



# Australian T.O.S. Links

December 2007

Healing is an important service activity in many TOS groups, both nationally and internationally. In most cases, it takes the form of spiritual and energy healing practices, carried out by groups or individuals. It can be directed at personal healing and well-being, be focused on harmonising global situations, be intended to work with the devic and angelic kingdoms or promote connectedness between all life.

Our third newsletter for 2007 focuses on this service area of *Healing*. It shares a range of ways in which TOS groups and members work as channels of healing energies.

At the end of the newsletter you'll find another resource that may provide the basis of a useful workshop in your TOS Group. It's a summary of Dorothy Bell's workshop at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International TOS Conference in July. Dorothy is a member of the Mornington Peninsular Group.

## International T.O.S. work

Thank you to all who contributed ideas to the international TOS vision statement and needs analysis. I have compiled your ideas and sent the Australian contribution to our International TOS Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin. Our worldwide collective thinking is currently being put together for our International President, Radha Burnier's consideration.

## 2008 — The anniversary of the founding of the TOS

In 2008 the TOS is celebrating one hundred years of service. It was founded in February 1908 by Annie Besant and since then groups have been formed around the world to provide an avenue for theosophists and like-minded people to put theosophy into action.

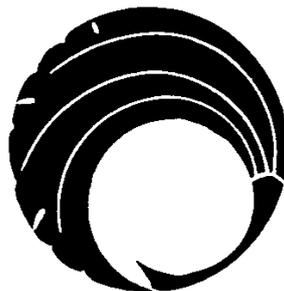
### Our focus service area: Healing

#### What's in this newsletter

- International T.O.S. work
- 2008 — The anniversary of the founding of the TOS
- TOS sessions at the TS in Australia Convention 2008
- Update on our 2 national projects
- What's new on our Australian TOS web-pages
- Focus on healing: Ideas for you and your group
- Healing our planet
- National contact details
- **Special insert article:** Building a high performance TOS team

This special anniversary provides us with an opportunity to celebrate and promote our service work during 2008. Here are some ideas you and your TOS group might consider:

- Organising an afternoon tea for members and friends of the TOS
- Making a special centennial gift or donation to a charitable cause that your TOS group supports
- Proposing the 'adoption' of a child in an international TOS or TS school project (see the Australian TOS web-pages for ideas)
- Holding a program of poetry, music and plays illustrating theosophical principles
- Organising something for your local TS branch such as planting a tree or providing a new teapot
- Publishing a leaflet related to a TOS activity
- Starting a new activity focus such as a healing group.



## TOS sessions at the TS in Australia Convention 2008

The TOS has two sessions at the TS in Australia convention in January 2008.

- Tuesday 15 January at 2.00 pm – a panel presentation, *Perennial Wisdom in Action*, with guest speakers: Geoff Boyce (Practical aspects of the multi-faith dialogue), Thich Thong Phap (Engaged Buddhism) and Dilip Chirmuley (The idea of service in Hinduism)
- Thursday 17 January at 2.00 pm – *National TOS Annual General Meeting and planning session*

The convention is being held at St Mark's College, Adelaide. If you live in Adelaide, please invite your friends to join us for the Tuesday panel presentation. See you there!

## Update on our 2 national projects

Zeneida Cereja da Silva, who is in charge of the orphanage in Brazil, writes:

*Your generous donation came as a welcome help. Thanks to all who collaborated in this donation. It will be possible for us to continue doing our work with all the strength and determination that is inside of us.*

*From Brazil, all our children send their warm greetings to you and all the friends that are collaborating in this work.*

From Pakistan, Fareeda Amir writes that the TOS has been conducting training sessions for the teachers selected to run the new 'Literacy home-schools' funded by Australians.

## What's new on our Australian TOS web-pages

We have several new postings on our web-pages:

- Information about how to get involved in *Animals Australia's* action on live animal exports
- On-line petition to stop whaling
- Climate change brochure produced by the Brisbane TOS Group.
- Looking for gifts? You may be interested in visiting The Trading Circle website [www.thetradingcircle.com.au](http://www.thetradingcircle.com.au) and the Oxfam website <http://www.oxfam.org.au/> Both of these organisations work in fair trade partnerships with craftspeople in African, Asian and Latin American countries who live in situations of severe poverty.

Visit our pages at [www.austheos.org.au/tos/](http://www.austheos.org.au/tos/) and you'll find links to this new material in the left hand column.

## Approaches to healing

### Mandalas and healing

*Mandala* is a Sanskrit word meaning *circle* and is a symbolic pattern of light and sound. In many spiritual traditions, mandalas are used as sacred imagery to express and focus divine energy, represent connections with the One and mirror an illuminated state of consciousness.

Dr Judith Cornell introduces her book, *Mandala: Luminous Symbols for Healing*, by explaining that creating mandalas can:

- have the regenerative and curative power to activate the latent powers of the mind
- help to focus and open the heart to the healing power of unconditional love, through the associated meditative practice
- have a calming and relaxing effect on the mind and body, thus focusing and strengthening the will to heal

- bring joy as it facilitates the healing of a sense of psychological fragmentation
- make the invisible visible—expressing paradoxical situations or patterns of ultimate reality that can be expressed in no other way
- reveal unity between human existence and the structure of the cosmos—opening up a perspective in which things can be understood as a whole
- give form and expression to an intuitive insight into spiritual truth by releasing the inner light of the soul.



For people interested in exploring ways of using mandalas in healing, Cornell's book provides a valuable source of background information, related meditations and practical drawing activities.

### Meditation: healing through Oneness

According to the Buddhist tradition, human suffering is intimately related to a sense of separation from the One; it results from our focusing on separateness from other living things rather than experiencing a sense of Oneness with all life. Through meditation we can increasingly experience this Oneness.

*Meditation is at the core of spiritual development. Through meditation a practitioner can calm the mind, diminish personal suffering and develop feelings of love, sympathy and compassion. Ultimately, meditation may bring a more positive reflection on the inevitability of death and unlock doors of insight into the depths of human existence,* write Dr Arunachalam and Al Robinson. Both are Brisbane TS members and Dr Arunachalam is an active TOS member. Their recently published little book, *The Meditative Path*, provides a succinct commentary on meditation

together with clear explanations of the stages of meditative practice.

Another practical and longer guide to meditation is Christmas Humphreys' book, *The Search Within: a course in meditation*.



Many TOS members practise meditation either individually or in a group. The Mornington Peninsular TS Group, for instance, holds a session of meditation at their monthly meetings. "The meditations are quite varied," writes Daphne Standish, "as we prefer not to dogmatise one particular form of meditation. We have yogic meditation on breathing patterns; healing through visualisation; guided meditation – some from books and others which are inspirationally received. With our meditations we have found that what suits one member does not necessarily suit all – hence the variety which works well in our group."

### **Spiritual healing**

Many years ago, Geoffrey Hodson wrote a beautiful spiritual healing ceremony. It is used by several TOS groups around the world, including the USA's Healing network. If you're interested in a copy, email or write to me at the address listed at the end of this newsletter.

If you'd like to find out more about the USA Healing network, their website, (<http://www.theoservice.org/node/4>) has details and a contact for its facilitator, Hutoxy D. Contractor.

### ***The Essence of Healing: a Theosophical Handbook***

For readers interested in holistic approaches to healing, this book edited by Karen Shultz and published by the Theosophical Order of Service in America, brings together information from a wide range of traditions. It is divided into two parts. Part 1 provides an overview of the history of healing and the use of etheric, astral and mental energy fields. Part 2 describes several traditional systems

of medicine and their use of food, herbs, energies and music.

### **The Divine Life Visualisation**

The following technique, designed by Geoffrey Hodson, is described in *The Essence of Healing*, edited by Karen Shultz.

It is a personal healing meditation designed to restore the harmonious flow of the Divine Life through one's whole nature. This Life, which is the vital energy of the Universe, is present everywhere in abundance. Its steady and continuous flow through us maintains perfect health and strength. Illness is a sign that through lack of inner harmony, we are temporarily shut off from this universal supply of healing force. When we attain a state of spiritual, mental, emotional and physical harmony and accord, the Divine healing and vitalizing power will flow freely through us, and we shall be whole.



To achieve this flow of spiritual energy, visualize the Divine Life as being everywhere present and as filling the upper air with its radiant and golden glow: Reach up towards it with all the power of your thought and will, aspiring ardently to become one with It, to embody it within yourself, so that it may flow freely through you, in the helping of the world.

Then you may dwell in thought upon the One as the Source of all power and life. Seek to realize Its presence and to lose yourself Therein. You may think of yourself as a chalice into which the Divine Life is poured, and as you aspire to at-one-ness with the Divine Life, the cup will increase in size, growing ever higher, into the inner worlds, where dwells the Healing Life.

Then think of the Divine Life in all its glowing splendour, as pouring down upon and into you in a torrent of vital force, filling the cup to overflowing and flooding your whole nature with its power. After dwelling for a time in silent realization, this power may be directed outwards through your heart to heal the sorrows and sufferings of the world.

This meditation may safely be performed regularly, day by day, even many times a day, preferably at early morning, midday, and before retiring.

Gradually an automatic flow of healing life will be established in you, the aspirant, and you will then bear about with you, wherever you go, a healing and uplifting power of incalculable value to the world. Thus, as you tread your upward Path, you may heal and bless your fellow-beings.

## Therapeutic Touch Therapy

Therapeutic Touch is an energy therapy developed in the USA in 1970 by two theosophists, Dolores Krieger and the late Dora Kunz. TOS member, Shirley Stack Tolhuis, writes that she first read about Therapeutic Touch in a Theosophical journal back in 1989. It is now a technique used in hospitals and universities in Australia, and may soon be as well known as Reiki.

If you'd like information about Therapeutic Touch techniques and the training required, please contact me (address at the end of the newsletter) and I'll give you Shirley's contact details.

## Healing our planet

With the razzamatazz of the Bali meeting on global targets for carbon emissions finishing, we can be forgiven for wondering if our small personal efforts are worth anything. Just as I was contemplating this question, I came across a feature article in the 17 November issue of *New Scientist*, entitled 'Why bother going green?'

The statistics about the impact of human activity on our planet give food for thought. Every year our activities add about 30 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, largely through burning fossil fuels but also through destroying forests that act as major carbon dioxide absorbers. Since pre-industrial days, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the air has increased by over one third. Most scientists think it will reach an unsafe level by 2040 if emissions continue at today's rate .... and indeed they are rising, not falling.



So can we do anything useful when many nations are being slow to act? The answer is an unequivocal YES! Chris Goodall, author of *How to Live a Low Carbon Life*, describes how it is possible to cut individual carbon emissions by around 75% without seriously altering our Western lifestyles. He suggests a wide range of actions that reduce energy use. You'll find many of these ideas in our April 2007 TOS newsletter.

By making small changes, it is estimated that the average Westerner can cut almost 8 tonnes from their carbon footprint. If a third of the UK population did this, it would save around 160

million tonnes of carbon dioxide. Our individual reductions may not seem much, but together with millions of other people's energy savings, they could make a very real difference to healing our planet! SO LET'S MAKE THOSE REDUCTIONS!

## Less meat means less heat!

Did you know that becoming vegan, vegetarian or cutting down on animal products could make a significant saving to your carbon emissions? According to an Australian National University team led by Professor Tony McMichael, the world's appetite for meat is increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture contributes about 22% of global greenhouse emissions and 80% of this comes from livestock production.

Professor Tony McMichael argues that "for the world's higher income populations, greenhouse gas emissions from meat eating warrants the same scrutiny as do those from driving and flying."

The study also points out that reducing meat consumption would have health benefits for many people, including potentially lowering the risk of several types of cancer.

## Donations

Donations to the National Projects and other activities of international TOS groups can be made through the Theosophical Order of Service in Australia, with cheques sent to my address at the end of the newsletter.

## A thought to share

### **A CHRISTMAS INVOCATION:**

*May all who work for a world of peace and reason be granted the gifts of strength and courage. May the good that dwells within every human heart be magnified. May the blessings of truth and understanding be ours. May the joys of the Christmas season dwell within all of us and as we grow and build for tomorrow may we live in sympathy with all others.*

*Joyce Tozer, Coordinator, Sunshine Coast TOS activities*



## Contact

**Please note that my email address is now: [cdharrod@cad-assist.com](mailto:cdharrod@cad-assist.com)** If you are sending a donation, my mail address is Ms C Harrod, 26 Lytham Street, Indooroopilly Q4068.

*I wish you peace, harmony and spiritual fulfilment, and a New Year filled with happiness and wonderful experiences.*

*Yours in service  
Carolyn*

# Building a High Performance [TOS] Team

Dorothy Bell

## Day 2 - Workshop Session , Second TOS International Conference, Wheaton, USA, July 2007

It was an ambitious goal to try to cover the key aspects of team building in a 60-minute workshop – as well as to orchestrate the contribution of participants *en route*. For this reason I had prepared some resource sheets hoping that this take-away material would allow those whose interest had been sparked, to consider key points in more depth and in their own time.

I also made a decision to focus mainly on team management issues and not on the detailed development of a TOS vision, mission and goals – as these tasks were already part of the plenary sessions and group work in other parts of the Conference program. However, I planned, if time permitted, to share Case Study material from the Mornington Peninsula TS Group – of which I am a member – as a practical way of exploring issues around Theosophical service and team building.

### The Workshop Plan

My intention was that participants would take away from the workshop, a better understanding of other people's views and the research about the reasons why groups or teams are inefficient or just don't seem to work at all – and that this exploration would begin with their own life experiences. Then they would compare their experiences and "opinions" with some of the social research into differences between teams and groups.

#### Definition of a Team:

A highly communicative group of people of different backgrounds, skills and abilities, with a common purpose, working together to achieve clearly identified goals.

#### Some of the differences between a traditional Work Group and a Team, from the research, include:

##### Work Group

Internal competition  
Personal Agendas  
Status quo  
Autocratic/hierarchical – power relationships  
Toleration of other group members  
No linkage

##### Team

Internal co-operation  
Team Agenda  
Innovative  
Participative – equal in their differences  
Enjoyment of other team members  
Linkage

**Teamwork** creates commitment and emotional ownership; gives control over one's own life; improves interdisciplinary communication; promotes co-operation rather than competitiveness; increases productivity.

The discussion that this activity would produce would lead into consideration of other relevant data from the research – the characteristics of good team leaders and team members:

#### Characteristics of ideal team members:

**Committed, Co-operate, Communicate, Contribute.**

#### Some examples of the characteristics of ideal team leaders:

Highly developed interpersonal skills  
Willing to listen; able to express themselves  
Pursue progress and develop team members  
Are willing to model behaviour - transparency  
Minimal ego investment/power-control needs

Excel in organisational effectiveness as well as visionary  
Encourage self-leadership and -management skills in team  
Have expectation levels- people and task oriented.  
Able to deal with "problem" team members; mediate  
Values, respects others –diversity of methods, perspectives

**Models of decision making** and their effects, would also to be considered as being most relevant to team building:

**Unilateral [benefit = speedy] Consultative [benefit = quality] Consensus [benefit = commitment]**

The next step to be explored would be THE PROCESS - how to translate the theory and how to start building - or continue to build - a team. And this is where “best management practice” would kick in again:

Team development is team education and aims to develop co-operation to work towards a shared vision, mission, goals. Whatever language one chooses, a group begins to become a team when there is a shared vision, direction, purpose and set of values. “Decision-making is easy where values are clear”. Team members must also have knowledge and skills – ‘knowledge is power’ – and team education is vital to individual and team growth and empowerment. (An obvious analogy are football teams – all focused on team building. Individual skills are valued and contribute to team agendas for the ultimate goal in September – the mission and the vision splendid!)

Thus there are goals and these are translated into what needs to be done - the long/short term objectives; when, and, for clarity, an action plan is to be produced, showing tasks, the expected outcomes; people responsible for “doing”, and a time-line for completion of tasks – whatever the project or program.

Inevitably, in the Workshop, discussion would need to focus on the fact that knowing about these proposals, i.e. what detracts from or makes a good team, what makes a good team member, a good team leader – the features of a co-operative team building process - visions and action plans – that this “knowledge” does not guarantee success. It only informs us and encourages us to take a second look at how we operate – either as a team member or leader or facilitator in the TOS or any other group situation – at the local, national or international levels. Insight comes through the evaluation of personal experience – perhaps in the context of some of the principles that are presented from social research as being effective.

### **A Case Study – Mornington Peninsula TS Group**

To bring a practical component to the Conference Workshop, I planned to discuss materials from the Mornington Peninsula [MP] TS Group as a Case Study.

First or all, as an example of a team-building activity on the nature of “Service,” materials from a Committee workshop, conducted in 2006, would be distributed and discussed. These materials contained extracts from the writings of Annie Besant as well as Radha Burnier and Diana Dunningham-Chapotin, and were discussed at the MP Workshop in terms of the key questions, [“What is Theosophical Service? How does it differ from other humanitarian groups?”](#)

Key comments made in response to these questions were on another Resource Sheet. These comments really clarified a vision, mission, goals about the theosophical ‘Order’ of service – although these terms were not used.

Second, a collection of perceptions of “What makes a group successful?” – written by Mornington Peninsula Committee members in 2005 on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Group – would be distributed and compared with what the research said about what makes for a “successful” team. These materials - relating to real people and real experiences – were intended to provide balance to theoretical research, and to be a useful reference for participants’ work on team building.

### **What Happened at Olcott –**

All went according to plan with the exception of my “time management”. The resource material proved to be a great springboard for discussion, but I found myself with one eye on the clock and the other on the direction of the discussion! We went overtime. One or two participants, who had commitments elsewhere, departed and the remainder worked on until they felt comfortable with how they might use the “hand-out” reference material in their own groups/teams –and also in the context of running a similar workshop.

### **Conclusion**

The American TS Section’s Summer National Gathering with its focus of “The Foundations of Theosophy – Sangha, Sacrifice and Service” developed a momentum that the International TOS Conference expanded. The energy that was generated by these two activities at Olcott was quite remarkable. As we explored visions and committed to tasks, the experience turned out to be both inspiring and practical. I feel that Annie Besant, founder of the TOS. would have nodded her approval - after all “making theosophy practical” was a keynote of her presidency.

**“A vision without a task is a dream; a task without a vision is drudgery; a vision and a task is the hope for the world”  
17<sup>th</sup> century English tombstone]**