

Labyrinths Matter - Newsletter

Summer Edition Down Under 2010

Australian Region of The Labyrinth Society, Inc. & Veriditas

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Join in the celebration of World Labyrinth Day Saturday 1st of May 2010

Last year this day was embraced by Australian labyrinth enthusiasts. Of the 33 labyrinth events listed on the World Wide Labyrinth Locator 9 were here in Australia. e.g. QLD, NSW, ACT, VIC, SA and TAS. A total of 133 labyrinth walks were held on this day around the world.



Would you enjoy getting a few friends together to collect some autumn leaves then create a labyrinth in a park on World Labyrinth Day?

Autumn is a great time to share the experience of labyrinth walking with the wider community. Such as this one on the lawns of the Tasmanian Parliament House in 2009. Baskets were filled with autumn leaves to create Nature's Classic Labyrinth then left for others to discover and enjoy.

World Labyrinth Day brings people from all over the planet together in celebration of the labyrinth as a symbol, a tool, a passion, or a practice. While the entire day is open to celebration, there is once again an invitation to Walk as One at 1 in your time zone. Join a wave of peaceful energy as the world turns.

- Your event can be covered by public liability insurance; thanks to The Grove.
- We can list your event on the World and Australian Labyrinth Locators, and the Labyrinth Society's Event website. Share your walk on the day with The Labyrinth Society on Utube.

Please send details of your event to Lorraine Rodda - Email lgrodda@primus.com.au

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About the newsletter

In April 2007 the newsletter was created as a forum for sharing the labyrinth journey across Australia. The many articles and photo's contributed since have enriched the newsletter and grounded us in the labyrinthine experience. I am so looking forward to receiving details of your World Labyrinth Day events so that we can have them all listed as part of the World's celebration. It would also be wonderful to have photo's of your event for the newsletter.

Lorraine Rodda, San Remo, Victoria.
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Parliament of the World's Religions The Labyrinth Project in Batman Park.

Report by Trudy, Geoff and Lorraine

After a very unsettled period leading up to the labyrinth events we went forward accepting and trusting the path to unfold as it was meant to be . . .

Just one day before we set off for Melbourne we received the permit to use Batman Park for the labyrinth events !!!

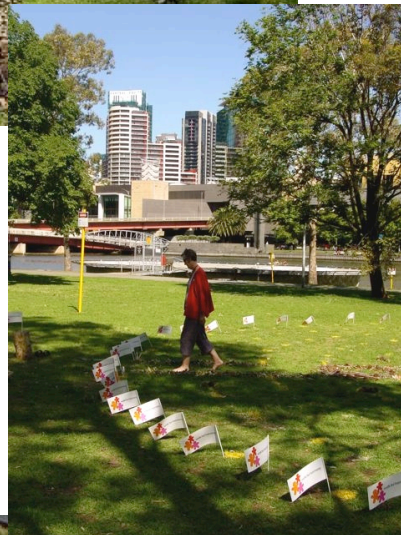
Our call for volunteers had a fabulous result. We had first aid people for all walks as well as people to help with building two labyrinths.



A very special thank you to The Grove women's holistic spiritual centre in East Brunswick. Not only did the event proceed, public liability insurance was granted with a bonus: it also covered labyrinth events across Australia; including events in this year's World Labyrinth Day to be held on Saturday the 1st May 2010

The Labyrinth Society grant of US \$300 together with other donations enabled us to purchase chalk spray, battery lights and a first aid kit.

Note: Battery tea light candles & first aid kit are available for others to use.



Collecting materials for the labyrinths.

The day had arrived. The 235 milk containers packed into the boot of one car, in the other 14 shopping bags filled with flowering gum nuts, 14 cans of chalk spray, and a couple of hundred tea light candles, we set out not knowing what the day would bring, only knowing that on the day of the walk 400

battery tea lights were to be collected from the wharf, along with the 50 battery lanterns generously loaned from St Margaret's Anglican Church in Eltham.

Creating the Santa Rosa Labyrinth.

A copywrite design by Lea Goode - Harris
www.leastudio.com

Friends of the Santa Rosa labyrinth gathered to fulfill their passion of labyrinth creation. This time

it was very special. We were in a park in the centre of Melbourne. The threatening rain held off; that is until we were cooking our BBQ. There was a great flurry as we grabbed our food and ran for shelter.

To create a labyrinth with an Australian look and feel we had a production line of six people spraying white chalk into the

templates. Whilst this looked great on the day it was hardly visible after the heavy rain. Melbourne so needed that rain. Despite the impact on the labyrinth, with spirits light we purchased more spray, flowering gum nuts highlighted the entrance, centre and turns with "Harmony Walk" flags holding the space.

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Creating the Reconciliation Labyrinth. By Clare Wilson of South Africa

The Reconciliation Labyrinth is designed with two entrances. This recognises that, due to apartheid, South Africans do not start the journey towards reconciliation from the same place. Like the 'person' embedded into the design, the journey starts from where one's feet are. No matter how far apart we start however, with the intention to relate, to recognize and reconcile our differences and to grow in the strength of our diversity, we can still make a start on our journeys towards that mythical place, a South Africa where people really care about each other and what life's experiences have done to us.



Labyrinth events, experience and location.

By Lorraine, Geoff and Trudy

The intention to have offsite labyrinth events in Batman Park was to provide delegates to the Parliament, as well as the general community, with opportunities to walk the labyrinth to the themes of the Parliament. About 100 people were involved in the scheduled facilitated events and as the designs were (mostly) visible people also walked the labyrinths at other times. In the photo below the Monks daily walking meditation group is shown walking the Reconciliation Labyrinth. The location of Batman Park on the banks of the Yarra River and its proximity to the Parliaments venue were fantastic as the six labyrinth walks were in the hub of city life. People who otherwise would not have been involved participated. People living in multi story apartments or staying in hotels over looking the Park also came down to investigate.

Note: For copywrite details contact Clare at <http://reconciliationlabyrinth.withtank.com/>

A labyrinth walk for Contemplates in Action. Facilitator was Fr. Michael Hansen.

By Lorraine Rodda

The theme for this walk, as a prelude to the Parliament's opening, provided opportunities to connect with delegates and also to focus on the themes of the Parliament. Before commencing the walk Michael asked walkers to stand at each of the cardinal points of the labyrinth where it was blessed. Each person taking a turn as we rotated around the labyrinth was a wonderful experience. Can you see the (white) radiance in the photo?



Walkers were asked to consider the walk as a spiritual exercise or prayer as a friend of God seeking to be contemplatives in action. "to be aware and willing for sacred desires to give life to the fundamental decisions in life, such as religion, career, marriage or mission, and the smaller decisions that animate you daily, like generosity, creativity, laughter and sacrifice". "The influence of 'holy desires' flowing upwards through you into all your smaller desires, feelings and decisions". In this walk we were invited to take one of these desires for the week of the Parliament and our future work, to bring it to God and be contemplatives in action".

Connections were made with Di Williams, of Edinburgh University's Interfaith Chaplaincy in the United Kingdom. Di later handed out information about walks in Batman Park to people attending the walk that she facilitated the following day. This walk was on the 1st day of the Parliament

Photo: Left Di Williams from the UK, Geoff Rodda, Leah McKay, Michael Hansen & Carol McDonough



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Pre Parliament Labyrinth Walk

Rev Dr. Helen Malcolm
TLS Region Rep. in Shepparton
and Veriditas Facilitator.

That night was to be the opening of the Parliament of the World's Religions at the Melbourne Convention Centre on the banks of the Yarra River. All was in readiness. After months of to-ing and fro-ing with Melbourne City Council to ensure our labyrinth was eco-friendly and that we were covered for public liability, the Santa Rosa labyrinth had been lovingly drawn out on the grass beside the river in biodegradable chalk.

Melbourne desperately wanted rain, but not just when the labyrinth had been painted out. The paint faded but was not obliterated so the team went to work again emphasizing the turns in bright yellow paint and gathering bucket loads of gum nuts to outline the path – it looked wonderful. The world was gathering in Melbourne – from many countries and many faiths. The costumes and national dress were amazing. We didn't have to go traveling – the world came to us.

The labyrinth workshop was to start at 3.30pm – and the next change in the weather was due at 3pm! We almost held our collective breaths as the sky darkened and the wind strengthened. When it came, it was very short and very sharp. Chairs and pamphlets, hats and cushions went flying – but the gumnuts stayed put, the labyrinth was preserved, the wind died down and the people gathered. Even though the PWR had not yet officially started, about a dozen people from at least four different faiths walked the labyrinth that afternoon. Passers-by watched, others walked across the space oblivious to the symbol laid out on the grass, children ran round it and dogs investigated it. The warm Melbourne sun shone and we walked in each others' footsteps to "Hear each other, heal the earth and make a world of difference".



Information from Helen's Brochure

Helen's focus was on the labyrinth being a sacred space, a spiritual tool for centering us, a walking meditation, a pilgrimage, a reflection of the twists and turns on our life's journey. Reflecting that the circle, spiral, pilgrimage and labyrinth are present in many cultures and spiritual practices acknowledges we all may have a different path to the Divine, but we all travel towards the centre where we receive strength, inspiration and guidance and then re-engage with the world in a new way as we walk out of the labyrinth.

Guide: Walk with intent, not expectation. There is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth. Find your own pace - simply put one foot in front of the other. Use anything that happens on the labyrinth as a metaphor for what is happening in your life. After your walk take time to reflect on your experience. Consider the four 'R's - Stages to walking the labyrinth:-

- **Remembering** all that we are, all that we have, is a blessing from the Divine. As you prepare to walk, bring to mind the things for which you give thanks.
- **Releasing** As you walk to the centre, be open to letting go, calming, shedding, relinquishing all that we don't need on our life's journey.
- **Receiving** As you journey you may receive guidance, an idea, a sense of peace. In the centre you may like to sit, stand, kneel - stay as long as you require.
- **Resolving** As you walk out of the labyrinth and return to the 'world' you may have a sense of rebirth, a rejuvenation, re-creation. You may reclaim those responsibilities you laid down as you entered the labyrinth. You may resolve to re-engage with the world in a new way.

Each person's experience of walking the labyrinth is unique and these stages can occur anywhere on the labyrinth, or indeed in retrospect. May your labyrinth journey and your life's pilgrimage bring you blessing and peace.

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The Reconciliation Labyrinth

By Trudy Sebaly, Lorraine & Geoff Rodda
Representatives of TLS

Seven friends of the labyrinth found creating this new pattern an exciting and rewarding way to spend a Sunday afternoon. After the pattern was marked out in a chalk spray the enhancement of gum nuts, battery flickering lights were added later to form the person in the labyrinth.



Milk containers were added to strengthen the vision of concentric circles with the "Walk for Harmony" flags at the entrances supplied by the Victorian State Government's Department Immigration and Cultural Affairs.

Elizabeth Cerda Pavia of St Margarets Eltham called in the energy of the plants, trees and river to flow through the labyrinth for us to receive and heal the earth as we walked. The coloured lanterns around of the labyrinth provided an important role in holding the space and grounding the labyrinth.



Pictured above are from left to right Rosemary Mangiamele of The Grove Wholistic Spirituality Centre, Indigenous Elder Shane Charles and Elizabeth Cerda Pavia of St Margarets Anglican Church Eltham.

Appreciation is extended to all who shared photo's with us. The range of which captured the atmosphere of this special evening. A special thank you to Alastair Pritchard for his "balancing efforts from a great height" to capture the overhead view of the labyrinth on the right.

"Healing the earth with traditional wisdom" A candlelit labyrinth walk.

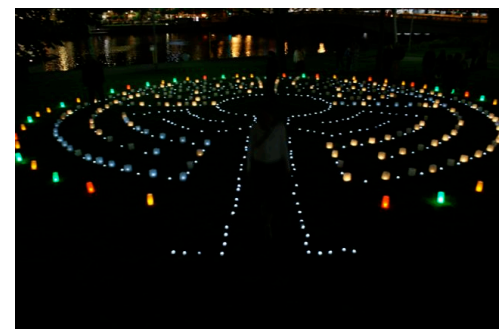
By Christina Rowntree. A Veriditas Facilitator

In the centre of Melbourne one hot night, a circular form appeared in the grass of Batman Park beside the Yarra River. Traffic rushed across a bridge punctuated by the clang of trams, while over head trains rumbled between the major city stations. This wedge of parkland is a breathing space.



As dusk settled the gentle flickering light of candles set amidst gum nuts presented a timeless glow in the grass, and a group of people gathered. Here The Labyrinth Society, Australian Region presented a series of labyrinth walks during the Parliament of the World's Religions which met in Melbourne in December 2009.

The candlelit walk focussed on the theme Healing the Earth with Traditional Wisdom. The labyrinth formed was that of the Reconciliation Labyrinth, designed by South African Clare Wilson, where people are invited to walk two by two, crossing over to walk in each other's footsteps, and meeting in the centre. The journey out of the labyrinth may be taken on a new, third path, into a reconciling future.



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Healing the Earth with Traditional Wisdom A candlelit labyrinth walk - continued

By Christina Rowntree

For Australians this reconciling path is being walked by indigenous and non-indigenous Australians after the national apology to the Stolen Generations in February 2008.



Shane Charles a Yorta Yorta man welcomed walkers to country, told story and supported the labyrinth walk with didgeridoo.



On this evening we were invited to listen to indigenous wisdom in regard to our relationship to the Earth.

Generations of indigenous people lived lightly and in harmony with the rhythms and cycles of their country, knowing it deeply. A sacred connection

to country, intrinsic to identity informs the way

Aboriginal people live with the land. As people prepared to enter the Reconciliation Labyrinth they were invited to listen respectfully to Indigenous wisdom walking with another person on the path.

As night deepened the city throbbed. Glaring lights, plumes of fire, and music from the Casino precinct flared across the river.

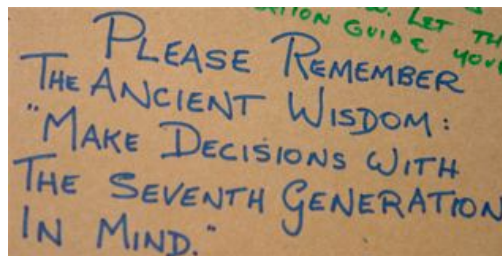
As city revellers traversed the park, many were intrigued and entranced by the sight of people walking in a different mode. They were drawn to the edge of the Reconciliation labyrinth, and some were drawn in.

Lovers walked together. Strangers who stepped out tentatively at the entrance, met in the centre as friends. Two young men who stumbled drunkenly across the lines, listened respectfully to the explanation of our purpose, apologised, and later returned to walk the labyrinth together.



In the reconciling centre of the labyrinth people held hands across cultures and across faiths, and no faith, returning together in hope for the healing of the Earth.

To listen to the audio recording of the ceremony and Welcome to Country go to pages 14-16 for the link and / or to read the transcript of this ABC Radio Encounter program



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All one, dancing the sacred paths: 2009 Parliament of Worlds' Religions and Labyrinth

By Carol McDonough.

Labyrinth Facilitator

Roaring forth - tidal Yarra River so close to its bay; pontoon heliport; south bank casino; high-above the regional and urban railway line; busy roads rattling trams, trucks and cars.

A well of quiet prevailed. Labyrinth. There were 2 labyrinths actually. One was the Santa Rosa and the other the Reconciliation design. Both dressed beautifully with Australian gum nuts and "Walk for Harmony Flags" provided by the Victorian State Government's Depart. of Immigration and Cultural Affairs. Both labyrinth styles meeting Council disability access requirements of wide paths.

We stand, stilled, silenced, at the quadrants of this ephemeral noise-surrounded labyrinth in the City of Melbourne, mindful of 5 million people surrounding us, being centred at the centre of the Capital of the State of Victoria, roughly the size of the British Isles, welcoming all. We welcomed walkers of and to Australia, to our Labyrinths and to the Parliament.

The hard work, particularly by Trudy Sebal, Lorraine and Geoff Rodda, Australian and Victorian representatives of The (International) Labyrinth Society, Inc. respectively, cliff-hanging, heart-stopping, breath-holding pauses waiting for necessary Council permits are over. Our labyrinths are approved and built; Parliament starts with registration in two hours; we are gathered just along from the Zen meditation walk.

The first aider also required by the Council waits, watches and is never used. Corporate types busy with laptops and takeaway coffees rush past on their way to the looming office towers.

Fr Michael Hansen, builder of the Campion Jesuit Retreat Centre labyrinth, raises his hand inviting us to do likewise. The paint-on-grass labyrinths are blessed.



At this inaugural walk there are people from Britain, Korea, USA and Australia. Over the next five days, walkers from many nations join us. Presenters from many traditions invite all to celebrate the seasons, blow bubbles of peace for children, reflect that we are made from stardust and water, that, though from all parts of the planet, we human beings are one, and, one with all creation



Children, also from across the seas, playing with parents in the park join in; a person on a g o p h e r nearly tries the disability

access; a city bag-man pushing his trolley is too shy ... we tried gentle inclusive hospitality.

Melbourne, a surprising city of over 100 nationalities and religions; many more from all zones, from the Tropics to beyond the Arctic Circle, came for this Parliament of the World's Religions - the first 1893, the second 1988 the seventh, Melbourne 2009. "A multi-religious, multi-lingual and multicultural city, Melbourne was selected as the ideal place to hold the world's largest inter-religious gathering. Culturally vibrant, Melbourne is home to indigenous and aboriginal spiritualities as well as diverse world religious and spiritual traditions including Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian." 1

The statistics from the Parliament are staggering. 500 volunteers speaking over 50 languages cared for 6000 participants. Parliament met for 7 days and six nights from 8am-10pm.

The day started with 20 or so religious/spiritual observances, morning intra-religious sessions [over 30 each day], afternoon intra-religious sessions [another 30 or more each session], late afternoon 'open space', evening plenary sessions in a new convention centre which could hold all participants, presenters and volunteers, all with good view of the humungous platform.

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All one, dancing the sacred paths: 2009 Parliament of Worlds' Religions and Labyrinth

Written by Carol McDonough. (Con'd)



Plenary sessions were presided over by a Wurundjeri Elder, usually Aunty Dr Joy Murphy and a didgeridoo player. The plenary sessions involved nearly 1000 individuals and included the opening and closing, with stunning music and dance, ceremonies and

blessings, with a night each dedicated contributions of Sacred Music, Youth, Melbourne and International 2.

All were mind and heart expanding, life-changing. PWR 2009 has got to have changed the World, our Nation, our State, Melbourne. 'Hearing each other, Healing the Earth' was the overarching focus: 'Healing the Earth with Care and Concern' was the first key topic. For working towards a more just, peaceful and sustainable future lies at the heart of aspirations of people everywhere. Emerging at this moment in history is a growing and shared recognition that 'we are all in this together'. The deciding factor in our future will have to do with those things which will make us an Earth community, and for which we must take common responsibility.

The impetus to come to grips with this common responsibility for fostering an Earth community comes from two places: the practical and the spiritual. There are the most pressing challenges facing us that can only be addressed through these two inseparable dimensions."2

It was to this that the Australian Labyrinth Society decided to contribute with events to be held in the park. When weather threatened to change unfortunately there wasn't sufficient space for the labyrinths onsite.

I felt the labyrinths, just offsite, were hard to locate and Information difficult to find ; a 500 page booklet, with labyrinth details on page 59 the day the walks commenced. The one onsite labyrinth session by Di Williams of the UK was packed.

Only today, lunching with one of the PWR Melbourne staff, we both said that there was room for our labyrinths both inside and outside the venue. Ah well. Maybe the world office staff in Chicago will ensure a labyrinth is even more accessible for participants at the next Parliament, where, yet to be decided.



But, there were great advantages for those of us following our labyrinths 'Welcome for the City of Melbourne' and its citizens. Lorraine, Geoff and Trudy undertook amazing negotiations and education for us. These were both inside the Council offices and also effectively in the park and on the streets. The potential of a permanent labyrinth at that venue, Batman Park is real.

Maybe even more so, than if they were to have been located at Parliament in the Convention Centre environs? Thank you Trudy, Lorraine and Geoff, from us all. Carol McDonough



Melbourne is home to about 20 labyrinths in parks, schools, churches and well being programs. Soon there may be one right in the City, gracing a public space.

History
www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=1&sn=4

Plenaries
www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=7&sn=55

Key Topics
www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=8&sn=5

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www.earthandspirituality.blogspot.com

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Walking the Labyrinth at the World's Parliament of Religions, Australia December 2009.

By Sue Oakley, Veriditas Facilitator

It was an uplifting and joyful experience to be part of facilitating Labyrinth walks at the world Parliament of Religions in Melbourne last year. Facilitating the walk on the grass Labyrinth, adjacent to the Yarra, opposite the convention center was just beautiful. I was facilitating, 'holding the space' with our group on the Sunday morning.

I had 'listened' and planned my session, a little differently this time. At the beginning, those who were there came together, and received a brief introduction, which included highlighting the opportunity for change, transformation and healing provided by walking this sacred path.

The difference this day, was I found myself emphasising, the uniqueness of each individual to walk their own path, with their own understandings and beliefs, in their own rhythm, while being at one with each other on the Labyrinth.



That is, by being true to our own unique path we acknowledge that others too are walking their own unique path that is just as real and valid as our own.



In this way we are all together, united in our quest, on the one path. I found myself sharing the understanding of the traditional way of walking the Labyrinth, whilst also giving people permission to walk it any way they felt was right for them. The latter seemed to create huge sense of freedom, with the realization that whatever they did in this space was OK, they would not be judged; that it was a space of love.

Making connections and creating possibilities.

I was interviewed by a lovely Indian lady, who was keen to take the understanding of the labyrinth back home with her to have one made. When I spoke with her about the context of facilitating the labyrinth walk today, her face beamed.!



She asked me to repeat it for her husband who was holding the camera, as she held the mike. Her question was about how I saw the Labyrinth relating to the world Parliament of Religions. I repeated that 'we all have our own unique spiritual and religious beliefs, and that we are all seeking a better way of living together of loving each other, of sharing and having fun with each other. The labyrinth provides a concrete, practical way in which we can stay true to our own beliefs, on our own path while we physically walk alongside others who are on their path with their beliefs, yet it is the 'one' path.' They both looked at me a little perplexed and I said, 'Children do it all the time'. Then they said 'yes, yes', and we all laughed and exchanged names and emails.



Another delight was meeting Di Williams of the Edinburgh University's Interfaith Chaplaincy. We had arranged to loan Di my full size canvas Chartres labyrinth for her Parliament Walk to which Mike and I were privileged to attend.

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Youth Pathway to Peace - An Inter Faith Youth Labyrinth Walk.

Facilitated by Rev. Siobhan Christian
Interfaith Minister and TLS RR New South Wales

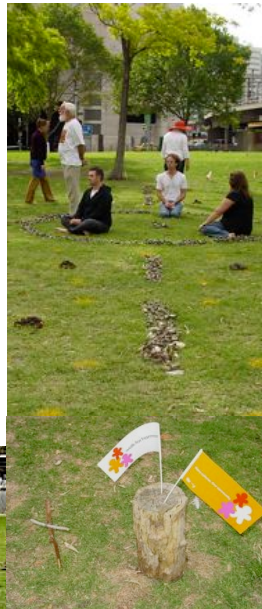


Set against the backdrop of Melbourne's Convention and Exhibition Centre, members of the Australian branch of the Labyrinth Society constructed a beautiful temporary Santa Rosa Labyrinth as one of the offsite events for the Parliament of World's Religions in December 2010.

Having attended the full weeks program, it was such a relief to take off the shoes and walk barefoot in Batman Park, beside the Yarra River. This was the perfect place to get out of my head space (there was ALOT of information to take on board at that event) and feel into the shift in awareness that my body was

experiencing.

I was honored to be asked to facilitate the 'Walking a Pathway to Peace' program, particularly as part of 'Youth Day'. I am only newly ordained as an Interfaith Minister and am ever grateful that such a calling came while I can mingle freely with a young crowd. Come this walk however, it was the young-at-heart who meandered over to our Labyrinth.



My focus for the walk was to suggest that people recall a moment from their childhood when they had made a decision about something, someone, themselves or the meaning of an event or action. How had this memory, this decision, set the foundations for a perception long-held throughout ones life? What if you could recall that moment as a child, and make a new decision, with the wisdom of an adult? How much freer might you be to continue on your journey without the burden of an out-dated belief system? Acknowledge it. Bless it. And let the inner child know that the adult is there to support it and make even better decisions now.

The thing that never ceases to amaze me about the Labyrinth is its ability to support us during our most vulnerable moments. A reflection such as this can be extremely powerful and visceral and we can experience a sense of vertigo as the body lets us know where such memories are stored. The gentle twisting and turning of the path is like being cradled in the arms of the Great Mother as we courageously trust the process.

This is not a realization that only happens once.

There are so many early decisions that can be explored. On the final day of the program I went to a seminar about Aboriginal Spirituality and listened to Gary Simon Jagamarra deliver a stirring off-the-cuff presentation about Dream-running. I was so moved that following the session I approached Jagamarra and asked how could I learn more? Given that the Dali Lama was appearing next (the much anticipated finale of the event) it was a leap of faith to chose this precious opportunity to sit in Batman Park for the next four hours and time-travel with Jagamarra in the very centre of the Labyrinth. Some may call it psychic healing, or maybe journey-medicine. Given my love of Shamanic traditions, to share time and space with the Walpiri law/lore-man in the very heart of the Labyrinth, was more than a dream come true. What extraordinary serendipitous opportunities (people!) present themselves when we are on our authentic path ...

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Parliament of World Religions Reflection

Di Williams January 2010

www.diwilliams.com www.labyrinth.ed.ac.uk

Hope 'I would draw a distinction between being an optimist and being a hopeful person...I think sometimes it's problematic to talk about hope for the future. I try to live hopefully now: that's all we have any control over'.¹

These words from Kathy Galloway, director of Christian Aid, Scotland, sum up the essence of my personal reflection of the University of Edinburgh Chaplaincy delegation's visit to the Parliament of World Religions in Australia during November and December of 2009. I came away with a newly realized sense of hope for all we are striving to achieve as a Chaplaincy provision in Higher Education, and for a growing consciousness of how people of diverse traditions and beliefs might help bring healing to the earth community and this beautiful planet.

The 5,500 people attending the Parliament, the world's largest inter-religious gathering, represented many of the diverse cultures and religious / spiritual communities of the planet. They were drawn together by a common sense that 'in today's world, understanding between people of different traditions is not optional. It is essential... (to) foster inter-religious, civil and cross-cultural dialogue on important local, national, and global issues and promote and encourage social cohesion within societies locally and across the world'.²

A world of difference

Our University delegation of students and staff included a Buddhist, three Christians, (spanning conservative, progressive and Spiritualist communities), a Hindu, a Muslim and a Shaman.



We were, in our diversity, a microcosm of the Parliament gathering. We felt that reality keenly. We all wanted to extend the experience we already shared in the University Chaplaincy by somehow deepening our appreciation of living and working together as a diverse community, 'a world of difference'.³

Experiencing afresh what it means to develop deep relationships across diversity is one of the most significant experiences I have come away from the Parliament still cherishing. The daily context of the Parliament ethos and programme valued and celebrated diversity. For our own University team it was the sense of flourishing trust, understanding, compassion and fun we discovered as we spent quality time together, leading workshops, making significant contacts, participating in sessions and ceremonies, sharing meals and exploring the places we travelled through and stayed in, that proved the worth of this special journey. The reality of sharing simple human living, with its mix of ease and disease, sadness and joy, struggle and agreement, despair and hope, was authentically enriching.

Parliament Presentations i) Documentary Film

The two presentations that we offered in the main programme of Parliament events fed this sense of team flourishing and, gave to those who participated, by their choice to be present at our sessions, a genuine engagement with the celebration of diversity. Our home made film, 'All We've Got: A Documentary Film about Hope', documenting how we manage 'questions that matter' and 'issues that concern' when faced with personal and collective difference, within our life in Chaplaincy and the wider University, opened up the profound questions of dealing with a multi-cultural and multi-faith reality in a high profile institution of Higher Education.

The feedback from our pre-Parliament workshop at the Australian HE Chaplains' Conference, as well as our workshop at the Parliament, surprised us with how the work we are doing via the Chaplaincy is genuinely respected and appears to be largely ahead of the field. We were deeply encouraged. However, knowing the human reality and personal cost of our work, I admit to leaving more challenged than complacent!

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Parliament of World Religions Reflection (cont'd) By Di Williams January 2010

ii) Labyrinth Walk – a metaphor of journeying together

The experience of offering a labyrinth walk as a time of spiritual observance or practice was equally well received. As an experienced labyrinth facilitator, consultant and teacher of labyrinth work, I felt our labyrinth session at the Parliament should not pose too great a problem to execute. Despite continuing practical difficulties with the venue, right up until moments before our early morning workshop, our spirits were lifted by the kindness of folk from the local labyrinth community in Melbourne, who loaned us their canvas labyrinth and supported our session in body and spirit!



Some members of our team had a little experience of working with, and walking, labyrinths. For others this spiritual practice was something completely new. Yet all were committed to supporting the session and giving Parliament delegates an opportunity of metaphorically creating their own 'world of difference' in walking the circular path together.

The sensitive and professional way the team managed the session was a metaphor in itself of our developing trust in each other and in what we can offer others. To allow 40-50 walkers a peaceful and unhurried labyrinth walk in the hour allotted was quite amazing. I was very moved by the team's work and the reflections of the walkers ...

Labyrinth Reflections

- 'My first labyrinth. It was a wonderful, deeply spiritual experience!
- Beautiful clarity of mind. Thank you for the opportunity.'
- 'Very relaxing – I started off wanting to walk very quickly and found myself naturally slowing down after a while... very uplifting.'
- 'This walking path is a wonderful and soul deep start on a new life path.'
- 'It struck me as a powerful metaphor of the mixture of 'doing your own thing' and 'living in community.'

Australian Labyrinth Community

During my stay in Australia I was able to connect with the labyrinth communities in Melbourne and Canberra. This proved immensely invaluable.

In 2004, I had walked the Rachum Labyrinth in Canberra. The experience of that walk had laid the basis for ongoing connection with the Rachum labyrinth community and their work, and the development of my own labyrinth work in the University of Edinburgh, UK and Europe. This return visit enabled me to meet the owner and builder of the Rachum Labyrinth, Alison Meretini, for the first time. She invited me to spend a day in the bush walking this beautiful Chartres type labyrinth again, then honoured me by inviting me to lead a ritual of blessing of a much larger, land 1 labyrinth which was already beginning to take shape on the property.



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Parliament of World Religions Reflection cont'd Di Williams January 2010

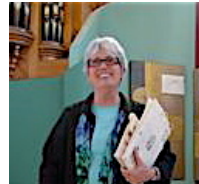
The following morning the wider Rachum group met for breakfast in the Eucalyptus Field of Canberra Botanical Gardens. We talked about the development of their project and how we might support one another, then, to my utter surprise, we had an impromptu launch of my book 'Labyrinth-landscape of the soul'. It was a moment of joy and delight watched over by four curious kangaroos sat under the nearby trees! Back in Melbourne I met with Lorraine Rodda, the Australian Representative of Veriditas (a not-for-profit organization dedicated to introducing people to the healing, meditative powers of the labyrinth) and The Labyrinth Society, Inc. She publishes an Australia wide newsletter, 'Labyrinths Matter', that seeks to build community, share good practice and encourage walkers and facilitators of labyrinths across the country.

I was particularly interested in how such a tool as a national Newsletter could be of help to the steadily expanding use of labyrinths in the UK, not only within Institutions of Higher Education, but also within hospitals, hospices, primary and secondary education, retreat and spirituality centres, prisons, parks, private gardens and the leisure industry.

One of the highlights of my connection with the Melbourne labyrinth community was the experience of receiving a 'welcome to the country' by Shane Charles, a Yorta Yorta man of the Kulin Nation and then walking the twilight, candle-lit Reconciliation Labyrinth (laid out in Batman Park at the side of the Yarra River), to the healing sounds of the didjeridoo.

After the final session of the Parliament of the World's Religions I received a stone, on which is painted a pathway, outlined in white dots in the Australian Aboriginal style. It was a gift, given to all the participants, from the Aboriginal community, along with a blessing for the Journey written by Vicki Clark of the Mutthi Mutthi:

'As you journey on Our ancient land, travel gently on Our Mother Earth, with respect and care. Hold the Spirit of the Sacred campfire always in your heart and may the Spirits of Our Ancestors always watch over you and keep you safe.'



Lauren Artress March

2011. Lauren will visit Australia in March 2011. There will be public lectures, a workshop and facilitator training in Melbourne. Public lecture and facilitated walk in Shepparton and a workshop in Brisbane.

About Facilitator Training

This course is the most comprehensive of facilitator training offered. Over the years a body of knowledge about labyrinths, their history and how to use them effectively has developed. This course is suitable for people new to Veriditas facilitator training as well as those who have already trained. This course is in continuous revision and evolving with the emerging needs of people who facilitate labyrinths walks as well as the needs of those who walk them. People do this training to:-

- deepen their knowledge of labyrinths.
- become certified labyrinth facilitators.
- update existing Veriditas Facilitator skills

Workshop - the one day workshop serves as a model for presenting the labyrinth. This experience also helps the facilitator-in-training to embody the labyrinth. The workshop is a pre-requisite for attending facilitator training.

Reading required: Lauren's books.

Walking a Sacred Path
The Sacred Path Companion.
Order www.amazon.com

Two day Facilitator Training - a behind-the-scenes conversation with Lauren about using these powerful archetypal patterns as blue prints for transformation.

A Day with Lauren Artress.

This day is offered as an optional extra to the two day training. It will be used to deepen the experience of facilitating labyrinth walks including the art of story telling. Veriditas Training is a pre-requisite for this in depth training day.

For more details about facilitator training.

<http://veriditas.org/programs/training.shtml>

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Walking the Labyrinth ABC Radio's David Busch's report.

Among the many opportunities to engage in religious observance during the Parliament, one of the most beautifully located must be the labyrinths, created for this event in Batman Park on the banks of the Yarra a few hundred metres from the Parliament venue.

Two designs are in use through the week, but Friday evening saw the creation of a special reconciliation labyrinth, using a special design from South Africa enabling white and black people to walk together.

The reconciliation focus was on indigenous and non-indigenous people, particularly in Australia. Boonerong elder and Yorta Yorta man Shane Charles gave a welcome to country and played the didgerido while several dozen people, many barefoot, walked the labyrinth's concentric circles marked out with candles, gum nuts and eucalyptus leaves. That Batman Park marks the place of the arrival of the first white settlers in the area added to the poignancy of the exercise.



With its evocative candlelit meditative ambience, the labyrinth sat in stark contrast to the traffic, party noise and bright lights of a December Friday night in downtown Melbourne - not so much as a critique or challenge, but as an invitation to a deep centering of spirit with each other and the earth.

Healing the Earth with Traditional Wisdom - Pre walk interview between David Busch and Christina Rowntree.

Download the audio (Dur: 9.47; Size: 4.48 MB)
<http://blogs.abc.net.au/m/files/labyrinth-walk.mp3>

Hi I am Christina Rowntree, a member of the Labyrinth Society and here at the Parliament of the World's Religions - offsite event - we have set up a couple of labyrinths on the banks of the Yarra River in Batman Park in Melbourne.

Tonight we are going to walk a reconciliation labyrinth for the healing for the earth. To show our care and compassion for the earth and we have a very strong indigenous theme here tonight because Shane Charles, who is a Boonerong Elder will give the Welcome to Country and support our walk with didgeridoo.

I feel it is a very significant night tonight and the place where we are walking is significant here at Batman Park where the Enterprise long ago first came up the Yarra River and white settlers stepped onto the area of Melbourne.

So this place is now alight with candlelight. Tonight we are going to walk with a commitment to listening to indigenous wisdom here in Australia and I think because many of the delegates in the Parliament come from all over the World I will be inviting them to think about the indigenous people in their place who have the wisdom and the knowledge about how to care for the earth. How to live in harmony with the earth.



All labyrinths, with their concentric circles are a very archetypal shape and yes Shane and other indigenous people in Australia have recognised that

these concentric circles are part of indigenous peoples iconography or symbology, yes, and I think you'll find that across the World these shapes call to us at a very deep level.

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Healing the Earth with Traditional Wisdom - Interview continues.

Download the audio
(Dur: 9.47; Size: 4.48 MB)

<http://blogs.abc.net.au/m/files/labyrinth-walk.mp3>

David Busch . . . What are you encouraging people to do as they walk the corners and turns in life on the labyrinth?

Christina Rowntree . . . Tonight I am going to encourage them to consider their connections to the earth, Inviting them to think about the cells in their body to being completely at one with the land that they walk on, the river that is nearby, the plants and the animals that surround us. So that we begin to allow that distinction between the human world and all of creation, all of nature to just blur a little bit and I think the labyrinth can take us to that point. Particularly in this climate of time of crisis we need to find a heart response to the earth in order to make the changes that are going to be necessary to survive . . .



You are able to sing your Country. You are able to dance your Country; the vibrations giving thanks to Mother Earth. You are able to paint your Country. We not only lived it we could feel the Country. This is one thing that non indigenous people find hard to grasp; the spiritual connection is about feeling .

So on this land we are here today was created by Bunjil the eagle who protected the land and Wahn who travelled as a crow to protected the waterways.

Welcome everybody as we gather on the land close to where white people first stepped in Melbourne it does fill an important thing to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land in doing so I introduce Shane Charles an indigenous elder of the Boonwurrung tribe who will offer us a Welcome to Country tonight . . .

Welcome to Country by Shane Charles

First and foremost I must pay my respects to my traditional elders. The land we are on today is of the Boonerong people one of 5 tribes of the Kulin Nation in the Melbourne area.

Bunjil taught us to welcome visitors but he had 2 lores. The first one was to respect the land and the second was to protect the children of bunjil.

So in the words of my ancestors Wominjika
Merrim Beek Beek Bunerong Yarn Derp
Buthapen Utah Willam

Welcome to the traditional lands of the Boonerong. Our Beautiful Home

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Healing the Earth with Traditional Wisdom - facilitated by Christina Rowntree a Veriditas Facilitator. Continued

Download the audio (Dur: 9.47; Size: 4.48 MB)
<http://blogs.abc.net.au/m/files/labyrinth-walk.mp3>

Christina Tonight's walk in taking up the theme of the Parliament of the World's Religions. Healing the earth with care and compassion.

So here in Australia, as is in other parts of the world, I believe our best hope is to listen respectfully to the knowledge and wisdom of the indigenous people. Tonight we are invited to walk with each other and with all the earth listening for indigenous wisdom. Connecting with the earth.

We are invited to to walk sensing ourselves one and the same with the earth. Making no distinction between the cells that make up our body and the cells of the rocks, and the earth we walk. The cells of the water of the river beside us and the cells of the trees and plants and a that surround us.

We are very privileged to walk the Reconciliation Labyrinth tonight. It comes from South Africa. Clare Wilson designed this labyrinth as a way to walk black and white people together as a healing and reconciling metaphor for the walk in South Africa after apartheid.

So what is different about this labyrinth is that there are two paths, two entrances to walk in together. Now you might like to walk with your friend, your partner or a complete stranger and find out what this walk means to you both.

You might like to think about the other as representing for you the earth so rather walking with a human imagine walking with something someone from the natural world. It is up to you. The paths that you will walk are separate. So follow your own pace. Set off together and then dont worry. You might cross paths at the top of the labyrinth where you can cross over paths. Then you can choose to walk your partners path or you can retrace your steps but eventually you will be guided into the heart space into the centre of the labyrinth where you can spend some time.

Then when you are ready you can come out together or alone down the third path, the middle way, a new way into the future.

So there is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth. It is a journey that you take. An inward journey. Everything that happens on the labyrinth is a kind of fuel or a metaphor something to work with

Worldwide Labyrinth Locator.

To find a labyrinth to walk in Australia and also to have yours listed please go to the Worldwide Labyrinth Locator. The labyrinths on this site are not listed by State of Territory so you will need to scroll down the list. Currently we have 67 labyrinths listed. Is your labyrinth listed? Do you know one that is not listed.
<http://labyrinthlocator.com>

Australian Labyrinth Locators.

The Australian Labyrinth locator is generously hosted by Cedar Prest on here website. Click the link below. The list of labyrinths is located in the Directory then click the State or Territory where you will find a drop down list of 52 labyrinth locations.



Note:

There is a difference of 15 between these two lists.

Maybe yours is missing from one or the other?

www.labyrinthlinkaustralia.org

You are invited to "Come walk with us"

This newsletter, established in 2007, was to support Cedar Prests efforts to create an Australian Labyrinth Network. Cedar sought to connect with people interested in spreading the calming and healing use of the Labyrinth throughout our great country and to make it easy to find a labyrinth to walk. Initially there were few links but Cedar knew that collectively we were going to do something to change this. She said " It's the Australian way"!.

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Will you come and walk with us?

By Lorraine Rodda

lgrodda@primus.com.au



We sat side by side in the morning light & looked out at the future together"

www.storypeople.com

Firesouls. Behind each sacred space is a firesoul. A word used to describe the people who are the sparks behind the creation of sacred spaces. The firesouls' passion and vision are the driving forces behind nurturing the sacred spaces from idea to reality. Their energy, enthusiasm, patience and persistence inspire communities to come together around the creation and use of public green spaces. See this website:

www.openspacesacredplaces.org

Are you a "Firesoul"?

Then you maybe interested in joining the team as we walk towards the labyrinth being an integral part of the communities in which we live, work, learn, play and pray . . . to come walk with us as we create our Labyrinth Society with an Australian look and feel. Network.

Some people have joined Labyrinth Link Australia others The Labyrinth Society and some have joined both to support the global efforts of making connections at the local and regional, state and national levels.

We need people who we can contact in all of our states and territories. These positions can be with, or without, membership of The Labyrinth Society Inc. We invite you to bring your special labyrinth interests, energies to share our labyrinth journey.

Primarily all you need is between 1 & 2 hours a month where you can be responsive to enquiries about labyrinths in your region, to encourage the creation of labyrinths and labyrinth events and to sharing the journey through articles in our newsletter.

Are you interested in being a contact person in your local area?

The Labyrinth Society's Region Representative positions are a great way to really be in the thick of things. The general responsibilities are minimal and as a fire soul you are probably already doing what is required. The difference is that you will be connected to people like yourself. In Australia, whilst this has been largely through the newsletter I foresee opportunities as our numbers grow to have connections at the State and Territory as well as National levels.

Labyrinth Society Membership Benefits

The Labyrinth Society, is largely a voluntary organisation, established just over 10 years ago, offers a range of benefits to its members. This can best be demonstrated through last years initiative to hold World Labyrinth Day. This is a day where labyrinths can be taken to the wider community to discover, enjoy and transform. Interested then go to this link for more information.

<http://labyrinthociety.org/benefits>

Apart from the valuable role membership plays in supporting the global efforts of the Society, as the organisation develops so will benefits reach globally. i.e. A DVD is being produced to assist membership's efforts to promote labyrinth building initiatives. Membership to TLS is \$US 50 a year. If finance is an issue there are options for a scholarship membership no questions asked you need only request it. The important thing is to be connected and resource you. If you look at the website I am sure you will see the value of your subscription.

<http://labyrinthociety.org/membership>

Regional Representatives

The Labyrinth Society has recently appointed Kimberley Saward as the Global Membership and Regional Representative coordinator. Her role is to strengthen the connection between membership, to develop networking across the globe and between its region representatives at Inter and Intra Country levels. By joining The Labyrinth Society you are helping to grow the global organisation and at the same time helping us to take the next step by being connected with others in your State or Territory. There is no limit to the number of reps we may have in any given area.

www.labyrinthociety.org/regional-reps

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Retiring TLS Region Representatives

Trudy Sebaly is retiring from voluntary work as a Regional Representative of the Labyrinth Society to concentrate on growing her business. A very big thank you Trudy for your enthusiasm and the radiance you brought to our meetings; especially your role as Convenor of our Inaugural Gathering in Victoria in 2008.

Then there were your supreme efforts - doing the hard yards leading up to the Parliament of the World's Religions. Without your networking with the Grove for our public liability insurance these events would not have been held.

Appreciation also to Julia Wilson for being the lone TLS Regional Representative in Queensland. We look forward to having more contact with you Julia now you are a Victorian. The timing was great too . . . just as Rick Zweck settled into his Regional Representative role in Queensland.

Fire Souls across Australia includes TLS Members and a Non Member

Victoria

Geoff Rodda - San Remo
groddabdav@iprimus.com.au

Paula McLeod - Hurstbridge
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Dr Lisa Shortridge - Shepparton
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Dr Helen Malcolm - Shepparton
hmalcolm@bigpond.com

Leonie Brien - Wangaratta
Leonie.Brien@galen.vic.edu.au

Helen Bramley-Jackson - Bendigo
helenbj@optusnet.com.au

Junitta Vallak - Foster
greenweave@dcsi.net.au

New South Wales

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Dr Margaret Rainbird - French's Forest
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Tasmania

Jo Cook - Bellerive
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Ikia Healy - Kingstone
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Australian Capital Territory

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South Australia

Cedar Prest cedarprest@yahoo.com.au

Western Australian

Beth Robertson bethr@inet.net.au

Northern Territory.

No Representative at this time.