament of the World's Religions. Now held every five years, the Parliament of the World's Religions has taken place in Cape Town, South Africa (1999), Barcelona, Spain (2004) and in 2009 Melbourne, Australia will be the host.

## The Theme

The theme of the 2009 Parliament is 'Make a World of Difference: Hearing each other, Healing the earth' and reflects the urgent need for religious and spiritual communities and all people of goodwill to put their concerns for the environment, peace, and for overcoming poverty into action. This Parliament will also focus on the spiritualities of Indigenous peoples around the globe, particularly highlighting the Aboriginal communities of Australia. And awareness of our interconnectedness is crucial to discussing practical solutions to these global issues.

These themes and many more will be discussed in various formats across five broad categories – Spiritual observances, Intra-religious programs, Inter-religious programs, Workshops, and Open Space. Over 500 programs will be on offer at the 2009 Parliament chosen from program proposals submitted by the general public.

## The Youth Program

The Youth Program will be an integrated program created by young people for young people. Anyone can attend however the topics and formats will be carefully chosen to connect with young people. The Youth Program will consist of four elements;

1. **Daily Youth Sessions** – 90 minute sessions on different topics of particular interest to young people each of which will be followed by a 90 minute workshop to get you talking and planning.
2. **Coffee House** – lounge and entertainment area specially designed to encourage mingling, friendship building, interfaith discussion and chats with VIP guests.



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- 3. Youth Plenary** – main evening session that will celebrate the achievements of young people.
- 4. Service Projects** – help others by offering your time to a community project during the event.

All four elements have been designed to encourage action and demonstrate that young people can make a world of difference.

Two other program streams will be created to compliment the Youth Program – Youth Leadership and Youth Interfaith Models.

To register and for more information about the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions, please visit our website [www.parliamentofreligions.org](http://www.parliamentofreligions.org)

