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## THE REFORMATION THAT FAILED

This year and 2018 mark 450 years since the second phase of the French Wars of Religion (also known as the Huguenot Wars), a protracted struggle between Catholics and Protestants that lasted from 1562 to 1598. There was a total of eight periods of warfare, separated by truces of varying duration, and nearly every part of the country was affected. While the wars were mainly between rival ruling houses, other countries became involved at times and the fighting spilled across France's borders. It is estimated that three million people died from violence, disease and famine during that time.

Religious and political tensions had been growing since Protestant ideas and publications appeared in France in 1519 (only two years after Martin Luther wrote his '95 Theses'). The first French Protestant leader of any significance was Jean Calvin (see the Winter 2014 issue), who converted in 1533 and developed his own distinctive theology. King Francis I had tolerated the Protestants at first, despite opposition from the Catholic Church, but the actions of some extremists in 1534 prompted a crackdown in which some of the perpetrators were burned at the stake. Calvin had no involvement in those events, but he fled to Geneva and the church he established there eventually controlled the whole city.

Francis I was succeeded by his son, Henry II, whose Edict of Châteaubriant in 1551 severely curtailed the rights of Protestants to worship, assemble or even discuss religious matters. However, the Calvinist influence from Geneva galvanised the movement to the point that, in the 1560s, over 1200 Protestant churches existed and even half of the French nobility had converted – most notably, the Condé branch of the House of Bourbon. When Henry II died in 1559, he left a political vacuum with his eldest son, Francis II, aged 15 and his widow, Catherine de' Medici (pictured at left), as regent.

The Catholic Guise branch of the House of Lorraine sought to dominate the new king, who died in 1560, and his brother, Charles IX, but Catherine convened a national council of clergy to give the Protestants a fair hearing. Known as the Colloquy of Poissy, after its location near Paris, this led to the Edict of Saint-Germain in 1562, which permitted Protestants to worship publicly outside of cities and towns. However, only two months later, the Duke of Guise's retainers attacked a Calvinist service at Wassy-sur-Blaise in the northeast, massacring the worshippers and most of the town's inhabitants. The forces of Louis, Prince of Condé (pictured at centre), and his allies then seized control of Orléans, Tours, Lyon and other strategic towns. Battles and sieges followed, and English troops occupied the port of Le Havre, until Catherine mediated a truce in 1563.

This 'Armed Peace' held until 1567, when the Huguenots became concerned that the Catholics were mobilising, this time with the support of Spain. They attempted to capture Charles IX and his family at the Château de Montceaux near Paris, ostensibly to protect them from an Italian plot, but this was a failure. A number of cities then declared themselves for the Protestant cause and a massacre of Catholics took place at Nîmes, in the south. This led to the second phase of the wars and to the Battle of Saint-Denis, near Paris, in which 3500 Huguenot troops held off a force of 16,000 Royalists before retreating to their eastern stronghold. Another truce, the Peace of Longjumeau, was negotiated in 1568 but it lasted only a few months.

The third phase was a truly international affair but, this time, the Catholics started it. Prince William of Orange brought an army of Dutch Protestants into France, but it was under-resourced and the French government paid him to withdraw. With financial help from England, the Huguenots gathered a formidable army, which included German mercenaries, and the Catholics were reinforced by troops from Spain and Italy. After some gains in the southwest, the Prince of Condé was captured in the Battle of Jarmac in 1569 and subsequently killed. The Catholic forces got the upper hand in two later battles, but then the Huguenots launched a massive campaign up the Rhone Valley into the heart of the country. Another truce, the Peace of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, was negotiated in 1570, which made concessions to the Protestants.

For a while, it looked like the peace would hold – Charles IX treated the Huguenot leaders favourably, to the point of marrying his sister, Marguerite, to the Protestant Prince Henry of Navarre (pictured at right) in 1572. However, this only antagonised the Guise faction and they murdered the Huguenot military leader, Admiral Gaspard de Coligny, when he came to Paris for the wedding. That precipitated the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre on 24 August, in which Catholic mobs killed an estimate 2000 Protestant civilians, and a series of riots in a dozen other cities followed as the news spread. The total death toll was at least 10,000.

Forces led by Henry, Duke of Anjou (Charles' younger brother), then besieged three Huguenot cities, only one of which was captured. The fighting ceased in 1573, when Henry was elected King of Poland, but the subsequent Edict of Boulogne banned Protestant worship almost entirely. In his absence, the Huguenot leaders found Francis, Duke of Alençon (Charles' youngest brother), sympathetic to their cause. In 1574, they attempted to free Henry of Navarre and the new Prince of Condé, who had been held at the royal court since the former's wedding. That failed but uprisings elsewhere were more successful, precipitating another phase of the wars.

Charles IX died in 1574 and his brother returned from Poland to become King Henry III. Faced with a deteriorating situation in the south, the defection of his brother, Henry of Navarre's escape and an invasion from the Palatinate in Germany, he was obliged to negotiate the Edict of Beaulieu in 1576. That gave the Huguenots freedom of worship everywhere except in Paris and some of their leaders received land and titles. Promising as this was, Henry, Duke of Guise, and five dukes related to him formed the Catholic League in furious opposition to it. Henry III capitulated to them and less equitable terms were enacted in 1577.

The final phase of the wars is known as 'the War of the Three Henrys' because it involved King Henry III, Henry of Guise and Henry of Navarre. It began when Prince Francis died in 1584, after spending four years out of the country courting Queen Elizabeth I of England and taking part in William of Orange's revolt in the Spanish Netherlands (present-day Holland and Belgium). As neither he nor Henry III had any children, this made their cousin, Henry of Navarre, the legal successor to the throne, which the Catholic League could not accept. Under pressure from the Guises, the king signed an edict in 1585 that suppressed Protestantism and annulled Henry of Navarre's right to the succession in favour of Cardinal Charles de Bourbon.

The Catholic League wanted total war against the Huguenots but the king, who wanted a settlement, insisted that he had no funds for such a campaign. When a Catholic uprising in Paris drove him from the city in 1588, Henry III concluded that the Guises meant to overthrow him. His bodyguard assassinated Henry of Guise and his brother, Cardinal Louis de Guise, at the Royal Château de Blois and the king joined forces with his Protestant cousin. However, he in turn was assassinated by a Dominican monk in 1589 and Henry of Navarre became King Henry IV of France.

The Catholic League still controlled the north and east of the country, but Henry attacked and defeated them in two battles in Normandy. He laid siege to Paris in 1590 until a Spanish army from the Netherlands forced him back, after which the two armies fought until the invaders withdrew at the end of 1592. Henry then realised that he could never take Paris and rule the whole of France while he was a Protestant, so he became a Catholic in 1593 and the Pope revoked his excommunication in exchange for the Church's supremacy in France.

*(Continued on p. 16.)*



## ICUU NEWS

### Edict of Torda Celebrations

### Relocation of Council Meeting

### IARF Conference



As has been mentioned previously, this coming January will mark the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Edict of Torda, whereby Prince John Sigismund II of Transylvania proclaimed total religious freedom in his domain. He was persuaded to do this by the arguments of the Unitarian Bishop, Ferenc (Francis) Dávid, at the Diet that had been convened in the town of Torda in 1568.

From 12 January 2018, the Hungarian Unitarian Church will hold an International Conference on Religious Tolerance, at its Romanian headquarters in Kolozsvár, which will include a visit to Torda. Their publicity explains: “Today religious tolerance is considered a given. The state guarantees it, the rationality of our existence enforces it, and our religious feelings enhance it. We proclaim it as an attainment; we consider it natural and the end of the road. But is it so? ... Could religious tolerance be reformulated as a beginning and can this help in overcoming the spiritual crisis of our time, in starting a collaborative effort of churches and religions to help solve the political and social challenges of contemporary society? [The Conference] aims to map the implications of religious tolerance for contemporary society and to reframe it in such a way as to help individuals and religious institutions move toward a more open and cooperative approach.” Contact the ICUU President, Rev. Dávid Györö, at [dgyero@unitarius.org](mailto:dgyero@unitarius.org) for further details.

On 07 July 2018, the Church will dedicate its new Center for Religious Freedom: “The former residence of the Unitarian bishops, one of the remaining medieval buildings in Kolozsvár, is being renovated and transformed to serve the purposes of the larger community. The building will...house a community area, a research center for religious studies and a museum.” A Pilgrimage for UU ministers will also take place at that time, led by a panel of theologians from Transylvania, the US, Indonesia, India and Burundi.

The ICUU regrets that the Council Meeting and Conference scheduled for 12–18 February 2018 cannot be held at the intended venue of Shillong, in the Khasi Hills of northeastern India due to new regulations affecting visas for foreigners entering India to attend conferences. The new process for approving international conferences and visas for attendees is so arduous and lengthy that the existing timeframe was simply unsustainable. Consequently, a new venue has been chosen in Kathmandu, Nepal, which will at least make use of some of the planning arrangements already in place.

This will be a great disappointment to the large Khasi Hills Unitarian community and the people who wanted to see them and their churches, schools and other facilities. It will, however, be possible for individuals to make their own arrangements and travel to Shillong either before or after the Council Meeting. (There are 10,000 Unitarians in 30 congregations in the Khasi Hills that comprise the Unitarian Union of North East India. The denomination was founded by Hajom Kissor Singh in 1887 with some help from the British and Foreign Unitarian Society’s branch in Calcutta – please see the Summer 2015 issue for the full story.)

The 35<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom will be held in Washington, DC, on 29 July–01 August 2018 with the theme of ‘Reimagining Interfaith Cooperation’. For the first time ever, this will be a joint effort of the IARF, the UUA, the United Religions Initiative, the United Church of Christ and Religions for Peace. The venue is at George Washington University and the full program can be found at: [www.reimagineinterfaith.org](http://www.reimagineinterfaith.org).

These Congresses have been held every few years since the IARF was founded in London in 1901 but they have been quadrennial events since 2002. Unitarians were present at the first Congress and we have been active in the organisation ever since.

[*Retraction:* In the last issue, I wrote that Rev. Gordon Oliver of the Cape Town Unitarian Church had written some books. While he wishes he had, and the titles did have a Unitarian ring to them, it turns out that the actual author is an Anglican minister of the same name in the UK. My apologies for that but it just shows how careful one must be when searching names on the Internet.]

# UNDERSTANDING THE DREAMING

## The Basic Tenets of Wandjinist Religion

By Jim Poulter

[Dedicated to the memory of Uncle Reg Blow (1939–2012).]

### Putting aside primitive assumptions

All Australians are familiar with the words ‘The Dreaming’ or ‘The Dreamtime’ but very few have any real idea of what this means as a systematic set of religious ideas. A lot is known about the basic tenets of the other world religions, but very little is understood about Australian Aboriginal religion. In fact I looked up the Oxford Dictionary of World Religions a few years ago and every conceivable religion in the world was explained, except Australian Aboriginal religion. The words ‘Dreaming’ or ‘Dreamtime’ were not even mentioned in the subject index.

This lack of appreciation of the central themes of Aboriginal religion continues to prevail into the present day for two main reasons. First, there were strict levels of secrecy within indigenous society and many of the deeper religious concepts were only shared with those people initiated into the highest levels of the society. However despite this secrecy, many higher-level religious concepts are embedded within the many Dreamtime stories that have survived. The trick is in decoding these deeper concepts, but this is reliant on a respectful understanding of Aboriginal culture and mindset.

I say ‘respectful’ advisedly, because the second reason was that, when colonisation began in 1788, Aboriginal society was regarded as ‘the most primitive on Earth’. It was looked at as if it were a curiosity in a specimen jar. Think for a moment of all the pejorative terms you have heard to describe Aboriginal people. They were seen as simple, primitive, pagan, nomadic, stone age, hunter-gatherers who occupied the lowest rungs of humanity, or even below it. Similarly, all accounts of Aboriginal religion that I have seen effectively dismiss it as a vague low-level system of animal spirit worship and ancestor worship. It is commonly classed as ‘Animism’ and therefore assigned to the lowest rung in the hierarchy of religious thought systems.

In colonial Australia, Aboriginal people were not allowed to give evidence in court, even in their own defence. They were considered to not believe in God so therefore could not swear an oath on the Bible. This presumption was however simply not true. Aboriginal people did indeed believe in a Supreme Being, but would not readily discuss the deeper levels of their religion unless you showed the capacity to understand. In Aboriginal society, knowledge is rewarded with more knowledge and ignorance is responded to with silence, not argument.

This point was amply illustrated when two Adelaide Missionaries in 1838 spoke with a tribal person about his beliefs. They immediately rejected his explanation, saying that only Jehovah was the true God. The tribal man answered: *‘Then I am a liar and you speak truth. I shall not speak another word. You may now speak.’* In other words, he said that the Missionaries were disrespectful to his beliefs and he would not waste any further words with them.

Such disrespect of Aboriginal culture was commonplace in colonial Australia and was born out of the cultural arrogance of the British. The reality is that Aboriginal religion, which I choose to call ‘Wandjinism’, has many parallels with other world religions.

### The concept of the Dreaming

The first thing to understand is that ‘The Dreaming’ very neatly encapsulates the idea that the creation of the world and all life was originally internal to God. Our world is therefore a figment of a divine imagination. However, over the last few centuries our thinking has become dominated by objectivist science. It encourages us to look at the world as an external reality and therefore able to be empirically weighed and measured. Despite this, we nonetheless still know that human perception also determines our reality. To the question: *‘If a tree falls in the forest and no-one is there, does it make a sound?’*, the Aboriginal answer would be: *‘No, not unless you imagine it would’*. Contrary to this constructivist view of reality, the Bible story of Creation also tends to imply an objectivist stance when God said ‘Let there be light’. But who was God talking to? The Aboriginal concept of the Dreaming therefore clearly posits that the universe was created by God in an act of imagination.

More than thirty years ago, when I looked at all the Dreamtime Creation Stories I could find from across Australia, I was struck by the many similar themes. The first similarity was that the stories all started out in darkness. In the empty darkness, the Spirit of All Life began to Dream and that first Dreaming was of Fire. The similarity both to the biblical story of creation and the Big Bang Theory was a revelation to me.

These creation stories then all commonly described how the Dreaming continued. There was a Dreaming of wind and rain, earth and sky, land and sea and so forth. It gave the indelible impression of an understanding of the stages involved in the geological formation of the Earth, but as a product of a divine imagination.

God then began to grow tired from the long Dreaming, but wanted the dream to continue and be real and self-sustaining. So God broke the Dream up into millions of pieces and sent life into the Dream, in the form of Creator Spirits, to make it real. Each of these Creator Spirits carried their own piece of the original creation jigsaw with them and continued their creation work, forming the landscape with their bodies in accordance with their Dreaming. We are all very familiar with these many stories of the work of Creator Spirits, but the stories also show how objective reality became fashioned in accordance with their piece of the dreaming puzzle.

When these Creator Spirits finished their work they surrendered their Dreaming and became a landmark or animal we see today. Finally only one Creator Spirit was left and that was Mankind. Man walked across the land recognizing the creation work that had preceded, and knew that it was his duty to protect the whole fabric of the Dreaming. When God saw that Man finally understood his responsibilities to the Earth, two more things were done to make the Earth self-sustaining.

First, God created the spirits of all children ever to be born and seeded them into the Dreaming. This was so that each child born would have consciousness and free will, would know their responsibility to the Dreaming, and would receive the wisdom of their parents and family in caring for the Dreaming. Aboriginal people therefore believe in pre-life rather than after-life and before a child can be born, a father must dream the finding of the child's spirit. The father then directs the child's spirit to the body of their mother, who makes their flesh. When the child is born into the real world, their skin is the package that keeps spirit and flesh together in the real world and is therefore the symbol of family and marital relationship.

Spirit, Flesh and Skin are therefore the trio of concepts that determined social organisation in Aboriginal Clans across Australia. Spirit denotes the father-child relationship, Flesh denotes the mother-child relationship and Skin denotes the husband-wife relationship. However when Aboriginal people tried to explain this pre-existence of the child's spirit and the concepts of Spirit, Flesh and Skin to Europeans, they were again often confronted with cultural arrogance. I have even seen the ludicrous conclusion drawn in anthropological texts that '*Aboriginal people do not understand sex*'.

The second thing that God did before permanently retiring from any intervention in the real world was to seed all knowledge into the Dreaming. The answer to every question that could ever be asked therefore resides in the Dreaming and we have access to it through our own Personal Dreaming. This means that we do not have to pray to God for guidance in our everyday affairs, we only have to look into ourselves and find the answers in the Dreaming. In reality this is no different to personal prayer.

### **Wandjina as a non-interventionist god**

Following the gift of human consciousness and human recognition of our responsibility to be Caretakers of the Earth and the Dreaming, the creation Dreaming was finally complete. God therefore sought rest in the land and takes no further part in the affairs of the world, but continues to watch and listen. This is why all drawings of God, also known as Wandjina, are shown with eyes but no mouth. God sees everything, but says nothing.

Aboriginal people therefore see everything that happens as a product of human agency, whether witting or unwitting. Things can happen for good or evil, but this is nothing to do with any conscious will of a Supreme Being. It is simply the unfolding of human affairs into which Wandjina will not intervene. As a religion Wandjinism is therefore clearly in the category of Deism rather than Theism, because it subscribes to a belief in a non-interventionist God.

Because of this belief in human responsibility Wandjinism should therefore be regarded as a humanist religion. Whilst some might argue that 'humanist religion' is a self-contradictory term, to me it makes sense. Time is not taken up in idle worship and abstract piety, as there is the business of the real world to be taken care of. Spirituality must therefore instead be reflected in our daily responsibility to the care of each other and the environment.

Compared to most other world religions it seems that Wandjinism was able to achieve a much stronger emphasis on free will and human responsibility in its theology. It did not believe in predestination, with events unfolded according to some unfathomable divine master plan. Wandjinism instead emphasised the power of individual Dreaming in bringing personal options and choices into being.

On one level Wandjinism conveys an idea of divine determinism in that all options or eventualities that will ever confront human beings were anticipated in the original Dreaming. The seeds of all ideas, options and choices therefore already exist in the Dreaming. However it is by our own connection to the Dreaming that we are able to find these choices and options, and enact them into reality. In this sense then, Wandjinism articulates an 'optional determinism'. Simply put, God provides the choices and we make them. However the pattern of the choices made is not part of a grand divine plan and Wandjina is simply an interested spectator to the unfolding of human Dreaming.

Whether human actions achieve good or evil is therefore not part of some greater divine plan. It is entirely a matter of human choice and human consideration and simply part of the fabric of life. In Wandjinist religion good and evil are therefore not seen as having their inspiration in opposing divine sources such as God and Satan, good and evil are human conditions.

This, therefore, is the foundation for the Aboriginal belief in human sorcery. It is not to be dismissed as 'primitive superstition', as has so often occurred in the past. It is a natural extension of the foundation concept of a non-interventionist God, and the belief that human beings are responsible for all that happens, whether for good or evil.

### **The environment as a living entity**

The idea of God resting in the land and leaving everything in human hands, very strongly conveys the idea of the sacredness of the land and human responsibility for its care. To reinforce the notion of the sacredness of the environment, Aboriginal people have a belief in a complex spirit world that surrounds us. Anything with a form or shape, even inert objects, is regarded as having an essential being and Dreaming of its own that must be respected by human beings.

Although the idea may seem simple, it has complex ramifications. A tree has a spirit, the copse that the tree belongs in has a spirit and the forest to which the copse belongs also has its own spirit. A rock has a spirit, a rocky outcrop has a spirit and the whole hill has a spirit. A river has a spirit, each area of the river and each creek leading to the river all have their own 'Tikilara' or 'Spirit of Place'. Anything created also gains a spirit. If a bird makes a nest, the nest gains a spirit. If a person makes a digging stick, a spear or a shield, these objects all gain their own spirit. When it is all boiled down though, the belief in a complex multi-layered, overlapping spirit world is simply a device by which respect for the environment is guaranteed.

As an illustration of this, I was many years ago walking in Framlingham Forest with the iconic Elder Banjo Clarke and his young grandson, who was carrying a stick. The grandson dragged his stick along the ground and was softly admonished by Banjo to never make a mark on the ground unless it was for a reason.

The disappointing part is that the Aboriginal belief in a pervasive surrounding spirit world has often been dismissed as just 'Animism'. This is a category reserved for the supposedly fallacious pagan belief that inanimate objects can and do have a soul. Such dismissive views clearly convey an ingrained unwillingness to understand how a belief in a complex spirit world is actually a part of a coherent broader belief system.

In reality, such beliefs are not so far from our mainstream life experiences. If we build a house, does it not gain a spirit and become a home? As individuals, we each demonstrably have our own spirit, but when we band together with others for a mutual purpose, do we not then gain a team spirit and a common identity? Do we not sit in quiet parks and feel the spirit of the place?

## **‘Sorry Time’ as lifting the Earthly burden of the dead**

The Aboriginal belief in a complex spirit world therefore included a belief in human ghosts and bad spirits, but this also has to be seen within a broader context. Belief in a non-interventionist God of necessity means that there is no judgment after death on how you have lived your life. It is only a question of whether your spirit is at peace and ready to be reabsorbed back into the Dreaming and once again become part of the cyclical fabric of life. Ghosts are only the spirits of the dead that have not achieved peace after death.

Re-absorption back into the Dreaming can therefore only occur when we are alleviated of our accumulated earthly sorrows through appropriate human ritual. That is, rather like Jewish people, Aboriginal people believe that during the course of our lives we accumulate many sorrows. Before an individual is able to achieve peace and oblivion after death, this burden of life’s sorrows must be taken from them and shared by the living. If this is not done through proper ritual grieving then the dead are in danger of becoming tormented ghosts forever.

In Wandjini religion it is entirely of no consequence how many good deeds an individual may do in the course of their life. This will in no way provide any guarantee of peace after death or a heavenly afterlife. On the other hand every wrong that is done to you and every sorrow you experience in your lifetime will accumulate and affect your ability to find peace after death.

Death in traditional Aboriginal society is therefore marked by ‘Sorry Time’ where grieving and ritual will help absorb the sorrows of the dead and share it amongst the living. It is a tradition still alive today and of course shares a commonality with all human cultures. The traditional Aboriginal practice of the living no longer mentioning the name of the dead is therefore an extension of this belief of life’s accumulated sorrows. Mentioning their name only provides a pull back to the sorrows of the real world and a disturbance to their peace after death.

In conclusion, you would have noticed that this narrative was dedicated to the memory of Uncle Reg Blow. Reg and I knew each other for more than thirty years and spent many hours together discussing traditional Aboriginal thought systems and drawing parallels with other world religions. Reg rang me in late 2012 to tell me he was ‘*on the way out*’ so we met several times to put the finishing touches to our ideas. In the week before his death on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012, he tapped the final copy and said ‘*That’s it*’.

[Abstracted from an Address to the Melbourne Unitarian Church on Sunday, 24 September 2017. A multitude of works relating to the recognition, advancement, and empowerment of Aboriginal people has been produced by Jim, much in collaboration with elder Uncle Reg Blow: <http://www.jimpoulter.com>.]

## **REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS**

*Adelaide UC* have made a good recovery from all the work involved in hosting this year’s ANZUUA Conference (see pp. 10-11) and will hold their Annual General Meeting on 26 November. The service on that day will include a presentation on the festive season by the Sunday Club children’s group. On 10 December, the annual Multifaith Service will feature contributions from members of the many religious traditions in the Multifaith Association of South Australia, followed by a shared lunch.

The last service of the year will be held on 17 December. The Terrace Singers will perform ‘A Celebration of Christmas’ by Karl Jenkins, followed by readings and carols for choir and audience.

Finally, their US-born minister, Rev. Rob MacPherson was approached by the UUA to write an article on Australian gun legislation in the wake of the Las Vegas shooting (see pp. 12-13).

*Auckland UC* heard an address on 26 November by Rachel Mackintosh, Vice-President of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions titled ‘Counting for Nothing’. That afternoon, a public meeting was held, hosted by Refugees Are Welcome Here NZ, on the prospect of detainees on Manus Island being resettled there.

Their Christmas service will take place on 24 December with an additional session that evening. The final service of the year will be on 31 December, followed by a break for the month of January.

*(Continued on p. 14.)*

## YOU WENT THE WRONG WAY, OLD KING LOUIE



Louis the Sixteenth was the King of France in 1789  
He was worse than Louis the Fifteenth  
He was worse than Louis the Fourteenth  
He was worse than Louis the Thirteenth  
He was the worst since Louis the First

King Louis was living like a king, but the people were living rotten.  
So the people, they started an uprising which they called the French Revolution,  
And of course you remember their battle cry, which will never be forgotten.

You went the wrong way, Old King  
Louie  
You made the population cry.  
'Cause all you did was sit and pet  
With Marie Antoinette  
In your place at Versailles.

And now the country's gone kablooie  
So we are giving you the air.  
That oughta teach you not to  
Spend all your time fooling 'round  
At the Folies Bergère.

If you had been a nicer king,  
We wouldn't do a thing,  
But you were bad, you must admit.  
We're gonna take you and the Queen  
Down to the guillotine,  
And shorten you a little bit

You came the wrong way, Old King  
Louie,  
And now you ain't got far to go.  
Too bad you won't be here to see  
That great big Eiffel Tower,  
Or Brigitte Bardot.

To you, King Louie, we say foey.  
You disappointed all of France.  
But then what else could we expect  
From a king in silk stockings  
And pink satin pants.

You filled your stomach with chop suey  
And also crêpe Suzettes and steak.  
And when they told your wife, Marie,  
That nobody had bread, she said,  
"Let 'em eat cake."

We're gonna take you and the Queen  
Down to the guillotine,  
It's somewhere in the heart of town.  
And when that fella's through  
With what he's gonna do,  
You'll have no place to hang your  
crown

You came the wrong way, Old King  
Louie,  
Now we must put you on the shelf.  
That's why the people are revolting,  
'cause Louie,  
You're pretty revolting yourself!

Allan Sherman (1963)

Understandably, nothing funny was ever written about the French Wars of Religion, so this will have to do. Allan Sherman (1924–73) was a famous Jewish-American writer of comic parodies based on existing songs and even pieces of classical music. This song begins with a riff of 'La Marseilles' but the verses are based on 'You Came a Long Way from St. Louis', composed in 1948 by Bob Russell and John Benson Brooks. It was recorded in Sherman's third album, *My Son, the Nut*, released in 1963.

Born Allan Copelon in Chicago, Sherman took his mother's maiden name after his parents divorced. He attended the University of Illinois and wrote a humour column for the student newspaper. He became a television writer and producer of game shows in the 1950s before he turned his hobby of writing parodies to better use in the 1960s. His first album, *My Son, the Folksinger*, came out in 1962, followed by *My Son, the Celebrity*, but his best-known song was 'Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah', released as a single in 1963.

Sydney Keith 'Bob' Russell (1914–70) was a songwriter, chiefly a lyricist, who started with vaudeville songs and later wrote musical scores for movies. He co-wrote 'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother' with Booby Scott in 1960. John Benson Brooks (1917–99) was a pianist, arranger and composer who worked with a great number of jazz and blues songwriters, amongst others.

As always, these songs need to be heard in order to be fully appreciated – just search: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

## I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old, familiar carols play,  
and wild and sweet  
The words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along  
The unbroken song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

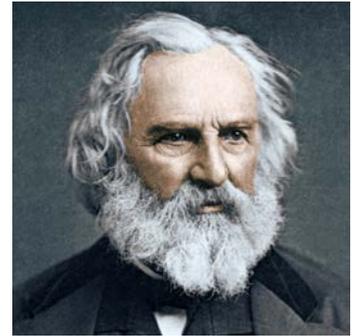
Till ringing, singing on its way,  
The world revolved from night to day,  
A voice, a chime,  
A chant sublime  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth  
The cannon thundered in the South,  
And with the sound  
The carols drowned  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent  
The hearth-stones of a continent,  
And made forlorn  
The households born  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;  
“There is no peace on earth,” I said;  
“For hate is strong,  
And mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!”

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
“God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;  
The Wrong shall fail,  
The Right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good-will to men.”



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1863)

This poem was written on Christmas Day, 1863, at the height of the American Civil War. Longfellow's son, Charles, had enlisted in the Unionist army without his father's permission and was severely wounded in battle in Virginia shortly before that time. He eventually recovered but he did not return to military service.

For reasons that are unclear, the poem was first published in 1865 in a magazine called *Our Young Folks*. It was first set to music by the English organist, John Baptiste Calkin, in 1872 and that version has been recorded by singers as various as Johnny Cash and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. (The verses relating to the Civil War are usually left out, however.)

As everyone hopefully knows, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882) was a Unitarian, born into a family of left-wing Congregationalists. William Ellery Channing was a friend of the family, having attended Harvard with Longfellow's father, and he met Ralph Waldo Emerson in later life, though his independent theology did not fully extend to the latter's Transcendentalism.

## REPORT ON THE ANZUUA CONFERENCE

By David Freesmith



The 2017 Conference in Adelaide on 20–22 October offered a vibrant program, an opportunity for public outreach and plenty of Unitarian sharing and networking. Altogether, 47 people registered for the event, of whom 24 were from Adelaide, 17 were from interstate and 6 were from overseas. While a number of people in the Adelaide congregation contributed to its realisation, Jenny Warner was undeniably the lynchpin who brought it together.

The conference commenced with a public lecture at Norwood Town Hall by the nationally prominent social researcher, Hugh Mackay. The event received local print media and radio coverage beforehand, which attracted several dozen members of the wider public. Mackay addressed the topic, ‘Religion in Australia: Decline or Quiet Revolution?’, and responded to questions from the audience afterward. Autographed copies of his books were available for sale on the night and proved popular. Due to our minister’s illness, the event was compered by his wife, Prof. Susan Luckman. Some 150 people attended the address, approximately 70% of whom were Unitarians and 30% were members of the public. A large amount of our Unitarian literature was taken by attendees on the night.



The other keynote speaker was Derek McCauley, Chief Officer of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. He addressed the conference theme through the lens of experiences in the UK in recent years on the Saturday morning at the Unitarian Meeting House, where the conference was held.

Saturday’s program included presentations and workshops by members of the Adelaide congregation on four different topics related to the conference theme of ‘Unitarianism in our Region – Flourishing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’. Jenny Dyster led the theme of Worship; Sandy Johns presented on Social Justice; Christine Mason spoke about Outreach; and David Freesmith presented on Child and Youth Programmes. There was lively sharing of experiences from around the region during the workshops and the subsequent feedback session.

On Saturday afternoon, the Biennial General Meeting elected our minister, Rev. Rob MacPherson as the new President of ANZUUA. Replacing him as Vice-President is Rev. Clay Nelson of Auckland UC, while James Hills of Brisbane UUF was re-elected as Secretary. The retiring President, Peter Abrehart of Melbourne UC is the new Treasurer, which position he held previously in 2011–13.

On Saturday evening a meal was enjoyed by 56 guests at the nearby 'Sfizio' Italian restaurant, preceded by live music and pre-dinner drinks at the Meeting House. About ten different musicians from the Adelaide congregation performed at intervals over the course of the weekend, including the Worship Service.



On Sunday morning, Rev. Rob MacPherson was briefly exhumed from his sickbed to conduct the service, including an address on our need to have the faith and the hope to take risks to grow our movement in the region. Afterwards, a number of conferees went to Shady Grove, our National Trust-listed settlers' chapel in the Adelaide Hills, and were given a brief history, a tour and a sumptuous lunch with the local congregation.



We trust all our visitors had an enjoyable, inspiring, and interesting time! A number of the addresses and presentation can be seen on YouTube:

- Prof. Mackay's speech: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYaJUB1ShWg&t=553s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYaJUB1ShWg&t=553s)
- The introductory and plenary sessions: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdbk6sRTj4o&t=515s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdbk6sRTj4o&t=515s)
- Derek McAuley's address: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\\_U9XNfxmOc&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_U9XNfxmOc&feature=youtu.be)
- Rev. Rob MacPherson's address: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1q\\_eaqt2i0M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1q_eaqt2i0M)

[David Freesmith works for the School of Education at the University of South Australia and is co-leader of the Adelaide church's Sunday Club children's religious education group. He is also their Social Justice Coordinator and a member of the Vision 2020 Committee that organised the Conference.

As the pictures hopefully indicate, the Unitarian Meeting House is a very attractive building with excellent audiovisual facilities. The group has many talented people who conduct a great range of activities, both within the building and outside of it. Please see their website: <http://unitariansa.org.au/> for more information.

A history of the Shady Grove Chapel (and the restoration work on its cemetery) appeared in the Winter 2011 issue of this journal, which is archived on the ANZUUA website: <http://james4hills.wixsite.com/anzuua.>

## ALMOST NO ONE HERE IS ARMED

By Rev. Rob MacPherson

[Reprinted from the *UUA International* blog of 05 October.]

Current Australian gun laws, introduced in 1996, as well as their clear effects on suppressing gun-related violence, are frequently cited by gun control advocates in the USA. These laws and their effects were achieved in the wake of the Port Arthur shooting, when a lone, white, mentally-disturbed gunman armed with a stockpile of automatic weaponry, went on a rampage, shooting up a quiet Tasmanian tourist town, killing 35 and wounding four. Here down-under, such a scenario is the stuff of nightmares, not of the nightly news.

The laws introduced by the then Liberal-National Party coalition government (note: for 'Liberal' read 'Conservative' here. Don't ask me why...) were sweeping in scope, aimed at a total prohibition on the ownership, possession, sale, and importation on all automatic and semi-automatic firearms. These laws were enforced by a 6-month amnesty, during which time, the owners were invited to sell such weapons back to the government, which, in turn destroyed the surrendered guns. Failure to comply would mean tough penalties, including jail time. Included in the raft of legislation were a national gun registry, stricter guidelines for licensing and training, and an education program. There are still occasional amnesties and buy-backs for unregistered and illegal guns.

By and large, the legislation was passed in its entirety – such was the national shock and horror at the Port Arthur massacre. The LNP government saw the political capital in the tragedy, the public mood, and the public benefit, and acted swiftly and decisively under the strong leadership of PM John Howard. *As an indisputably direct result of this legislation, homicides fell by 59% and gun-related suicides by 65%. There were 13 mass shootings in the 18 years preceding Howard's gun laws. There have been no 'mass' shootings since.*

Such events as Las Vegas or Sandy Hook simply do not happen here any longer. More than those statistics is the freedom one feels here: freedom from random gunfire, freedom from being torn apart by high-velocity rounds blithely squeezed off by someone having a very bad day. Australians can go to any large event, walk on a crowded street, study on a busy campus, or catch mass transport, and it will never occur to them that more than half the people around them are strapped and loaded. Because they aren't. Only the cops are. So, to sum up:

- A mass shooting.
- A shocked nation.
- Strong, decisive leadership.
- Comprehensive, practical action by legislators and law enforcement.

These events combined to produce unarguably positive results for Australia.

If you sense some 'buts' coming, you're right and here they are:

**The legislation was initially opposed by a significant slice of the National Party**, part of the Liberal-National coalition government that generally represents the interests of farmers. Australia is still a frontier economy, based on primary production, and weapons are part of every farmer's tool kit. While it is true that you don't need an AR-15 to deal with the feral pest control of foxes and dingoes that attack grazing stock, nor to control native grazing animals like kangaroos, farmers find *semi*-automatic rifles pretty useful in the management of threats to grazing and growing. There is *still*, among farmers, a strong resentment to control of such weapons, and corresponding pressure on National Party members to soften the laws.

**Australians continued to buy guns since 1996.** In fact, there are now more privately-owned guns than there were in 1996, although with population increasing the per capita rates are significantly lower than they were before the legislation. As gun technologies change, as wealth from pressure groups like the NRA are deployed internationally, the Australian government will need to be vigilant to resist pressure groups, keep effective laws in place, and toughen them where needed. The past ten years has seen much leadership instability – five changes of PM, minority and coalition governments, and wafer-thin majorities. Swift, decisive, unilateral leadership may be becoming a fond memory in the sunburnt country.

**The NRA has Australia in its cross-hairs.** Since Australia is held up as a model for intelligent gun legislation, the NRA has pushed back with propaganda ads full of outright lies about the country – that the populace are in revolt against gun control, that ‘only the criminals here have guns’, that we are suffering under big-brother socialism, etc., etc. You know the tune. But you wouldn’t know these are false if you are at a geographical and cultural distance from here. The NRA are coming for our guns, Australia, and they want to hand them back to us.

**John Howard was no saint.** Howard, along with Bush and Blair, was arguably guilty of war crimes in his fervent and active support of the wars of the past decade. While genuinely and visibly shocked, appalled, and angered into action over local white deaths in a tourist town, Howard had not the least compunction about the collateral slaughter of Iraqi or Afghani civilians and their children, and still does not. The gun laws may be his one triumphant legacy.

**Australians have no right to feel smug about what its gun laws have achieved.** They may express bewilderment at a culture with such a huge pathology – *an average of one mass shooting per day* – that could be so easily solved with such comparatively straightforward solutions. However, Australia as a country is in denial about its own violent pathologies, namely:

1. the international disgrace of our harsh, punitive, inhumane, militarized, and torturous asylum-seeker policies;
2. the systemic oppression of Indigenous Australians evidenced by low life expectancies and a high incidence of aboriginal deaths in custody;
3. the gleeful cashing-in on fossil fuels in a time of rising temperatures, sea-levels and rates of climate-related deaths;
4. progressive de-funding and de-institutionalization of mental health care.

I am a US-born Minister serving here; I grew up in West Baltimore (*The Wire*, anyone?). I left the US as a young man in 1985, in part because I didn’t want my children to grow up in a place where gunshots ringing out in the night were entirely normal, where their right not to be shot was trumped by everyone’s right to own assault weapons, where the pathological addiction to weaponry was a normal fact of life.

Yet these things, so bizarre to Australians, are entirely normal if you grow up in the States. My father was entirely normal, and the most peaceful man you could know, yet even he kept three – *THREE* – weapons in the house: a Saturday night special six-shooter, a Mauser semi-automatic and a pump-action shotgun. The shotgun was bought on the QT from ‘a guy down at the plant’. Soon after he bought it, he was showing it off to my elder sister one day. He demonstrated how you pump the stock to put one in the chamber...and promptly blew a hole in the bedroom ceiling the size of an NBA hoop. Fortunately, my mother was not home. He swore my sister to silence and, being a gifted handyman, got up in the loft and patched and painted the hole so you’d never know it was there. My sister and father kept this secret until after he and mother had passed away.

But if my sister’s tender, beautiful, face had been in the way of this dumb, atrocious accident, there could have been no denial, no secrets, no lies. That is the sort of shame and horror that cripples families and ripples down to affect generations yet unborn. None of us, and none of our children or *their* children, could have gone unaffected by it. The sins of the fathers (even my sinless father) do indeed get visited upon the children. I grieve for the victims of Las Vegas and their families and friends. But I grieve somehow more for the generations of kids yet unborn who will be brought into life in so violent a place as the USA.

The USA has not been so lucky as my family was. As a nation, my birth-country lost its crucial parenting moment at Sandy Hook. If a pile of the bullet-riddled bodies of kindergarteners doesn’t change the national taste for violence, I’m not sure if anything will. But the lies about gun violence, the secrets about the wealth and corruption that keeps guns firmly entrenched in our homes, and the denial that this is a national pathology must be exposed, exposed now, and by those in the position to do something about it swiftly and decisively.

Leaders can begin by listening to voices outside the US media bubble. Australia is not some other planet. It’s very much like the US. And Australia is not alone in having effective gun legislation. Apologies for salty language, but *f\*\*k your exceptionalism*. Learn from us before more innocent lives are mown down by this ongoing nightmare, the apocalyptic scythe that stalks your every home and street.

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

*Brisbane UUF*'s members recently learned the key principles of Sociocracy in a games night run by member Paul Wildman and his wife Annette. Paul had led a service a few months ago in which he described Sociocracy as an inclusive decision-making process that uses consensus, rather than majority rule. In the game, they were housemates deliberating on such issues as how to allocate the single parking space outside the house and what to do with a cat left by the previous owners, both of which provoked lively discussion.

This month, the same Paul Wildman gave a presentation on Transhumanism, an international movement that aims to transform the human condition by developing and making widely available sophisticated technologies that will enhance human intellect and physiology. This is possibly an area where U\*Us could provide leadership, as few faith traditions appear to be willing to explore the urgent moral and human implications of such a vision. The last service in November featured a talk on Theosophy (they meet in the premises of the Brisbane Theosophical Society) and their End of Year Gathering will be on 10 December.

The Queensland branch of Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, which Renee Hills has been helping to organise all year, held a press conference on 20 November to release a statement calling on major political parties to veto any public funds for the Adani coal mine and to pursue renewable energy sources for job creation in northern and regional Queensland. The event was anchored by the Very Reverend Dean Peter Catt of St John's Anglican Cathedral, joined by Catholic, Quaker, Bah'ai, Muslim, Buddhist, UU and Torres Strait Islander speakers and representatives. Two television stations and one radio station covered the event. (See Ch10's report here: <https://www.facebook.com/tennews/videos/1715458068524493/>.)

*Christchurch Unitarians* will hold their Seasonal Celebration on 13 December, which will be led by their president, Natalia Artemiev. The event will feature readings, songs and a shared light meal.

*First UU Melbourne Fellowship* have been a bit short of numbers due to some American members going 'home' for Thanksgiving. At their October and November meetings, they watched podcasts of addresses by Rev. Rob MacPherson, 'Arms and the Land Down Under' and 'Tomorrow'. (The latter was delivered at the ANZUUA Conference.) The Christmas service in December will be followed by a festive afternoon tea and they have purchased two goats through Oxfam as a collective present (presumably to be given to needy peasants in the Third World, rather than eaten by the Fellowship).

The 'Cakes for the Queen of Heaven' workshops will continue until the end of the year. After the November workshop, members attended a rally organised by the Refugee Action Collective that occupied the intersection outside Flinders Street Station for several hours (much to the frustration of passing traffic).

*Melbourne UC* heard Rev. Brian Chenowith, minister of the UU Church of Lexington, Kentucky, speaking on 'Few Persons of Persuasion' in November. The first service in December will feature political comedian and Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, Rod Quantock, whose topic will be 'The Last Tim Tam'. They will then hear from Lidia Thorpe, an Aboriginal and Managing Director of the Clan Corporation, a sustainable housing and renewable energy business, on 'Australia Day, Invasion Day?'

There will be an End-of-Year Concert on 17 December, the proceeds of which will go to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation.

*Perth Unitarians* heard Marion Millin speak on 'Reclaiming the Feminine God' in September, followed by Dr. Richard Smith on 'The Power of the Parable' and Prof. Goff Barrett-Lenard on the objective and subjective natures of time in October. Services in November were suspended due to the absence of their leaders but their minister, Rev. Peter Ferguson, will lead the services on 03 and 17 December.

*Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship* heard talks in October on 'How to Make Yourself Miserable' (Rev. Geoff Usher), how confirmation bias distorts our reason (Helen Whatmough) and the Age of Enlightenment (Martin Horlacher). In November, Colin Whatmough spoke on Islam and Rev. Usher commemorated the 175<sup>th</sup> birthdays of two famous Unitarian ministers: William Ellery Channing of the US (see p. 15) and Nathaniel Philipps of the UK.

The Christmas service will on 03 December and the party will take place on 17 December.

[Almost finished! – please see p. 16.]

## WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, UNITARIAN FOUNDER

By Mike McPhee

This year marks the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of a man who played a major role in the schism that hived the Unitarians off from the Congregational Church in the US. It is perhaps fitting that Channing was born in 1780 in Newport, Rhode Island, as that small colony was set up by people who had been expelled from their own religious communities and it became a refuge for ‘heretics’ of all colours and stripes.

By Channing’s time, the Congregational Church had spread to other states and diversified to some extent from its Calvinist origins. The grandson of William Ellery, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the son of the state’s Attorney-General, Channing grew up to become an (anti-Calvinist) New England Liberal before he graduated from Harvard University at the top of his class in 1798. He returned to Harvard in 1801 and qualified for the ministry the next year.

After working as a tutor in Virginia, Channing took his first ministry in 1803 at the Federal Street Church in Boston, where he would remain for the rest of his life. His services were so well received that a larger church was built on the existing site in 1809. In 1814, he married Ruth Gibbs, his first cousin and a wealthy woman in her own right. Because he upheld a woman’s right to own property, Channing ignored the laws of the time that would have allowed him to claim his wife’s money as his own. He also served on Harvard’s governing board and was instrumental in the foundation of its famous Divinity School in 1816.

The Congregational Church was in such a state of tension between conservatives and liberals that even the principle of congregational polity was hard-pressed to constrain it. That principle guaranteed each church’s independence, and the well-educated liberals were able to hold their own whenever they were called to debate their theological posture. Channing habitually sought the middle ground but found himself the primary spokesman and interpreter of the liberal position. He challenged the conservatives to see reason, tolerance and fairness as qualities to be fostered in religious life, but they continued to denounce the liberals – and Channing, himself – as heretics and madmen.

With the urging of like-minded colleagues, Channing reluctantly agreed to set forth the tenets of this liberal faith in a sermon, entitled ‘Unitarian Christianity’, at the ordination in 1819 of Jared Sparks at the First Independent Church (Unitarian) in Baltimore. The printed version became a runaway bestseller, stamping Unitarian tenets as rejection of the Trinity, the belief in human goodness and the subjection of theological principles to reason. By this time, the split in the Congregational Church was official and those churches with Unitarian majorities had taken to using that name.

After nearly twenty years as a minister, Channing’s health became fragile and, in 1822, he sought a rest cure in England and Europe. While this did not improve his condition, he returned with the inspiration to write several highly acclaimed essays on John Milton, François Fénelon (an anti-monarchist French theologian) and Napoleon Bonaparte. He also had to reduce his church duties and therefore he deferred a proportion of his salary to his young associate minister, Ezra Stiles Gannett. However, he continued to help found and participate in a number of humanitarian societies

Channing had spoken against slavery as early as 1825 and his feelings were strengthened after a trip to the West Indies in 1830, again in the hope of improving his health. In 1835, he published his only book, *Slavery*, in which he wrote that human rights derive from our moral nature, created by God, not by society. He said that to enslave a person is an insult to God, a sin that corrupted both slaves and their owners. In a later work, he rejected the legalist argument: “No decision of the state absolves us from the moral law. It is no excuse for our wrong-doing that the artificial organization called society has done wrong.”

While Channing was denounced by more radical abolitionists as far too moderate, certain wealthy members of his congregation accused him of encouraging a slave insurrection. In 1840, the Standing Committee refused to allow him to conduct a memorial service for his friend, Charles Follen, an abolitionist Unitarian minister. Channing’s resignation was not accepted but he only preached one more time from the Federal Street pulpit. He died on 02 October 1842 at Old Bennington, Vermont, where a cenotaph to his memory now stands, and was buried in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Statues of Channing are located in the Boston Public Garden, across from his church, and at the Channing Memorial Church in Newport, Rhode Island, that was built in 1880 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of his birth.

**(The Reformation That Failed, *cont'd.*)**

While Henry had committed to reserving all high positions to Catholics, he wanted to assure the Huguenots that he was not a puppet of Spain. In 1595, he initiated the Franco-Spanish War, in which he also sought to subdue the few remnants of the Catholic League that refused to recognise his accession. This led to another invasion from the Spanish Netherlands, which was stopped at Calais and driven back, after which the Peace of Vervins in 1598 deprived the French rebels of support from Spain. Henry then pacified Brittany without bloodshed and issued the Edict of Nantes, which guaranteed the rights of Protestants and ended the wars.

In 1599, Henry's childless marriage was annulled and he married Marie de' Medici the next year. She soon gave birth to a son, who became King Louis XIII when his father was assassinated by a fanatical Catholic in 1610. Marie became his regent until 1617, after which Louis used various means to erode the provisions of the Edict of Nantes. His son, Louis XIV, was even more hostile to the Huguenots and, from 1661, he actively pressured them to either convert or leave the country. Finally, his Edict of Fontainebleau in 1685 declared Protestantism illegal and between 200,000 and a million Huguenots emigrated.

Some Protestants remained in the mountainous Cévennes region in the southeast, where they were largely left alone. In more settled areas, many who claimed to have converted practiced their faith in secret, suffering severe penalties if they were detected. Ironically, religious freedom was restored by Louis XVI in his Edict of Versailles of 1787 – two years before the Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.

[This story has a number of interesting historical sidelines, starting with the regent queens, Catherine and Marie de' Medici. Both were scions of the ruling house of Florence, which also produced three popes: Leo X, who excommunicated Martin Luther; Clement VII, who granted King Henry VIII of England's annulment; and Leo XI, who was elected at 69 and died less than a month later.]

The short-lived King Francis II was married to Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, whose mother was the sister of Francis, Duke of Guise. She lived in France from the age of five until her husband's death, after which she returned to rule Scotland. Her son, James VI, succeeded Queen Elizabeth I as King James I of England in 1603. (His great-grandmother, Margaret Tudor, was King Henry VIII's sister.)

Henry III was the last ruler from the House of Valois, whereas Henry IV founded the Bourbon Dynasty. His eldest daughter, Elisabeth, married King Philip IV of Spain, while his youngest, Henrietta Maria, became the wife of King Charles I of England, Scotland and Ireland. Louis XIII died when his elder son was four years old, giving Louis XIV the longest recorded reign (72 years) of any monarch of a sovereign European nation. Known as the 'Sun King', his time was a period of political centralisation, economic advancement, military success and empire building in North America, India and Africa.]

**(Reports From Member Groups, *concl'd.*)**

Sydney UC's program in this quarter involved a number of presentations relating to the Protestant Reformations in England and Europe, delivered by Peter Crawford. Guest speaker Bill O'Toole gave an illuminating talk in October about his experiences as an event organiser in Saudi Arabia and there was another Power-Point presentation in November on the history of NASA. The Music Service in the period was dedicated to piano music of the Romantic era, featuring works of Schubert, Liszt, Brahms and Rachmaninoff.

The Christmas service will be held on 17 December, with the usual singers from the Conservatorium of Music, fulsome lunch and carol singing. Services will resume in February.

**LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

Sorry for the mess on the last page but I needed a shoehorn to put this issue together. I also didn't think I'd even get this issue finished in time, so I hope it isn't shot through with typographical errors. In any case, I seem to have survived another year as your editor and (no rest for the wicked!) have been re-elected for another two years at the conference in Adelaide. My thanks to those who contributed articles and other information during the year, and my best wishes for the Festive Season to all of our readers. But there will need to be another issue in March, so keep sending material to: [michael.mcphree@optusnet.com.au](mailto:michael.mcphree@optusnet.com.au).

