



Issue 8 - January 2010

Dear fellow-members of the TS and TOS around the world,

We trust that you are beginning 2010 with a sense of optimism and a conviction that every small act of service imbued with compassion and given selflessly will make a positive difference to life on this beautiful planet.

In this issue we celebrate the publication of our International President's new book, *The World Around Us*. You'll find news from TOS Groups in India, Australia, Pakistan and Tanzania, an article about the Copenhagen summit and an invitation to join a campaign to help animals in circuses. Our article is by our International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin and Australian member, Dorothy Bell. They share their ideas on how the work of the TOS can support the Theosophical Society. The information on two more UN International Days in early 2010 gives ideas for service activities within our communities. As usual, we finish with an inspirational story, this time beautifully illustrated.

Remember that the newsletter is designed to be read while you are connected to the internet. We hope that you will continue to enjoy keeping in touch with what is happening in the TOS worldwide and find inspiration and ideas for service.

Please consider sending photographs of your TOS activities and news items that might be of interest to fellow TOS members. We would welcome your contributions, either through your National TOS Director/President/Coordinator/Correspondent or directly to the editors at: carolyn.tosinternational@gmail.com

Radha Burnier publishes her fifth book

Radha Burnier, the International President of both the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical Order of Service, has recently published her fifth book. *The World Around Us* is a compilation of her editorials, "From the Watchtower", published in *The Theosophist* over the past thirty years. [Read more](#)

TOS news from around the world

Find out about recent TOS activities in the Assam and Arunachal Region of India, Melbourne in Australia, Pakistan and Tanzania. [Read more](#)

After Copenhagen - the continuing need for climate change action

Many people and organisations pinned their hopes for dealing with climate change on the capacity of the international community to reach agreement during the Copenhagen summit and to commit to positive action. This was not to be and for many, the unwillingness of countries to sign up to definite action is seen as a failure. However, perhaps we should realistically regard the December 2009 UN talks as a starting point. [Read more](#)

What's new on the International TOS website?

The simplest mobility aids can make a world of difference to a person with a disability, yet they are often not available to poor people in India. The new [Featured Project](#) describes the valuable work of the TOS in India to provide mobility aids. Australian TOS member, Dorothy Bell shares insights from the heart in the new [Featured Article](#). There are also additions to the TOS photo gallery and the Inspiration section. Go to <http://international.theoservice.org>

How to move forward? The Theosophical Order of Service lends a helping hand

Service to others is possibly an element common to all our visions for the future of the TS, writes Diana Dunningham Chapotin, International Secretary of the TOS, and Dorothy Bell, Australia. What then could be more natural than for active members of the Theosophical Order of Service to talk about how the TOS can help the TS move forward? [Read more](#)

Campaign for the welfare of circus animals

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is currently campaigning for the welfare of circus animals. Their present focus is the treatment of baby elephants who are cruelly bound with ropes and wrestled by several adult men to learn circus 'tricks'. The baby elephants scream, cry, and struggle as they are stretched out, slammed to the ground, gouged with bullhooks and shocked with electric prods. [Read more](#)

UN International Days for community activities

We feature two International Days:

April 22 Earth Day

May 15 International Day of Families

For information and ideas for activities in which TOS groups could engage, [Read more](#)

An inspirational story of a cracked pot

The moral of this story, told in a beautiful slide show, is that it is wise to value all of our attributes.

[View as a video](#) (very low volume music)

[View or download as a Powerpoint show](#)

Would you like to receive this on-line newsletter automatically?

- To sign up, you only have to send a message telling us which country you live in to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'Subscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.
- If you do not want to receive future newsletters you can easily unsubscribe. All that is needed is a blank message to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'UNSUBSCRIBE TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.

With best wishes,

Carolyn and Diana

***Diana Dunningham Chapotin is the International Secretary of the TOS and
Carolyn Harrod is the National Coordinator of the TOS in Australia.***

Wisdom is a root-principle in man, which has to flower in right thought, right action and right living.

N. Sri Ram

[[Go to top](#)]

Issue 8 - January 2010 [Back to newsletter](#)

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The World Around Us is a compilation of her editorials, "From the Watchtower", published in *The Theosophist* over the past thirty years.

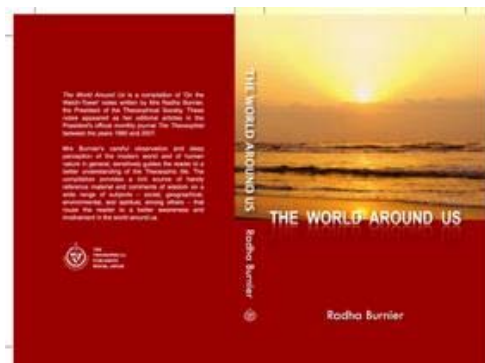


The book is divided into a number of sections of broad scope which can help facilitate study, whether for the individual or the group. Several of these sections will be of particular interest to TOS members, since they focus on Brotherhood, Ethics, Morality, Rights and Responsibilities, Women, Inhumanity and Violence, and Nature.



The first copy of the book was presented to the Theosophical Society manager, Mr S. Ramu.

The book was launched at the International Headquarters of the TS in Adyar on 22 November 2009, with 200 guests celebrating its release. Chief Guest at the book launch was Dr M. S. Swaminathan (in grey), a prominent scientist who is internationally respected for his work in economic ecology and sustainable agriculture.



The cost of the book is US\$12.00 (paperback) and US\$16.00 (hard cover). Orders can be placed with The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar via their website at: <http://www.adyarbooks.com/>

You'll find a full report of the book launch at http://www.theosophicalsociety.gr/Aikya/book_release.html

Several local newspapers reported on the book launch and its significance to the TS, as follows -

Express News Service (India) 23 Nov 2009

CHENNAI: Observing that people today wasted time and technology in small and ridiculous things, while ignoring certain important things, Theosophical Society president Radha Burnier asked people to see life in plants and animals that exist around them.

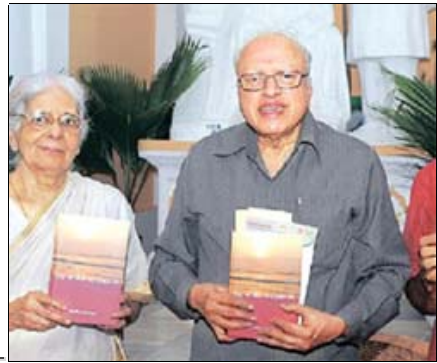
This was at the launch of her book *The World Around Us* held in Theosophical Society here on Sunday. The book is a compilation of

Radha's writings on various issues in her editorials in the magazine Theosophist, from 1980 to 2007.

Releasing the book, Prof M S Swaminathan referred to the book as "ageless, and dealing with eternal truths." He also spoke on various issues plaguing the country, like starvation, poor conservation of animals, birds and other living species. Swaminathan also read out various portions of the book, in his address.

Swaminathan asked them to form a coalition of compassionate people to address these issues. Referring to certain government measures taken to solve our country's leading problems, he noted that the schemes was driven more by patronage than anything else. The World Around Us, which is Radha's fifth book, has been divided into 10 sections and is being published by The Theosophical Publishing House.

GOLDEN OLDIES: Theosophical Society president and author Radha Burnier, along with M S Swaminathan in the city on Sunday. The book is priced at Rs 250 (hardbound) and Rs 200 (paperback.)



THE HINDU - Online edition of India's National Newspaper
Monday, Nov 23, 2009 [Tamil Nadu](#) - Chennai

"Programmes to eliminate hunger should be born out of compassion"

Special Correspondent

MSSRF chairman M. S. Swaminathan launched the book 'The World Around Us' by The Theosophical Society president Radha Burnier in Chennai on Sunday. The first copy was received by S. Ramu.

CHENNAI: Hunger and poverty alleviation programmes are bound to fail if they are based on charity and a poor feeding approach, M. S. Swaminathan, chairman, M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation said on Sunday.

Dr. Swaminathan, who launched the book "The World Around Us", a compilation of articles by Radha Burnier, President of Theosophical Society, said hunger persisted in India because the multitude of alleviation schemes failed to empower people to "earn bread with human dignity." Noting that according to latest statistics, an estimated 200 million persons, including children, went to bed hungry in India, he said programmes to eliminate hunger and deprivation should be born out of compassion rather than adopt a "do-gooder" approach.



An espousal of compassion to the less privileged and an intuitive understanding of human affairs were the hallmarks of Ms. Burnier's writings, Dr. Swaminathan said. Pointing out that information evolved into knowledge when added with value, and knowledge with the weight of experience became wisdom, he said the author's works reflected her intellectual and spiritual evolution. Dr. Swaminathan handed over the first copy to S. Ramu, manager, Theosophical Publishing House.

Ms. Burnier said the Theosophical Society had an increasingly relevant role to play in awakening humanity." C. A. Shinde, librarian, introduced the author. Pedro Oliveira, head of the Editorial Board of the Theosophical Society spoke.

[Back to newsletter](#) | [Top](#)

TOS news from around the world

TOS in the Assam and Arunachal Region of India

Countless Indian families with handicapped children cannot afford crutches for them, let alone a walker, wheel chair, callipers or an artificial limb. This situation would be considered scandalous in more affluent nations.

For this reason, the TOS within India has made 'mobility aids' a national priority over the past ten years or so. Walking sticks, special shoes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs and hand-propelled tricycles are distributed by many TOS groups throughout the country.

Here are some photos typical of the kind of equipment distributed. They were sent to us by Mr Jatindra N. Patowary, the President of the TOS in the Assam and Arunachal Region (situated in the easternmost part of India). Mr Patowary is dynamic in his work for the TOS and is one of our most faithful correspondents.



Mr Jatindra N. Patowary making the presentation



TOS in Melbourne, Australia



One of the social highlights of the Melbourne TOS's year was their annual picnic in the beautiful Melbourne Botanical Gardens. During the picnic, they held a *peace and healing meditation* under the trees and raised awareness of the Australian Conservation Foundation which their TOS group supports.

One of the Melbourne TOS members, Gloria Keh, even finds time to volunteer in Singapore. Since September 2007, she has held regular sessions on Colour Therapy at the AWWA Community Home for Senior Citizens. During the sessions, residents work on specific designs on particular themes, working with colours on the concept of a 'circle' format, to promote One-ness and develop one-pointedness.



Residents of the AWWA Home in Singapore with their artwork from a colour therapy workshop.

The TOS in Pakistan



A group of young beneficiaries of the educational sponsorship program

One of the longest running activities of the TOS in Pakistan is the organisation of educational sponsorships for students of primary, secondary and college levels. The TOS has been working to provide opportunities for bright young people who are unable to afford an education. The applicant is interviewed and the case is investigated. After the necessary investigation a sponsor is found.

All the students are from poor and needy families and this program enables them to get an education. Many finish their schooling and go on to get a university degree and are able to better their lives and those of their families. To date, several thousand students have benefited from sponsorship. Because of this help, many have gone on to become productive, successful members of society and include doctors, nurses, engineers and other technical professionals.

For information about sponsorship email the Pakistan TOS : tospakistan@gmail.com

The TOS in Tanzania link with the Italian TOS

TOS members in Tanzania commemorated Foundation Day by opening up a huge box of teddies made by Italian TOS members and friends. The teddies are given to children suffering from trauma and illness.



TOS Members cut the Foundation Day cake

[Back to newsletter](#) | [Top](#)

After Copenhagen - the continuing need for climate change action

Many people and organisations pinned their hopes for dealing with climate change on the capacity of the international community to reach agreement during the Copenhagen summit and to commit to positive action. This was not to be and for many, the unwillingness of countries to sign up to definite action is seen as a failure. However, perhaps we should realistically regard the December 2009 UN talks as a starting point.

The Copenhagen Accord, as it was named last month, makes reference to the need to keep temperature rises to no more than 2°C and says rich countries will commit to cutting greenhouse gases and developing nations will take steps to limit the growth of their emissions – but sets no targets.



Under the accord, countries will set out their pledges for the action they plan to take to tackle climate change, in an appendix to the document, and will provide information to other nations on their progress. There are promises of short term finance to the tune of \$10 billion a year over three years for poor countries to help them fight climate change, and a long term funding package worth \$100 billion a year by 2020. There are also references to the importance of reducing deforestation and efforts to give poor countries access to technology that helps them go green.

Download the Copenhagen Accord [here](#).

Countries will meet in Mexico City (COP16 in December 2010) to fill in details sketched in the Copenhagen Accord.



Continuing discussions in 2010

According to a statement from French President, Nicolas Sarkozy's office, Sarkozy intends hosting a meeting of the 28 countries that signed the Copenhagen Accord in Paris in April or May 2010. The aim of the meeting would be to implement the target of halving global emissions by 2050 – a target that has been repeated in many international sessions throughout the last year, including summits of the Group of 20 (G-20) and the Major Economies Forum. However, it was omitted in the accord agreed at the UN conference in Copenhagen, COP15.

In the view of environmental organisations such as Greenpeace, the focus must now turn to domestic and regional actions to curb emissions. For instance, meeting Europe's target to generate 20% of its energy from renewables by 2020 will now be critical. Much of the solution to environmental problems lies with the application of new technology and changing personal behaviour. Politicians can provide a framework, but little progress will be made until individuals start making different decisions.

We can take four important steps right now to reduce our personal impact on the environment. We can:

- **reduce consumption**
- **reduce or eliminate the meat in our diets**
- **reduce energy use**
- **reduce water use.**



We can also continue to put pressure on our governments and keep up-to-date with the climate change discussion on sites such as:

<http://en.cop15.dk/> (United Nations Climate Change Copenhagen Conference website)

<http://unfccc.int/2860.php> (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)



[Back to newsletter](#) | [Top](#)

<http://www.ipcc.ch/index.htm> (for Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change reports)

<http://www.avaaz.org/en/> (for information on current community action)

<http://www.google.com/landing/cop15/> (Google Earth)

Google Earth has videos and other material to explore the potential impacts of climate change on our planet Earth and learn about solutions for adaptation and mitigation. You can view climate change scenarios, interact with narrated tours, investigate deforestation and even dive into the depths of the oceans.



Issue 8 - January 2010 [Back to newsletter](#)

How to move forward? The Theosophical Order of Service lends a helping hand



Diana Dunningham Chapotin, International Secretary of the TOS (left)
Dorothy Bell – TOS, Australia (right)

Service to others is possibly an element common to all our visions for the future of the TS. What then could be more natural than for active members of the Theosophical Order of Service to talk here about how the TOS can help the TS move forward?

Our dearest wish is to support the TS as a place where social action as spiritual practice is valued and actively nurtured. To facilitate unselfish aid to those in distress (including animals and the planet itself) and the inner transformation of the server that this aid requires is the two-fold purpose of the TOS.

One doesn't have to be a member of the organisation to benefit from what it has to offer. It exists to help TOS groups, TS branches, individual members and friends to engage in joyful, spiritually aware service as they offer relief to the needy. This help may take the form of moral or material support for work in which people are already engaged, fresh ideas for service endeavours, or dialogue about the inner side of service (helpful skills and attitudes, psychological mechanisms that limit our effectiveness, etc.). At the very least, visitors who remark that Theosophists don't seem to do much except study can be referred to our website (<http://international.theoservice.org>) where lots of photos and reports are available showing that we Theosophists may *look* a bit old-fashioned but are actually engaged in lots of hands-on projects! The TOS also has an electronic newsletter that brings the latest news of service opportunities every couple of months.

The TOS does not see its role as peripheral to the work of spreading Theosophical teachings, nor does it see itself as simply duplicating the work of other humanitarian groups. The TOS exists to show the world that Theosophy has much light to shed on contemporary issues of concern and can help people find meaning in suffering. It aims to demonstrate that service grounded in spirituality can engender far-reaching good in the world. It labours to recognize and support Theosophists in their 'giving dharma'.

The TOS places the utmost importance on a harmonious working relationship with the TS, recognizing the potential for discord to which the existence of separate groups can easily give rise. Though the TOS has not so far been present in all the countries where the TS is active, it is growing and aspires to become of greater and greater support to the TS in making the teachings of Theosophy of transformative value in the world. Forward together!

[Back to newsletter](#) | [Top](#)

Campaign for the welfare of circus animals

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is currently campaigning for the welfare of circus animals. Their campaign is aimed at a USA-based company – Ringling Bros. circus – and they are inviting concerned people from around the world, as well as USA residents, to express their views to the government and the company.

This cruelty issue is not restricted to the USA since many countries still have circuses that use animals. Studies repeatedly show that circus animals suffer unreasonable stress because of their cramped and unnatural living conditions, travel, enforced performances and removal from normal social contact with their own species.

The following information is from PETA's website:
<http://www.ringlingbeatsanimals.com/bound-babies.asp>



Never-before-seen photos reveal how [Ringling Bros. circus](#) trainers cruelly force baby elephants to learn tricks, and it's not through a reward system, as they claim. You might have wondered how Ringling Bros. gets 8,000-pound (3,629 kg.) elephants to perform tricks like sitting up and even standing on their heads. Ringling breaks the spirit of elephants when they're vulnerable babies who should still be with their mothers. Unsuspecting parents planning a family trip to the circus don't know about the violent training sessions with ropes, bullhooks and electric shock prods that elephants endure.

Baby elephants are cruelly bound with ropes and wrestled by several adult men to learn circus 'tricks'. **The baby elephants scream, cry and struggle as they are stretched out, slammed to the ground, gouged with bullhooks and shocked with electric prods.**

At Ringling, still-nursing 18- to 24-month-old **baby elephants are captured rodeo-style, roped around all four legs, tethered neck-to-neck to an 'anchor' elephant and dragged from their mothers.** From this point forward in their lives, every movement, every instinct and every natural form of behaviour is subjected to suppression and discipline at the whim of the trainer. Ringling restrains baby elephants with ropes or chains on a concrete floor in a barn for up to 23 hours a day to break their spirits. The babies are never allowed to play outdoors or enjoy anything that is natural or important to them.

PETA is calling on people to stop going to circuses that use animals and on Ringling's sponsors not to support elephant abuse. PETA is also asking people to **write to US Department of Agriculture officials and urge them to revoke Ringling's licence and pursue criminal prosecution of Ringling's trainers today!** They have an email letter available on their website.

UN International Days for community activities

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.

In our last newsletter we featured several International Days that could provide opportunities for partnership activities within our communities including **World Day of Social Justice on February 20** and **International Women's Day on March 8, 2010**. We feature two more International Days in this issue.

April 22 Earth Day

The first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970 at the Spring Equinox in March when traditionally the UN Peace Bell is rung at the exact moment of the Equinox. It is a time for remembering that we are one human family and collectively are trustees of the Earth. For the last few years, Earth Day has been celebrated on April 22.

On Earth Day we share ideas for acting as Earth Trustees in our daily lives to help peace, justice and the care of Earth. We commit to making choices in our daily conduct that will foster harmony, lessen pollution, diminish waste and assist nature. For example, we might walk more, use cars less, buy less, grow some of our own food, recycle, plant a tree, etc. We might work with other groups to help to further these goals.



In 2010, the campaign - A Billion Acts of Green -celebrates the 40th anniversary of the first Earth Day. Organisers hope that a billion people around the world will register their individual carbon reduction acts. This is intended to make a bold statement on climate that governments cannot ignore.

Everyone is invited to start registering their actions on the Earth Day website: <http://www.earthday.net> This website also has information on events, environmental education, a global water campaign, climate change solutions and a program to calculate your ecological footprint.

The Brisbane TOS group in Australia has also developed a brochure providing lots of suggestions for personal action to reduce our carbon footprint. You'll find it on the Australian TOS website or download a copy [here](#).

May 15 International Day of Families

This annual observance was instituted in 1993 to highlight the importance that the international community attaches to families as basic units of society, as well as its concern regarding their situation around the world.

The International Day of Families provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families as well as to promote appropriate action.

We could celebrate this day by holding an event for our TOS and TS families to celebrate the joys and benefits of family life. It might lead us to adopt a refugee family or to partner with another community organisation that supports refugees. We might decide to use the International Day of Families to promote awareness of a related social problem such as domestic violence and publicise support networks.

You'll find information on events and resources at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/>

