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**Journal of the Australia New Zealand  
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## **TWO GREAT AFRICAN-AMERICAN LEADERS**

This month marks the birth anniversaries of Frederick Douglass (14 February 1818) and William Edgar Burghardt Dubois (23 February 1868). They were a generation apart and lived in very different times, but both are venerated to this day for their efforts to advance the cause of African-American people.

Douglass was born a slave in Maryland and named Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey. For lack of any records, he later chose the date and year of his birth. As was the custom in Maryland, he was separated from his mother as an infant and then from his grandmother at the age of six. When he was 12, his owner's wife taught him the alphabet and, largely through his own efforts, he learned to read and write over the years.

After two failed attempts to escape, Douglass met Anna Murray, a free black woman in Baltimore, who gave him the means to flee to Philadelphia in 1838. From there, he went to New York City, where Anna joined him and they were married. They settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and took 'Douglass' as their surname at the suggestion of an abolitionist friend.

Douglass joined the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and became a licenced preacher in 1839. He also attended abolitionist meetings, occasionally speaking at them as his oratorical skills improved. In those circles, he was profoundly influenced by the writings of William Lloyd Garrison, a founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society and editor of *The Liberator*, a weekly magazine that he produced in Boston from 1831 to 1865. Garrison had written about Douglass as early as 1839 and the two men probably met in 1841.

Encouraged to become an anti-slavery lecturer, Douglass joined the Society's 'Hundred Conventions' project in 1843, a six-month speaking tour of the eastern and mid-western states. In 1845, his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, was published and became bestseller immediately. While some said a black man couldn't have written so eloquently, 11,000 copies were printed in the US within three years and the book was published in Europe, as well.

Douglass then went on a very successful two-year speaking tour in Ireland and Britain, speaking in churches and chapels, where he was amazed by the absence of racial discrimination. One reason for the tour was his American friends' concerns that the publicity of his book would come to the attention of his still legal owner in Virginia but, before he left for home, his British supporters raised the money to buy his freedom.

Back home in 1847, Douglass started publishing an abolitionist newspaper, *North Star*, in Rochester, New York. He disagreed with Garrison that the US Constitution acknowledged slavery, arguing instead that it could be used to grant democratic rights to everyone. To that effect, he supported female suffrage, playing a pivotal role at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 when he stated that he couldn't accept the right to vote as a black man while women lacked that right. He also condemned the segregated schools in New York, saying the black schools were vastly inferior and that full inclusion in the education system was an even more pressing need for blacks than suffrage.

During the Civil War, Douglass recruited black soldiers for the Union army and was consulted by President Lincoln on their conditions. However, he was disappointed that the latter's plans for Emancipation did not include suffrage, which he took up with President Andrew Johnson after Lincoln's death in 1865. Black males did get the vote under the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1870 but it took President Ulysses S. Grant's Civil Rights Act of 1871 to enforce it in the Southern states. Douglass continued campaigning through his newspaper and his speeches in support of these and other measures to make racial equality a reality.

In his later years, Douglass became a Presidential Elector for New York and a US Marshall in the District of Columbia. He wrote updates of his 1845 biography in 1855 and 1881, respectively titled *My Bondage and My Freedom* and *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. His wife, Anna, died in 1882 and he later married Helen Pitts, the daughter of his white abolitionist colleague, Gideon Pitts jr. In 1886/7, they went on a speaking tour of England, Ireland, France, Italy, Greece and Egypt.

Douglass was even nominated for the presidential candidacy at the National Republican Convention in 1888 and served as the US Consul-General to Haiti in 1889/91. On 20 February 1895, he attended a meeting of the National Council of Women in Washington, where he received a standing ovation, and died that night from a massive heart attack. He was buried next to his first wife in their long-time home of Rochester, New York.

William Edgar Burghardt DuBois had a very different life, as he was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, shortly after the Civil War. His father, Alfred DuBois, was of French-Canadian descent but his mother and his paternal grandmother were black West Indians. His mother, Mary Silvina Burghardt, was of African, English and Dutch descent, but she was considered to be black. Great Barrington was a tolerant community, however, and DuBois attended integrated schools before he entered the black Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.

DuBois graduated in 1888 and applied to Harvard University, where he had to do their undergraduate course before he could proceed to post-graduate study in sociology in 1890. Two years later, a special grant enabled him to attend the University of Berlin and also to travel extensively in Europe. This was a formative time for him, as he was working with some of the most prominent social scientists in Germany. When he returned and completed his thesis in 1895, he became the first African-American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard.

By that time, DuBois had already received a number of job offers and he decided on Wilberforce University in Ohio, which was owned and run by African-Americans. While there, he married one of his students, Nina Gomer in 1896. He then took a one-year research position at the University of Philadelphia and moved on to a professorship in history and economics at Atlanta University in 1907. He also became a founding member of the American Negro Academy, which sought to promote tertiary education for black students. In that forum, he argued against Frederick Douglass' assimilative concept of integration, instead affirming the value of a distinct African-American culture that his people should preserve and take pride in.

DuBois produced numerous social science papers in the late 1890s, and also his first book, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), based on his earlier research work there. In 1900, he attended the first Pan-African Congress in London, which unanimously adopted his 'Address to the Nations of the World'. That letter appealed to leaders in the US and imperial Europe to "acknowledge and protect the rights of people of African descent" and to grant self-government to the colonies in Africa and the West Indies.

In 1903, DuBois published *The Souls of Black Folk*, a collection of essays portraying the genius and humanity of his people, which was said to have as great an impact on African-Americans as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. He was a founder of the anti-segregation Niagara Movement, formed after a conference of African-American leaders in Canada in 1905, which indirectly led to the formation of the National Association for the Advance-ment of Coloured People in 1910. DuBois had a part in the NAACP's formation and became its Director of Publicity and Research, editing its monthly magazine, *The Crisis*.

(Continued on p. 15.)



## ICUU NEWS

### Council Meeting & Conference

### Other Conferences



The ICUU Council Meeting and Conference was held at the Yellow Pagoda conference centre in Kathmandu, Nepal, over 12–18 February, hosted by the Unitarian Union of Northeast India. (As was reported in the last issue, the venue had to be moved from Shillong in the Khasi Hills of India.) With the theme of ‘The Heart of Unitarian/Universalism’, its focus was on key theological questions that face our liberal faith.

The Council Meeting of voting delegates (and observers) was held on the Monday, before the Opening Ceremony of the actual Conference that evening. The outgoing Executive Committee and the Executive Director, rev. Sara Ascher reported on the work in the past two years and tabled a number of documents affecting the ICUU’s foundational structures and important issues the body will face in the near future. Also, the Italian Unitarian Communion became a Full Member, now that it has received official governmental recognition

A new Executive Committee was elected with broad global representation: the new President is Inga Brandes (German Unitarians), succeeding Rev. Dávid Gyerő (Hungarian Unitarian Church); the Vice-President is Rev. Derek McAuley (UK General Assembly); the Secretary is Rev. Eric Cherry (UUA); and John (Mich) Michell (Canadian Unitarian Council) was re-elected as Treasurer. The three Members-at-Large are: Rev. Aryanto Nugroho (Unitarian Christian Church of Indonesia), Shelley Adams (Unitarian Church of South Africa) and Lucie Hrabánková (Religious Society of Czech Unitarians).

On the Tuesday, the three Keynote Speakers addressed the Conference theme from their personal and cultural perspectives. They were: Rupaia Lamarr of the Unitarian Union of Northeast India; Rev. Rácz Norbert of the Hungarian Unitarian Church; and Rev. Diane Rollert of the Canadian Unitarian Council.

The day-to-day proceedings started with morning worship services led by ministers from different countries and featured discussions in pairs, small Chalice Circle groups and larger groups using a World Café model. There were special sessions for the Young Adults (ages 18-35), who also held a panel discussion before the full body of conferees. It is understood that some of the proceedings were broadcast live on Facebook and videos will be put on the ICUU website. Hopefully, the latter will include some scenes of Kathmandu, as the venue had a tourist facility for those who wanted to have a look around.

In conjunction with the Conference, the first of the Torda450 gatherings of U\*U theologians and ministers from around the world was held on the Wednesday. It was led by a panel of five senior ministers and, like the Conference, its focus was on how theology informs U\*U identity. It is not clear how many of these sym- posia are planned but there will be another in Kolozsvár, Romania, in July.

Travel bugs will need to be quick to attend the Annual Meetings of the UK General Assembly at the De Vere Staverton Estate in Northamptonshire (near Coventry) on 04 –07 April. The Keynote Speaker will be Rev. Dr. Paul Rasor, former Director of the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom and Professor of Inter-disciplinary Studies at Virginia Wesleyan College in the US. Since 2015, he has been teaching theology, religious studies and law at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. For more information, please see: [www.unitarianmeetings2018.com](http://www.unitarianmeetings2018.com).

the UUA’s General Assembly this year will be held in the Convention Center in Kansas City, Missouri, over 20–24 June with the theme ‘All Are Called’. Details of keynote speakers and the Ware Lecturer are to be released this month. So check: [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga) if you’re interested in going – the current publicity describes the venue as the City of Fountains, also renowned for jazz and BBQ ribs.

Lastly, the biennial National Conference of the Canadian Unitarian Council will be held on 18–20 May at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Its theme is ‘An Invitation to Love and Justice’ and the Confluence Speaker is Rev. Karen Fraser-Gitlitz of the Saskatoon Unitarians in Saskatchewan. For more details, please see: [www.cuc.ca/conference/](http://www.cuc.ca/conference/).

## LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD IN A SPACIOUS PRESENT

By Goff Barrett-Lennard

[Developed for and from a presentation to the Perth Unitarian Fellowship on 15/10/2017.]

Living in a clock- and calendar-ordered world, we are used to thinking of time as linear, with a distinct past that has gone, an immediate present, and a projected future. Clearly, we can think thus, and doing so has its uses. But we're not confined to envisaging and treating experiences that way. Further, the human brain and memory capacity are not like a continuous recording gradually using up digital slots in a fixed non-overlapping sequence until no space is left. Yet, memories are somehow contained in the pathways of our brains, pathways created or modified by experience and interconnected in very complex ways. With many billions of neurons involved, a very complex arrangement of groupings and an uncountable range of modifiable connections, there is enormous capacity for dynamic perception, memory 'storage' and retrieval.

Elaborate human language enables us to communicate with each other in subtle detail. What we discriminate, identify and communicate is partly a matter of culture. Language systems vary widely, especially taking more separately developed indigenous cultures into account. Different contexts and circumstances bring out differences in what it is discriminated and available for thought processing and communication.

We have the capacity and tendency to abstract from many specific events and ideas, broader concepts and more powerful understanding. The 'theory' of evolution is a notable example. As I was preparing this talk, it occurred to me that processes, both of developing or 'becoming' and of maintaining or conserving, are fundamental in living beings. Closely related are the ideas of change and continuity, which can seem to be at odds yet also work together.

As complex beings, not wholly determined by culture, we each are somewhat distinctive in our language and ideas. What I wish to share and further explore involves some shift in the way I used to think. This change has come about partly through work on my own memoir, involving intensive absorption in vivid experiences shared by others and also by me over the long span of my life, especially as recorded in letters and diaries. These records do not change, are not subject to the potential vagaries of memory, and can be powerful means of entry into the original experience and event.

All this brings me to the question of what we mean, or might mean, in speaking of the present? The experience and concept of 'present' seriously interests me now, with practical consequences. 'The present' can refer to what is happening just now, or today, this month, the present year, this decade or century, a whole life, even the current geological era. Calendar time can be 'cut', so to speak, in very different sized slices. A sizeable slice typically includes a lot of happenings that are quite strongly or vividly experienced – things that are felt, witnessed and potentially communicated from the immediacy of being 'inside' the experience. The particular happenings may connect and blend together into a broader moving whole of experience and meaning; in effect, a broader present.

Thus too, what does it mean to say something is in the 'past'? If remembered, it has not gone but remains with us in significant form. It hasn't disappeared but is part of a wider spectrum of 'nows'. Since the human brain is not a rigid computer, every time we bring a former event into mind it reforms in present consciousness, and typically is not an exact duplicate. In the case of traumatic episodes, or something of great impact in its origin, the experience may come back with little change. In non-traumatic or everyday experiences, the meaning of what we remember clearly can more readily adjust and interweave with other experiences, giving a larger and more complete picture than any component. It is now a larger 'chunk' of experience with overall qualities and variety.

When I was only about 3½ years old, through a careless accident by a farm employee, our recently built weatherboard farm house burnt to the ground. Watching it at that age, it was like a huge bonfire. I was not frightened or troubled, but still have some pretty clear visual images of that fire and some of the after-events – next morning, for example. When that memory is aroused it is happening now in my consciousness. Anything we distinctly remember is like that. It is both happening now and flowing into this moment from other moments; all of these parts of a broader present. A much later 'now', in this house fire case, includes some awareness of the enormous stress to my father and mother of that happening.

To give another example, one of a great many vividly expressed letters I have, in this case from my late wife Helen, was written in 1958. We were in Chicago, where I was working on my doctorate. We had two lovely little children, the younger one born there, and Helen gave wonderful pen pictures of them in her letters. Although those attachments were profound and we also had good local friendship relationships, she sometimes was sharply lonely for our larger families. She especially missed my mother, whom she felt close to and had reason to hope would visit us. Given such a visit, besides the precious first-hand contact with us and our children, my mother would then meet our special friends, experience the environment we were in and see how it all had such profound meaning and impact for us.

However, it turned out that she couldn't come due, in Helen's understanding at the time, to family opposition 'at home'. Helen was very distressed and even angry about this and poured her heart out to my mother. Her long letter was bundled with many other papers that I inherited but had never been right through before. It was a very moving strongly present experience for me to read and 'hear' her passionate and eloquently shared feelings. And other features of that whole context of our lives came strongly back to me, contributing to a vivid present experience.

There are many other instances when I have re-experienced something as profoundly present though originating at a much earlier calendar time, and perhaps the same is true for you, when you come to think of it. I have, for example, diaries Helen and I each kept, as well as letters, from the period when we fell deeply in love, and I was only 19 or 20. As I engaged deeply with those sources, the embodied experience was again active in me as part of the broader present of my life. The draft Chapter 2 of my memoir is titled 'Becoming an adult, in university and in love'. I was 'inside' that phase of my life 65–70 years ago in calendar time. It remains a vivid basic part of the flow of my life, not gone but enduring. Without it, I would be a different person in the immediate now of my life.

A further-on chapter is titled 'Becoming a teacher of adults, work and family in the Deep South' (in the US). That part of the flow happened geographically far from here, in a different world. But my twin daughters were born there and other events and learnings happened which, far from having literally gone, have significant linkage with immediate 'nows', all as part of the broader present of my life. Similarly, with our formative and influential time in Armidale, New South Wales, and later crucial times and difficult turning points during 15+ calendar years in Canada. Though I'm glad that losing my life partner (the same Helen as in Chapter 2 of my memoir) is not as I first felt it, both her presence and her loss are still there, not gone. She lives on in our children and grandchildren and our relationships, in the living memories inside me and in some of the main patterns, contexts and qualities of my life.

How does all this tie in with a future sense or the very meaning of 'future', especially given the way I see the past-within-the-present? What we call the future unfolds from a large dynamic context of influences, not just from what happens to be going on at this moment. My original family lived through the Great Depression of the 1930s, World War II and what followed. There is no contradiction for me in thinking that those times are both past and parts of a broader present that is always unfolding, always becoming. In a way, 'past', present and 'future' are one. It is not a seamless unity because, as complexity increases, new things emerge and are parts of the still broadening present. There are further outcomes of this way of thinking.

Some practical consequences are in the realm of understanding, and already implied. More specifically, the metaphor of zooming in and zooming out is helpful. When we zoom in, we see a small region perhaps of an immediate process, in great detail. This has its own and sometimes potent value. When we zoom out, we see a much larger picture, the whole 'wood' if you like not just individual trees. We then see variations, differences, patterns and possibilities not visible in events just of the present moment.

A human person is vastly complex. For this complexity to work requires synchronisation of a great many parts and processes. For it to work well depends on the integration of a great many now experiences into larger wholes, ultimately one whole – our life. Thus, a spacious present can be said to include many brief nows. It is not, of course, a simple addition of those differing nows, but a kind of integrative or emergent combination that is more revealing of our experience and being.

It is, of course, within our human potential to get stuck in a rather 'unyielding' now. There are nows in my life when I personally was stuck or embedded in a very short-range present and immediate future. That was my felt 'reality'. I was oppressed unduly by this short-term and blinkered view. It could have been enormously helpful to have seen around that 'encapsulated now' and felt more of other nows, of my whole still-evolving

and learning self, my most valued relationships and the broader directions of my life. I needed to shift in that direction to heal and grow. In that shifting, the meaning and impact of what had been seriously oppressing me changed. The memories did not disappear but were connected with a wealth of other experience. If directly focused on, there still was a residue of pain and regret, but the acute and heavy burden was gone. One of the other effects is that I could better accept being vulnerable while, at the same time becoming less so. It could be said that I was a bit wiser.

Any of us might want at some point to put down and 'leave behind' a very painful and troubling experience. But we cannot literally discard a strong or disturbing experience as though it never happened. Further, nearly all of us have had positive or even cherished experiences, as well. If we find a way, on our own or with help, to change and enlarge what we are attending to into a more spacious wide-ranging awareness of our life experience or a large part of it, we lift out of this confined immediate now in a way that shifts its meaning and impact. Our whole present and presence is not just contained in that event or episode but in something much larger, something that can keep on growing from the setbacks as well as the more satisfying advances in our lives – and all the meanings we have taken in or refined through relationships with others. Generally, one can learn more from things that don't or 'didn't' work than from things that are sailed through.

I have worked a good deal as a therapist and I can imagine with some clients inviting them, at a propitious moment, to reflect and share what mattered most to them, not just now but in their lives more broadly. One way of viewing their distressing problem could be a kind of entrapment in a narrow present. Though retired from working with official clients, I can share this thinking with you and see whether or what parts of it resonate for you, and what you might add, subtract or develop. I'm sure that my own understanding will go on evolving.

To sum up, immediate happenings have their own importance, but clearly they are far from the whole of who we are or what matters in our lives. It only feels as though they are if we are living in a very narrow present. A more spacious sense of the enduring present, however we achieve it, yields another kind of awareness and potential enrichment of being.

[Godfrey (Goff) Barrett-Lennard is a founding member of the Perth Unitarians, as was Helen, and both are recipients of the Order of the Flaming Chalice award. As indicated, Goff is a retired psychotherapist and counsellor.]

## **REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS**

*Adelaide UC* had a Water Communion and Blessing of Children's Bookbags on 28 January. On 04 February, the minister's topic was 'Into the Dark Woods: Depression, Anxiety and the Spiritual Life'. (See pp. 10/12 for the follow-up to that address.)

Their minister, Rev. Rob MacPherson, will have a 'pulpit swap' in April with Rev. John Clifford of the UK, who was an Interim Minister at Adelaide UC many years ago). Rob will conduct services in Glasgow, York and Leeds, while Rev. Clifford and his wife, Barbara, will lead the services in Adelaide in his absence. (Rev. Clifford also addressed the 2015 ANZUUA Conference in Melbourne in his capacity as President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.)

*Brisbane UU Fellowship* opened the service calendar year with a Water Ceremony led by James Hills. The second meeting in February was addressed by a Jewish woman, Heather Abramson, who explained basic tenets of Judaism and talked about growing up Jewish in Australia. On 11 March, Renee Hills will speak to the International Women's Day theme, 'Leave No Woman Behind', and future services will include discussions on Existential Psychotherapy and Mother Earth.

On 03 March, they will present a concert featuring UU performer and pianist, Amy Brinkman-Davis, and her Brisbane soprano girlfriend, Elizabeth Smalley. Amy had contacted them from Berlin, where she is studying, and offered to conduct a fundraising concert when she visited Brisbane. The program will include Lieder (poems put to music) and songs by Greig, Strauss and Sondheim and the funds raised will go towards the BUUF Kiva fund to expand their microloan capacity for women in Asia/Pacific.

*(Continued on p. 16.)*

## PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

Franz Kafka begins his story, *The Metamorphosis*, with one of the great openings in world literature:

*"When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed into a monstrous vermin."*

Gregor's shock, at once horrifying and comical, has become my own. Waking up from drug-and-flu-induced dreams on a Sunday last October to find that I had been elected (appointed?) ANZUUA president *in absentia* and unopposed will probably not be the only Kafka-esque thing that happens over the course of the next few years.

Because I meant what I said at the BGM (through a healthy proxy) – that I had zero interest in presiding over an organisation content with managing its own decline and irrelevance, and that, if you don't want a brisk (and probably brusque) change agent, please don't vote for me. And so it follows (as does the night the day) that *you've only got yourselves to blame* for what follows from turning me into this...President creature.

As regards the 2017 Conference, I can't really read a room I wasn't in, but reports from eyewitnesses suggest we did ourselves no favours as an association and I think anybody who was there will know why. Let me say, straight up, that I have zero tolerance for bullying in any context or form. Committee meetings and General Meetings will be forums where mutual respect and democratic principles will be firmly enforced. Those who insist that their will prevails by shouting down opposition may wish to consider whether they care to attend any such future events. We need to stop these petty internecine wars if we're ever going to grow and thrive together.

But maybe that's a mistaken assumption. Perhaps, in our heart of hearts, we don't actually want to grow and thrive together. Perhaps we are prepared to let ANZUUA burn on the altar of our personal/local hobby-horses. Often, the core of such self-seeking destructiveness is having *one sacred goal* against which all others must be disregarded. Social justice martyrdom must trump nourishing fellowship. Atheism must trump theism. Bourgeois politeness must trump speaking prophetic witness. (I use the word 'trump' knowingly...

If Unitarians are anything, they are the church of *both/and* rather than the church of *either/or*. The heart of our spirituality is seeing the divine not in one or another isolated thing, but in all beings and all things. This is the stern challenge of our Unitarian faith that has never been as easy as it looks. As an association of churches and fellowships, we have to make enough space in our hearts and in our forums so that all concerns and dreams can be heard and gently held. Love, and the respect that follows from it, is the one and only trump card we hold.

With that caveat out of the way, here are a few general directions in which the current ANZUUA Committee is heading:

1. Freeing up the frozen assets in the Bottomley Trust;
2. Developing an annual budget;
3. Developing criteria for material support of small and emerging congregations/fellowships;
4. Developing methods of greater resource sharing and communication amongst our congregations;
5. Developing regional ANZUUA in-house print material for all congregations.

Also, feel free to write or call anytime to express hopes, dreams, concerns, whatever. My personal email is [robmacpherson1@hotmail.com](mailto:robmacpherson1@hotmail.com) and my direct line is 0419 550 543.

With every good wish and blessing for our shared future,

~~Gregor Samsa~~

Rob MacPherson, President

[More from Rob on pp. 10/13.]

**BOOKER T. AND W.E.B.**



“It seems to me,” said Booker T.,  
“It shows a mighty lot of cheek  
To study chemistry and Greek  
When Mister Charlie needs a hand  
To hoe the cotton on his land,  
And when Miss Ann looks for a cook,  
Why stick your nose inside a book?”

“I don’t agree,” said W.E.B.  
“If I should have the drive to seek  
Knowledge of chemistry or Greek,  
I’ll do it. Charles and Miss can look  
Another place for hand or cook,  
Some men rejoice in skill of hand,  
And some in cultivating land,  
But there are others who maintain  
The right to cultivate the brain.”

“It seems to me,” said Booker T.,  
“That all you folks have missed the boat  
Who shout about the right to vote,  
And spend vain days and sleepless nights  
In uproar over civil rights.  
Just keep your mouths shut, do not grouse,  
But work, and save, and buy a house.”



“I don’t agree,” said W.E.B.  
“For what can property avail  
If dignity and justice fail?  
Unless you help to make the laws,  
They’ll steal your house with trumped-up clause.  
A rope’s as tight, a fire as hot,  
No matter how much cash you’ve got.  
Speak soft, and try your little plan,  
But as for me, I’ll be a man.”

“It seems to me,” said Booker T.—  
“I don’t agree,”  
Said W.E.B.

Dudley Randall (1969)

Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856–1915) was an African-American educator, author and political leader whose lifespan overlapped those of Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois. Born as a slave in Virginia to a woman whose husband, Washington Ferguson, had escaped to West Virginia, he and his mother joined him there after they were emancipated. He then attended school for the first time, after which he worked for several years until he was able to study at the Hampton Institute, a black college in Virginia.

Washington was put in charge of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Alabama in 1881, which he and his students literally built with their own hands. While its stress was on skills in farming and trades, there was also academic content and the graduates were sent to teach in a network of smaller schools and colleges across the South, which Washington raised the funds to establish over his 30-year term.

Dudley Randall (1914–2000) was an African-American poet and publisher from Detroit, whose best-known work is ‘The Ballad of Birmingham’, about the bombing of a black church in Alabama in 1963. After serving in World War II, he obtained a BA from Wayne State University in Detroit in 1949 and a master’s degree in library science from the University of Michigan in 1951. (More about both men on p. 16.)

### THE WISDOM OF GEESE



Next time when you see geese heading South for the winter, flying along in V-formation, you might consider the wisdom of their ways:

As each bird flaps its wing, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in the V shape, they achieve 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

\* People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily, because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

\* If we had their wisdom, we would stay in formation with those who are headed the same way as we are.

When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point.

\* Take turns with the demanding jobs – and leadership is one of them.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those upfront to keep up their speed.

\* Words of support and inspiration help energize those on the front line, helping them to keep pace in spite of the day-to-day pressures and fatigue.

Finally, when a goose gets sick or is wounded and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend it help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly, or until it dies. Only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation, to catch up with their group.

\* Consider what it might be like if we truly stood by each other like geese do.

[The reason for presenting this item will be seen in the next article. Its author is unknown but there are many versions of it on the Internet, often adapted for business or athletic purposes as examples of 'teamwork'. There are also some artistic videos (even some with music) on YouTube.

Much of the ornithological information appears to come from 'Man and Other Animals', an article by the American economic and social theorist, Jeremy Rifkin, that was published in the *Guardian* newspaper in August 2015. Rifkin is the author of several books, an advisor to the European Union and the Chinese government, and a prominent climate change activist.]

### **TRUSTING THE LOW BAR**

[Abstracted from a sermon delivered at the Adelaide Unitarian Church on 11 February 2018.]



This week's service builds on last week's, when we explored mental health as a journey with a spiritual dimension. Illnesses like depression and anxiety are on the rise, a cultural disease of developed societies like ours, where a loss of meaning and loss of connection are increasingly prevalent. And we considered that church communities offer a unique space in the wider community to support vulnerable people in finding and building meaningful connection.

But, whereas last week we focussed on the individual journey and what church community could offer a person lost or broken or searching, this week I want to focus a little more on how we vulnerable adults might *collectively* make our church a place where we can truly be our brother and sister's keepers, where the lost or broken or healing can themselves create the meaningful connections and find belonging in a caring community as a needful network of support that maintain spiritual/mental health.

Building the caring community where people may find meaningful connection comes down trusting folks who are not kith or kin, or indeed not known initially very well at all. As you'd know, trust in churches and religious institutions is at an all-time low. There are lots of good reasons for this, including much publicized systemic breaches of trust, like clergy sexual abuse and its enabling, or the greed and venality and hypocrisy of megachurch leaders. Conventional churches have done much to break not just their brand but the whole religion business.

But one of the key reasons for lack of trust in churches stems from its very reason for being – radical hospitality. To be truly redemptive, the very nature of church is inclusion, so a very low bar is set to membership – “all are welcome” really means “anybody's welcome”. The bar may be set low but it is still possible to trip over a low bar. It's good for churches to keep in mind that trust is itself a vulnerable commodity and can be just as easily broken as we ourselves can be.

Sometimes, the ‘all and anyones’ coming from an absolutely general public through our wide-open doors, and into our open arms and hearts, may be those few who are so damaged that when they see a group of vulnerable, ‘nice’, gentle church people, they see an easy opportunity for narcissistic supply – dominance, predation, money, whatever self-seeking motive drives them. This has become more of an issue since we are in an era of history where church is in steady decline. In an atmosphere of decline, our hunger for new memberships may more likely blind us to letting in wolves among the sheep. But, having mentioned and acknowledged this low road, I don't intend to take it today – this talk is going somewhere else.

Another trust issue may arise from the fact that a lot of people just shoot through a free church like ours. Some are working a few things out and come for a while, get what they need or not, and leave one day. And that's absolutely cool; offering hospitality freely to all who come is the essence of church. But it's hard to quantify or indeed express the...well, grief that you can feel after you've let people into your hearts and minds, and then these same entrusted folks just disappear one day. I look around and can't help think of all the faces I no longer see here, not people who've passed away, but people who have moved away or went elsewhere or gave up on church altogether, people I've shared deep and personal things with from this pulpit and in pastoral dialogue, laughed with, worked with, cried with, to whom I've given and from whom I've received loving kindness.

Was our trust misplaced? Is it possible for us to be too trusting? So simple the heart, so ready as the song says for more hope and joy that we drop our guard too readily? Does their loss make it easier to trust each other or harder? Obviously such departure is not a deal-breaker because not everyone shoots through. Some others indeed stay, offering the loving kindness to others they themselves have found and make sure the place is here to provide that safe and caring space. That's more than cool – that's the spirit at work in a healthy church. So that's an indication that being trusting is not necessarily wasted time and energy.

What about you? Do you consider yourself a trusting person? How many people in your personal life do you really trust with important things? How many of you have come to trust others in this church context? How did that trust come to be? Gradually? Suddenly? By accident? By one of you just taking the risk?

Let me ask you this: which of these things would you be most afraid to lose – your keys, your wallet or purse, or your phone? For me, it's my phone, which as you see is also a wallet, so a double whammy. In here is access to all my email, social media, pictures, bank account, ID cards, credit cards, membership cards. My whole so-called life. The last time I thought I lost this, it was like I was hit with an ice hammer. I felt that freezing jolt, the fight-or-flight shot of cortisol. I did what I call the little dance of panic – I literally ran around in little mad circles, panting like a dog scared of thunder. If someone found it, would they return it? Would they steal my identity, bankrupt me, hold it to ransom, just indifferently chuck it away?

I ran down the street retracing my steps, looking around under cars, looking in absurd places. I must have been a sight to see – a lunatic, for all anyone knew. Because suddenly there was this total stranger holding out his hands like you'd hold water. He had my phone! He just said, "I think you dropped this mate." I nearly knelt at his feet in awestruck gratitude. I offered him \$50, but he wouldn't take it. He said, "You'd do the same for someone else, I'm sure." Would I? I'd like to think so. I'd like to think I'd meet such obvious vulnerability not with greed, nor indifference, but with proactive loving kindness. So would you, I think.

I'm going to ask you to do a little experiment with me now. If you will, exchange what you identified as the thing you'd least like to lose with someone sitting near you (*not* your trusted partner). Holding another person's 'precious' in your hands, sing with me:

May I be filled with loving kindness  
May I be well  
May I be filled with loving kindness  
May I be well  
May I be peaceful and at ease  
May I be whole

[Followed by "May you be...", "May we be..."]

Intentional communities like this can create what's called 'social capital' and, in a fragmented world drained of meaning and connection, social capital is critical not just to the success of communities like this one, but also critical to the spiritual well-being of those who come here seeking, and ready to risk, deep connection. How well we do that, how safe we make it, is dependent on being willing to trust one another. It can seem hard in this context (how are you feeling now?). The famous theologian and Nazi resistance martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, said that church is that which exists for others – 'others' is the crux.

He also said church is where you find yourself sitting next to others you'd probably otherwise have nothing to do with. But I'm not sure that's such a big deal. If you're here intentionally (not out of sloth or habit or duty), you've probably got more deep values in common with others sitting next to you than any *random* assortment of co-workers or school chums you might find yourself arbitrarily thrown together with. Why not dare to trust those who sit next to you?

So here's the problem for us as a collective: How does a community of the vulnerable and those willing to risk vulnerability build a robust, functional community out of vulnerable people? St. Paul famously likened the church to the body, made of incomplete, isolated parts, that only works when each part subordinates itself to the good of the whole. But I know many of you break out in a rash when the Bible is mentioned, so you may prefer to recall the more natural ecological insights about how geese succeed by flocking.

[Member David Binenbaum reads 'The Wisdom of Geese' (see p. 9).]

UUs love and cling to that reading as spiritual direction for community, but you only needed to have been at the ANZUUA Conference to know that humans can be less socially functional than geese. Why? We are more complex creatures with a key inherent contradiction, or paradox, or...design flaw. On the one hand, we have achieved our moral consciousness and evolutionary dominance as a species because we are social creatures (thence, trust inbuilt). On the other hand, we are also weak creatures, always ready to fight or flee at the first hint of a threat. This has kept us safe from faster, bigger, stronger species, which is most of them (distrust inbuilt). And the increasing lack of connection with others since modernity (not just in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) favours our fight-or-flight reaction, making distrust more likely rather than less.

If trust is an issue for you, you may be interested to note that there is an emerging field of social science research called ‘The Science of Trust’. Recent studies from a range of sources confirm three things: (1) that trust increases with intelligence – more intelligent people tend to be more trusting (not so smart?); (2) that people who are trusting are happier and healthier (enjoy higher social capital); (3) that trust can be built, thus merely a choice.

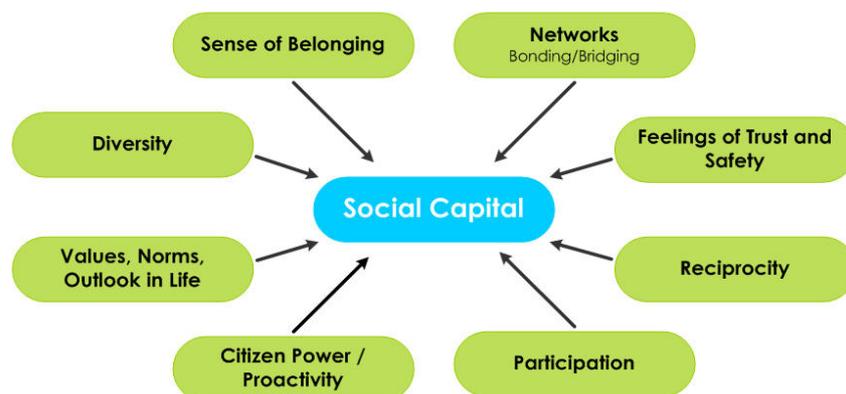
The many researchers who have studied the sociology of trust note that trust is, of course, essential to healthy relationships and that most of us consider it a greater compliment to be *trusted* than to be loved. Since trust implies a certain degree of uncertainty, trust is the *willingness* to be vulnerable to others – a choice. So, in a world of uncertainties, trust is an desirable personal skill.

Scanning the material on this research, there seems to be a fairly simple strategy for building trust: “Be the first”, as Hemingway said. Last time, you’ll remember I put flyers in your pews, encapsulating our approach to pastoral relationships. They describe not only the care you can trust this church community to offer but, more importantly, it offers you the opportunity to build trust by offering *your* caring pastoral support to others. To receive but also to give is how you build trust. I mean, you must realize that I can’t possibly do all the pastoral caring myself, and even if I could, all ministries must end one day. Best you build up that web of caring fellowship amongst yourselves to future-proof the supply of caring support this community can offer.

Church fellowship is uniquely placed (maybe the last social institution) to actively develop trust reflexes amongst its members as part of its work, members who come from a diversity of backgrounds, wanting a diversity of things, but truly needing only a few – a little love, a little trust, a place to dream together and belong. Like all social capital, it does not come spontaneously but can be built by reaching out to whomever God, or luck, or what-you-will has thrown next to you in this space. And if you flex that trust muscle, you find it grows and you will be better able to trust more, and we all will reap the spiritual benefits thereof. Again, this is a choice.

I speak this in knowing. Every week, even if I don’t see or communicate with each of you individually, this is public worship so I stand in front of any and all every week with a presumption of trust. I open my mind, my heart, and my life experiences to whoever comes. And what is that if not you being trusted, a greater compliment than love? Beyond that many of you have honoured me by trusting me in pastoral confidence with your darkest secrets, your scariest fears, your mad passions, your noblest dreams, your highest aspirations, your heartbreaking regrets – trusting me, or at least the ministerial role, is a greater compliment than love. I call on you now to make trust not a linear two-way transaction (like radio) but a multi-directional network of interaction amongst yourselves (like the internet).

And you can now get your ‘precious’ back. That’s a relief, eh? Maybe during coffee hour, find the person you entrusted it to and say: “Thanks for letting me trust you. Thanks for trusting me.” Maybe trust *is* a great-er compliment than love.



## BE PART OF THE SOLUTION FOR WOMEN IN BOLIVIA AND THE PHILIPPINES!

By Renee Hills

Would you like to help a Bolivian woman speak up safely and be involved in decisions that affect her local community? Would you like to help fund an education and support program that addresses violence against women and girls in the Philippines?

As a member of the UU International Women's Convocation (IWC), I urge you to support their current Faithify campaign that was recently launched to raise funds for two projects aimed at empowering women in Bolivia and the Philippines. Faithify is a UUA crowdfunding platform and you can find out more about it here: <https://faithify.org/>. Basically, it offers the opportunity to support projects and social justice initiatives that one might otherwise never hear about. You make a pledge and your pledge is accepted if the campaign goal is reached.

These two projects are both close to my heart. In 2015, James and I went to Bolivia on an IWC pilgrimage and attended a women's conference on women, climate change, spirituality and the earth. We met 30 in-spiring women from various walks of life in Bolivia and Brazil, many of them struggling to have their voices heard because of the male dominated, often misogynistic, culture in which they operate. In fact, I sometimes fear for the personal safety of some of these women, as it is not unheard of for women to be threatened and sometimes killed for speaking out.

The IWC wanted to offer something to empower women to have a voice in their community. The funds sought in the Bolivian campaign will go to a project led by one of the women we met at the conference. She is an articulate, educated, indigenous woman and a published author yet, as she revealed to us at that time, was experiencing domestic violence – such is the nature of Bolivian society. The project is a 50-hour pilot program whose training is focussed on capacity building in areas such as self-esteem development, gender equality, public speaking, economic empowerment, prevention of violence, environmental education and women in environmental decision-making, and healthcare.

I am also personally interested in the success of the Filipino program. At the IWC conference in Monterey a year ago, I facilitated a group process that focussed on prevention of violence against women. Cecilia Hofmann, co-founder and executive director of GWAVE (Gender Watch Against Violence and Exploitation), spoke with deep understanding about the stigma experienced by girls and women who are sexually or physically abused and the support that her organisation offers, especially in rural communities. The funds raised in the Faithify campaign will be used by GWAVE to run the *Awake Women & Men through Knowledge & Education* (AWAKE) program in three or four target communities chosen by the Women's Association of the UU Church of the Philippines.

The workshops will address violence in the local community, legal systems and public policy frameworks, as well as educate participants on the rights of women. Each workshop will provide approximately 50 women and men with the resources and training needed to enable them to spread the information in their communities and initiate community-coordinated responses. Funds will be used for educational materials, training supplies, logistics and the cost of trainers. Again, James and I have personal knowledge of the difficulties faced by Filipino girls who experience sexual abuse and the invaluable work that GWAVE performs.

Both projects will only be funded if enough people pledge and the campaign reaches its goal of \$5000. So much can be done with so little in both Bolivia and the Philippines! So many lives could be changed for the better with these grassroots, practical, social justice initiatives. However, if the target amount is not reached by 17 March, no funds at all will be released and your pledges will not be accepted – such is the nature of crowdfunding! So please consider pledging *now*. The Brisbane UU Fellowship is considering donating the collection from our service on 11 March (close to International Women's Day) to the campaign.

Please send your pledges via: <https://faithify.org/projects/help-filipina-and-bolivian-sisters-spark-change/>, where you will also see more details about the projects.

[Renee Hills is the president of the Brisbane UUF. Her report on the women's conference in Bolivia appeared in the Autumn 2016 issue and she wrote about the IWC in Monterey, California, in the Winter 2017 issue.]  
(**African-American Leaders**, *cont'd.*)

From 1910 to 1934, DuBois wrote in his magazine on topics as various as the discrimination against black soldiers in World War I (they couldn't become officers), education, social justice, labour issues and international affairs, always stressing the achievements of African-Americans. He had many literary contributors and, by 1918, *The Crisis* had issues of up to 68 pages and a circulation of 100,000. His writings were often provocative, to the point that the NAACP leadership became concerned, and he finally resigned after being accused of promoting black separatism.

DuBois returned to Atlanta University, where his writings were largely supportive of Marxism. He had been exposed to socialist ideas since 1910 but he had rejected the Socialist and Communist parties, as well as the union movement that had long refused admission to blacks. Marx's scientific socialism and its atheist stance appealed to him, however, as he no longer had any use for the black churches that advocated submission. In 1935, his magnum opus, *Black Reconstruction in America*, was published, in which he refuted the argument that the blacks in the South had failed to take up the opportunities for democracy after the Civil War, rather than having been subjected to a savage white backlash after the Union troops were withdrawn.

DuBois embarked on a trip around the world in 1936 that took him to Germany, China and Japan, amongst other countries. He later opposed the US' entry into World War II, partly because he feared that the European powers wanted to reconquer China and Japan and also because black soldiers were being treated little better than they were during World War I. Possibly because of this, he was abruptly fired by Atlanta University in 1943, but his colleagues demanded that he be given a pension for life and the title of Professor Emeritus.

Despite being 76 at the time, DuBois rejoined the NAACP as its Director of Special Research. He was one of the three delegates from that organisation at the 1945 conference in San Francisco that founded the United Nations, though their anti-colonial submission was ignored by the Western powers. While he wasn't with the CPUSA, his association with Party members like Paul Robeson, Howard Fast and Shirley Graham (whom he later married) made him a target for the FBI. To protect the NAACP, he resigned his position in 1948.

DuBois' later efforts to ban nuclear weapons as chairman of the Peace Information got him charged in 1951, though his trial was aborted when his defence attorney said that Albert Einstein was prepared to testify on his behalf. His passport was periodically cancelled and restored after that but, when President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana asked him to come and head the *Encyclopedia Africana* project (which he had proposed on a pre-vious visit), he went there in 1961. Unfortunately, his health declined while he was in the Ghanaian capital of Accra and he died there on 27 August 1963 at the age of 95. One day later, at Martin Luther King's March on Washington, he was honoured by a moment of silence by the hundreds of thousands of marchers.

## **BOOKER T. AND DUDLEY R.**

From 1890 till his death in 1915, Booker T. Washington was a dominant figure in the African-American community, raising millions of dollars from white philanthropists for his educational projects, which were extended to building primary schools in the South and providing resources for them. While he was criticised, particularly by W.E.B. DuBois, for being too accommodating to the Southern racists, he privately gave substantial funds to support court challenges against segregation and disenfranchisement. His autobiography, *Up From Slavery* (1901), was a bestseller at the time and is still widely read today.

Dudley Randall worked most of his life as a senior librarian at various universities, while also writing poetry and running Broadside Press, his publishing house for black writers. In 1966, he co-authored *Poem Counter-poem* with Margaret Danner, which contained ten pieces by each of them, followed by six volumes of his own works between 1968 and 1981. At the University of Detroit (1969-76), he worked as its reference librarian and was also its Poet-in-Residence.

Randall also visited the Soviet Union in 1966 and studied in Ghana in 1970. As a result of the first experience, he later translated poems by Aleksander Pushkin and Konstantin Simonov. He received many awards in his life and was named Poet Laureate of Detroit in 1981.

The University of Detroit was actually a Jesuit institution and it merged with a Sisters of Mercy college in 1990 to become the University of Detroit Mercy. It now hosts the Dudley Randall Center for Print Culture and there is also an annual Dudley Randall Poetry Prize.

## A VISION SPLENDID – BOOK REVIEW

By Mike McPhee

Regular readers will know about Wayne Facer of the Auckland Unitarian Church and his historical articles affecting Unitarians (usually ministers) in New Zealand. Such is the standard of his research and writing that other works of his have been accepted by the *Dictionary of UU Biography* website. Originally qualified as an economist, Wayne commenced these activities after he completed a Master of Religious History through Massey University's campus in Auckland and now he has produced his first full-length book.

*A Vision Splendid: The Influential Life of William Jellie, A British Unitarian in New Zealand* is the first ever biography of that outstanding minister and socialist, and it tells his extraordinary life story in meticulous detail. The book was printed late last year by Blackstone Editions in Toronto, Canada, with a Foreword by Peter Lineham, Professor of History at Massey University, and a Preface by Rev. Dr. David Steers, editor of the biannual journal, *Faith and Freedom*, printed at Harris Manchester College, Oxford.

Briefly, Rev. William Jellie (1865–1963) was born in Northern Ireland and trained as a Unitarian minister in London and Oxford. He left for New Zealand in 1899 and led the Auckland Unitarian Church for ten years, followed by three years in Wellington. He and his family went back to England in 1913, where he served at Southport in Lancashire, returning to New Zealand in 1921. After two years as minister in Timaru on the South Island, he worked as a tutor for the Workers Education Association from 1926 to 1939. He also stood in as minister in Auckland in 1934–36 and in a shared capacity from 1939 until his death.

The book has three parts: Part One ('The Origin of William Jellie's Views on Society') deals with his early life and his entry into the ministry. Central to its title is how a sociology course in his ministerial training, taught by Philip Wicksteed, led him to aspire to redress the inequality that so many people suffered from. He went on to minister at the Stamford Street Unitarian Chapel, in a London slum where Unitarians had been doing social work for many years, and then went to the Ipswich Unitarian Chapel in Suffolk.

Part Two ('The Twentieth Century Ministries') covers Jellie's ministerial career in New Zealand and England, during which he was acclaimed for his scholarship even by people who didn't agree with his socialist views. Shortly into his term in Auckland, the congregation built their first church, which is still in use today. He also married Isabella Macky, the daughter of a prominent committee member. In Wellington, a church had been built in 1909, and he used it as a base from which to foster Unitarian groups elsewhere on the South Island. His term in Lancashire ended badly in 1921, due to his support for Irish independence.

Part Three ('Exchanging the Pulpit for the Lectern') details Jellie's teaching career and his eventual return to the ministry. After his brief tenure in Timaru, whose congregation was in terminal decline, he moved to Auckland in 1924 to join the Workers Education Association. Unitarians were involved in that organisation in many English-speaking countries and, by all accounts, Jellie was an erudite and entertaining teacher, specialising in literature and drama. Even after he retired from the WEA in 1939, he continued giving adult education lectures in a number of organisations for the rest of his life.

*A Vision Splendid* is a very readable book and Wayne certainly makes his point that a biographer's role is that of a historian "trying to place the subject in the context of a certain time and place." He achieves that through copious background information on every place where Jellie worked and every person he knew and/or collaborated with. Unitarians outside of New Zealand will learn a great deal from it and the same is probably true of those who do live there.

He also writes that "the cardinal purpose in writing biography is to discover and record a past that we might otherwise forget", and the truth of that is clearly seen from the incredibly exhaustive research that went into the book. In his Acknowledgements, he lists two pages of librarians, archivists and individuals he consulted in New Zealand and the UK, and the documents and papers he found that were either forgotten about or thought to have been lost forever. He even interviewed Jellie's relatives and descendants in the UK to obtain their recollections, as well as those of other people who had known him.

(More on the next page.)

The book Appendices include Jellie's notes on Philip Wicksteed's course at New Manchester College and a list of the public education courses that he taught from as early as 1913, among other things.

*A Vision Splendid* (ISBN 978-0-9816402-6-6) is available from: [www.amazon.com.au](http://www.amazon.com.au).

### **(Reports From Member Groups, cont'd.)**

*Christchurch Unitarians* intend to hold their Autumn Celebration on 25 March. Members are asked to bring poems, readings, memories and photos – anything that inspires and enhances.

*First UU Melbourne Fellowship* heard Rev. Gretchen Thomas of the UUA's Partner Church Council speak on the Edict of Torda and the Transylvanian Unitarian Church at their January meeting. In February, Rev. Rob MacPherson from Adelaide spoke on 'Unitarianism, Christianity and Post-Christianity' and, in March, Janine Rizzetti will give an address on the Australian author and suffragist, Catherine Helen Spence.

*Melbourne UC* have had the usual range of speakers since January, when members led the services. Speakers in March will include member Lev Lafayette, speaking on Martin Luther King and Romina Beitseen, the Secretary of the Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament, who will deliver the Inter-national Women's Day address, 'Women in the Peace Movement over the Past Century'.

On the afternoon of 11 March, there will be a public screening of *A Mighty Force*, the second documentary about the campaign to stop the Adani coal mine in Queensland. After the service on 25 March, members will join the Palm Sunday Rally, whose theme is 'Justice for Refugees'.

Their AGM will be held on 22 April and there are plans for major congregational meetings in June to examine all aspects of church life, from their internal workings/structure to their relationships with such outside bodies as Interfaith and the peace movement.

*Spirit of Life UF* will have a visit from Rev. John Clifford on his way to Adelaide. On 25 March, he will address them on '450 Years since Torda: memory of a dead horse or reminder for today?'

*Sydney UC* resumed services on 04 February with their Vice-President, Peter Crawford, speaking on William Butler's famous book, *Erewhon* (which is actually set in New Zealand). On 25 February, Mike McPhee gave a PowerPoint presentation on 'The Edict of Torda'. Their first Music Service of the year is scheduled for 11 March, which will feature a musical rendition of Rabindranath Tagore's poetry by John Alden Carpenter.

[Not all member groups sent reports, perhaps because it was too early in the year for them to have much to report. Hopefully, they will make up for it in the June issue.]

### **LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

I hope this doesn't look like a 'rush job' but it was something of a challenge to finish it by the beginning of March. My personal thanks to the contributors for their valuable input and I hope other groups will take their turn next time. (Just with Rev. MacPherson's piece, the available space could not do justice to the multi-media nature of the services in Adelaide. You can get a fuller picture of what they are like from the podcasts archived on their website: [www.unitariansa.org.au](http://www.unitariansa.org.au).)

On a personal note, I found on the Canadian Unitarian Council's website that Rev. Phillip Hewett had passed away on 24 February. He was Minister Emeritus of the Vancouver Unitarian Church and served as its first minister while I was growing up. Later, he was an Interim Minister at both the Adelaide (1981) and Auckland (1989) Unitarian Churches during his sabbaticals. He was the author of many books, his last (that I know of) being *Racovia: An Early Liberal Religious Community* (Blackstone Editions, 2006), about the proto-Unitarian settlement in Poland where Faustus Socinus lived in the 1600s.

Please help me keep ahead with the June issue by sending material to: [michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au](mailto:michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au).

