



WSA

World Subud Association

Amalia Rasheed
shares her experience at the 2009
Parliament of the World's Religions

The first Parliament of the World's Religions took place in Chicago in 1893 marked by the unexpected appearance of the Indian Guru, Vivekenanda. This effectively started the Interfaith movement, and a dialogue between Eastern and Western spirituality, but it was 100 years before the next one took place again in Chicago followed by parliaments in Capetown in 1999, and Barcelona in 2004. Melbourne 3rd -9th Dec 2009: Some 6000 people attended under the overall banner of "Make a World of Difference, Hearing each other, Healing the earth"

Sub themes were:

[Indigenous People](#), [Overcoming Poverty](#), [Securing Food and Water for All](#), [Building Peace in the Pursuit of Justice](#), [Creating Social Cohesion in Village and City](#), [Sharing Wisdom in the Search for Inner Peace](#)

- All the major Religions were represented , strong representations of traditional and spiritual beliefs including those of the Australian Aborigines , the American Indians ,the Maoris and the Nagas of NE India.
- The days began with a choice of prayer or meditation to join from all the traditions. Plenaries, cultural/sacred music and dance performances, presentations, panel discussions, workshops. Some of them featured world class speakers. Among them, Prof. Dr. Tariq Ramadan, Sister Joan Chittister, Chief Oren Lyons, Prof. Sakena Yacoobi, Rabbi David Rosen, Katherine Marshall..... His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the Dalai Lama.
- Sharing, learning, celebrating diversity, networking. Shared calling to build on more justice, sustainable and peaceful world. Education, forgiveness, charter of compassion, women's roles in conflict resolution, inter-faith, intrafaith....Every country brought its issues to the Melbourne Parliament to be heard. Religious, spiritual, cultural rights were discussed; radicalism, discrimination towards minorities. East Timor story of importance to burial rights of those lost in the independence struggle. Youth. Issues

youth face in nurturing their cultural, indigenous, religious heritage, while being integrated in modern global societies.

The Parliament of World Religions is an opportunity to experience how literally a 'World of Difference' is being cultivated to address the momentous problems that challenge our human community today. Can this contribute to finding solutions? Can a renewed sense of the sacredness of the natural world motivate a critical mass of people to adopt ways of living that will heal the earth? Can a recovery of the message of compassion and a commitment to the inestimable value of every life form break through all that prevents us from making poverty history? Can religious and spiritual values help to build a new world ethos in which families, communities and nations hear, respect and value each other? Each participant's and community's response to these questions will be the measure by which this will be judged.

Peace Next networking website as an ongoing activity to nurture initiatives in between the 5 yearly events, for global interreligious and spiritual communities:

www.peacenext.org and www.parliamentofreligions.org

Amalia Rasheed, Subud member for 30 years, serves currently as External Relations Officer for the World Subud Association (WSA) www.subud.com and as UN representative for Susila Dharma International Association, the social and humanitarian affiliate of the WSA www.susiladharm.org. A qualified practitioner of Ontological Kinesiology and Cranial Fluid Dynamics, she has worked as a facilitator in the field of human development for 18 years and as a trainer at the Institute for further education of the chamber of commerce (WIFI) in Vienna for the last 6 years. A witness of conflict related to wars in the Indian sub-continent and the effects of Apartheid in South Africa, her multi-cultural heritage has influenced a particular interest in inter-cultural and spiritual peace processes.