

Peaceful living is the continuing theme for this second newsletter for 2008. In essence, we truly live peacefully when we are at peace within ourselves. Making time for quiet reflection on the spirit of peace and learning to live without fear help us attain this inner peace. Then we act in ways that bring peace into our relationships. The coming months bring two opportunities to promote peace in our world – UN Day and the International Day of Peace. There are also updates on environmental and animal welfare issues and international TOS news.

## Moving beyond fear

One of the great obstacles to attaining inner peace is fear. We often fear the unknown and dwell on negative possibilities that seldom happen. This fear erects barriers between ourselves and new experiences. It causes us to look with suspicion at people, cultures and environments with which we are not familiar. It entangles us in the mire of our conditioning, governed by the ancient, automatic reflex for self-preservation.

Living beyond fear does not mean that we put ourselves consciously into life-threatening situations. It implies that we meet new experiences and people with openness; that we are willing to learn about cultures and environments that we do not know and understand; and that we treat all people with the respect and kindness with which we would like to be treated by strangers. It requires us to look deeply into our prejudices and examine what causes this sense of separation. When we live compassionately in acknowledgment of the Oneness of all life, we live peacefully, unfettered by fear.

Ideally, learning to be free of fear starts in our homes as children, is a focus of schooling, and continues in our adult life. As J Krishnamurti reminds us, *Without an integrated understanding of life, our individual and collective problems will only deepen and extend. The purpose of education is to produce ... integrated men and women who are free of fear; for only between such human beings can there be enduring peace.*

## Reflections for peace

We can enhance our feeling of inner peace by regularly taking time to quiet the mind, to reflect on inspirational ideas and to fill our beings with compassion and peaceful energies. We can be an influence for peace

### Our focus service area:

### Peace

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by radiating these energies out to the world and by holding positive thoughts for the peaceful resolution of difficulties.

Here we share two reflections.

### *Prayer shared by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in his Nobel Lecture, December 11, 1989*

For as long as space endures,  
And for as long as living beings remain,  
Until then may I, too, abide  
To dispel the misery of the world.

Shanti Deva

### *A Prayer for the World*

This is a beautiful affirmation contributed by Betty Bland, President of the TS in the USA, to the last edition of *The Service Link*.

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations.  
Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.  
Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows.

Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken.  
Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly,  
So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin colour.  
Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness,  
So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrow of our neighbours.  
And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbours.  
Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty.  
And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven.

Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

## Peace action

### *Start a Peace Club*

This is a great way to work with others in helping to create a culture of peace. *Peace Clubs* is an international grassroots network of local clubs helping to create a better world. They are not associated with any organization and don't require registration or membership dues.

Their website, <http://www.cultureofpeace.com/clubs/what.htm>, has a



large number of resources that are free for non-commercial purposes.

Your Peace Club might consist of members of your family or your place of worship, a school group, colleagues at work, friends and neighbors, co-volunteers in a charitable organization or your fellow TS and TOS members.

### **Personal action**

*Ideas from Deni Gross's article in the 2007 edition of 'The Service Link'.*

- We can use our personal talents, such as our love of art or gardening, to promote peace. We can ask others in the community to join us in planting a community peace garden. Here we can hold monthly gatherings to celebrate peace by working on the garden together, hosting a public peace ceremony, playing music, putting on skits that promote non-violence or reading our poetry.
- We can put ourselves in the other person's shoes. It's always easier to compromise when we try to see the situation from the other person's perspective. With enough will-power, creativity, hard work and cooperation, even the most difficult situation can usually be worked out to everyone's satisfaction.
- Remember the children. Raising peace-loving children is an important part of a secure future for everyone. We can talk about the importance of peace and non-violence to children through religious education classes, scouting events, or school functions. When asked to speak at the school's "career day," rather than talk about our jobs, we can discuss our roles as peacemakers.
- We can join forces with one of the many organized, non-profit peace groups in existence. A recent internet search yielded more than a million entries on the topic, "peace groups."
- We can learn about cultures other than our own and then pass that knowledge on to others.

## **Celebrate Peace & Unity**

### **International Day of Peace, 21 September.**

This day was established by a United Nations resolution in 1981. All United Nations member countries agreed that September 21, the International Day of Peace, should be observed as a Global Ceasefire and day of nonviolence.

How can we support this day? We can:

- ask our favourite groups, organizations, or religious institutions to endorse the International Day of Peace.
- hold an art and craft workshop with a peace theme.
- invite our communities to join us for a peace picnic, with games or discussions that encourage collaboration and participation.
- hold a more formal event such as an afternoon tea with a speaker who promotes the benefits of peaceful living.
- enter our groups as participants in the Pinwheels for Peace Project (see below for details) and talk to

our local schools about the project to encourage their participation.

- hold a candle-lit Vigil for Peace
- put on a play or hold a musical event with a peace theme.
- write letters for peace. This is a simple, but powerful way to help spread hope for humanity's day of peace. We can write letters to
  - ❖ our Mayors, Members of Parliament and Premiers asking them to declare a Proclamation of Peace for the International Day of Peace.
  - ❖ our Prime Minister asking that he pledge to heed the United Nations call for a Global Ceasefire on Peace Day.
  - ❖ the editor of our local papers letting our community know about the International Day of Peace.
  - ❖ musicians we know and ask them to let their audiences know about Peace Day.
  - ❖ any celebrities or other influential people we might know, asking them to use their spot in the limelight to spread the word about the International Day of Peace on September 21.
  - ❖ We can stamp every letter we send out with:  
**PEACE DAY - SEPTEMBER 21**

The International Peace Day website, <http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org/un.htm> has excellent resources including a play and songs for children to perform.

Their affirmation is, **May Peace Prevail On Earth!**

### **Pin wheels for Peace Project**

Pinwheels for Peace is an art installation project started in 2005 by two Art teachers in the USA as a way for students to express their feelings about what's going on in the world and in their lives. The project was quickly embraced by their students and the entire school community and by millions of art teachers, teachers, parents, children and adults who desire peace in our world.

Participants create pinwheels of all colours and sizes. As part of the creation process, they write their thoughts about "*war and peace; tolerance; living in harmony with others*" on one side. The writing can be poetry, prose, haiku, or essay-style – whatever writing form is appropriate as they express themselves. On the other side, they draw, paint, collage, etc. to visually express their feelings. They assemble their pinwheels and on **International Day of Peace** everyone 'plants' their pinwheels outside (at schools, museums, public places, etc.) as a public statement and art exhibit/installation. The spinning of the pinwheels in the wind will spread thoughts and feelings about peace throughout the country and the world!

This project need not be restricted to students. Parents can participate with their children and community groups can conduct their own workshops and installations of *Pinwheels for Peace*.

For directions for making pinwheels and an enrolment form for joining the project, go to the website: <http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com>



## **United Nations Day, 24 October.**

This day provides an opportunity to reconfirm the values that underpin the United Nations. The United Nations was built on spiritual principles and universal values such as peace, human rights, human dignity and worth, justice, respect, good neighbourliness, freedom, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

"Many of the key founders of the UN and those in leadership positions there today use spirituality and values as a guiding force..... The key countries that were addressing the UN Charter listed twelve major functions of the UN. One of these functions was to be the seeker of freedom. And, in defining this term, it said that for humans to attain ultimate freedom the UN not only had to promote material growth but also spiritual growth." (2008, *The NGO Committee on Spirituality Values and Global Concerns*)

**Wouldn't this be a marvellous theme for a TOS sponsored discussion or talk scheduled close to United Nations Day?**

### **Climate change report**

The Garnaut Climate Change Review is an independent study by Professor Ross Garnaut, commissioned by Australia's Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, to examine the impacts, challenges and opportunities of climate change in Australia. Its draft report was released in July.



The Review confirms that Australia has more to lose than other developed countries if we fail to act on climate change and more to gain if the world does act swiftly. It found that **Australia will be hit hard** by climate change. If we do nothing, our grandchildren will be living in a very different Australia, one where agriculture in the Murray Darling Basin has all but ended, the Great Barrier Reef has been destroyed, snow-based tourism in Australia is no longer viable, and 5.5 million Australians will be exposed to Dengue fever.

The Review goes on to propose targets for carbon dioxide emissions reduction and a range of actions for Government. It predicts that the likely costs of action will be far less than the certain costs of inaction.

As the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) points out, the Review's '*message to all Australians – government, business and the wider community – is that the job of reducing emissions belongs to us all and we must get cracking if we are to avoid unacceptable levels of risk.*'

You'll find the draft report and updates on activities at <http://www.garnautreview.org.au>.

The ACF also provides regular updates on climate change at <http://www.acfonline.org.au/>

### **Animal welfare update**

Several campaigns are currently inviting your support. Watch the videos (on <http://www.animalsaustralia.org>) of what actually happens to the animals - you'll be appalled at the cruelty.

#### **Live animal export**

Not only do the sheep suffer during transport to the Middle East, but once they are there, they are treated

with incredible cruelty by the Arabs. Animal welfare observers have seen them being dragged by their legs, thrown into vehicles, jammed into vehicles on their heads and worse, yet our government allows this cruel trade to continue.

#### **Pig factory farming**

Laws have failed to protect millions of pigs each year from acts of cruelty. The ability of these intelligent and sensitive animals to suffer is no different to the family dog. Despite this, consecutive governments have provided legal exceptions to pig farmers to prevent them from being prosecuted for animal cruelty so that they can maximize their profits.

#### **Battery hen campaign**

Experts agree that chickens are not only highly social animals, but they are remarkably intelligent as well. Yet every year, almost half a billion of these sensitive birds are confined in factory farms in Australia. Over 75% of eggs sold in Australia still come from hens in battery cages.

#### **Say 'No' to plastic bags**

Few shoppers stop to consider that plastic bags are responsible for the deaths of over 100,000 marine animals every year. This campaign draws attention to the 5.6 billion plastic bags used yearly by Australians.

Animals Australia has material for these campaigns available on their website at <http://www.animalsaustralia.org>

#### **New site to promote a vegetarian lifestyle**

What if you discovered that there was a simple way to save the lives of 100 animals every year, save 5 million litres of water, cut greenhouse gas emissions and significantly reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes and cancer? Animals Australia's new website, <http://whyveg.com/> provides information on how vegetarianism benefits animals, our planet and our own health. It also provides advice on transitioning to a vegetarian diet and recipes.

### **And don't forget to Celebrate World Animal Day, 4 October 2008**

#### **National TOS contacts for 2008**

##### **Contact for donations**

Mr Edward Sinclair  
National TOS Treasurer  
c/- The Melbourne Theosophical Society  
126 Russell Street,  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Please send donations to the National Projects and other activities of international TOS groups to the National Treasurer. Cheques need to be made out to the Theosophical Order of Service in Australia.

##### **Contact for newsletter**

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The national newsletter is published three times a year – April, August and December. It is available by email to all TOS & TS members across Australia. To register to receive an email copy, contact: [cdharrod@cad-assist.com](mailto:cdharrod@cad-assist.com)

## National project update

Well done! We are currently on track for raising \$8000 to continue funding eight literacy home-schools in Pakistan for a year. These schools are organised by the TOS in Pakistan and enable children, young girls and women who have had no opportunity to gain a basic education, to attend classes. If you can help, please send your cheque to our Treasurer, Edward Sinclair at the address listed above.

## International TOS news

After further international consultation, an action plan has been proposed to guide the work of the International TOS during the next five years. It will periodically be reviewed and amended where necessary during its lifespan. In summary, the plan proposes action in eight main areas. The work will be carried out by international teams of volunteers.

### 1. Development of International TOS constitutional guidelines

It is anticipated that these guidelines will outline the TOS's foundations, purpose, structure, membership and relationship to the Theosophical Society. These guidelines are expected to be available in 2009, after consultation with and approval from the International President.

### 2. Staffing International Secretariat

It is felt that a team is needed at international level to support the management of the TOS and the expansion of its work. A possible management structure will be drawn up and presented to the International President.

### 3. Increasing awareness of the TOS's existence

The TOS is currently present in only half the countries where the TS is active. Much needs to be done to make Theosophists aware of the opportunity to participate in the TOS's work and to start groups. As a starting point it is proposed to produce an introductory pamphlet 'What is the TOS?' and produce a start-up kit for new TOS groups.

### 4. Development of international TOS publications

It is intended that the international magazine, *The Service Link*, will continue as a printed magazine as well as being available on the International website. An official website for the International TOS has been in development for some time and has gone live this month. An International E-Newsletter will also be produced. A production schedule will be developed for these publications. Volunteer translators will be invited to help make the publications available in languages other than English and Spanish.

### 5. Increasing awareness of the nature of the TOS's work

The main purpose of the TOS is to encourage members to take up the path of service to humanity and the planet. Its mission is to offer:

- a framework in which individuals may work in self-selected lines of service for the relief of suffering and the uplifting of society;
- a framework in which the practical application of theosophical principles to issues of contemporary concern may be explored;



- a framework in which social action as spiritual practice is honoured, supported and nurtured.

A group of volunteers will explore strategies and draft useful material to improve understanding about the nature and function of the TOS.

### 6. Development of support materials for different lines of service

Volunteers are being invited to develop programs and resource materials on which local and national TOS leaders can draw in their work of facilitating service within the TOS, within the TS and by individual Theosophists.

### 7. Skills development programs

Again, volunteers are being invited to develop 'how-to' materials and workshop plans in two areas: to enhance the operation of their group and to support the inner transformational process involved in theosophical service or action.

### 8. Development of financial management policy and procedures

Some of the areas proposed for attention are:

- accountability processes about how funds donated from other countries are used and reported on;
- clear procedures for the channelling of funds for emergency relief;
- ways of transmitting money internationally (such as Paypal).

**If you are interested in contributing to the support material or skills development programs, please contact Carolyn Harrod by email or postal mail at the address given earlier.**



The International TOS now has a website. It is in its early stage and material will gradually be added. Visit it on <http://international.theoservice.org>

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

We have several new postings on our web-pages:

- Link to the new International TOS website.
- Link to the Garnaut Review on Climate Change.
- Link to the animal welfare campaigns on live animal exports, pig factory farming, battery hen production and reducing use of plastic bags.
- Link to the Why Veg site.
- Update on the environmental campaigns to protect Western Australia's Kimberley wilderness from industrialisation and to protect Queensland's wild rivers on Cape York Peninsula.

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.

## A thought to share

**"We need not change anything in our life to become spiritual, but we must change our attitude to life."**

Dr Annie Besant

With best wishes for the coming months,

*Yours in service*

**Carolyn**