

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# Quest

Summer 2008/9

The newsletter of the Australia New Zealand  
Unitarian Universalist Association

## Our Mission Statement

The Australia New Zealand Unitarian Universalist Association will support and encourage all member groups in their continued development of Unitarian ideals of freedom reason and tolerance and their interaction with local communities in an ethical, responsible and committed way

As Unitarians we affirm principles of justice, tolerance of difference, respect and equality for all people. With resolve and preparedness to struggle in an atmosphere of interdependent relationship and inclusivity, we search for greater understanding and wisdom, we reach out to each other and with wider community with love and compassion.

Through our sharing, may we gain a sense of our place in the complex web of creation and, as we radiate the joy of creative life, may we feel the spirit of freedom, peace and harmony

**“Think Truly, Speak Bravely, Act Justly”**  
**ANZUUA 2009 Sydney“**  
**Friday October 2<sup>nd</sup> – Monday October 5<sup>th</sup>.**

The conference will be opened with a keynote speech by Bob Carr, ex Premier of NSW. Other confirmed speakers are Bill Cruise, C.E.O of the Exodus Foundation, and Mark O,Conner, poet. The Sunday service will be taken by Rev Ian Ellis Jones. Information about other speakers and workshops will be announced in the next issue of Quest.

As in Perth, the accommodation will be at the conference venue: *The Centre* in Randwick ([www.thecentre.com.au](http://www.thecentre.com.au))

tariff (including breakfast):

single room - \$60 per night

single + ensuite - \$80 per night

twin share - \$50 per night per person

family & deluxe & double - \$120 per person

For initial enquiries please contact:

Michael Spicer at [info\\_syduni@yahoo.com.au](mailto:info_syduni@yahoo.com.au) or phone 0423393364

## **Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship**

Spirit of Life Fellowship finished the year 2008 in good shape and with an enthusiastic membership. Currently we have twenty six members and generally have an average attendance for each Sunday service of fifteen people including visitors. Our attendances are growing although slowly at this stage.

We have recently embarked on a significant publicity program including letter box drops in the local and surrounding areas, brochures in local libraries, notices on sixty three Council notice boards, and selected advertising in local newspapers to build attendances and expose Unitarianism to the wider community.

We started 2009 with a number of exciting developments. We are in the process of completing a new website for the Fellowship. We have engaged a professional web designer and our new look should be in place early in the New Year. The new site will be more attractive to view, contain more information, and include some special features that should add to the interest of those viewing it.



We recently engaged the services of a professional pianist, a student at the Conservatorium of Music who will attend services every second week and play hymns and classical music as required for the congregation. This will enable us to expand the range of Unitarian hymns available for services. Previously we used the excellent CDs produced by the Oakland Unitarian Universalist Church in California. From now on we will alternate week by week with CDs and live music. Our congregation was very excited the first week and we noted everyone got into the swing of the new hymns pretty quickly.

Our first service of the New Year was a guest speaker as usual. This year it was Sarah Penicka, the Director of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir. Sarah is an outstanding musician and is currently completing a doctorate in religious studies.

The big news for us is that commencing the second week of January we are privileged to have a US based UU minister in our congregation. Steve Wilson will be living in Sydney on vacation and has volunteered to help our congregation over the period. Steve will conduct a number of services for us and will advise us on ways to grow and nurture our Fellowship, with a particular emphasis on growing numbers, catering to families and young people and helping our Executive committee plan for our future. Naturally we are all looking forward to his visit and his input.

We look forward to our fifth year as a Fellowship with confidence and hope to participate fully in the ANZUUA conference later in the year. Our members look forward to meeting other Unitarians from all over Australia and New Zealand at that time.

#### **ANZUUA Biennial General Meeting (BGM).**

The time has come to consider what you would like to talk about at our meeting in Sydney in October. There will be three ANZUUA business sessions over the course of the weekend. The first will cover the group reports and the reports from the treasurer and president.

The second will consider internal matters, such as the ratification of our new constitution, rules for membership and web protocol. If you have some issue regarding the workings of ANZUUA, this is when it will be discussed.

The third session will cover external issues.

The timeframe is as follows”

**April 30** - deadline for submissions to be received by the executive.

**May 31** – distribution on proposals to member groups

**July 31** - selection of the proposals to go forward to the meeting

This should give all groups enough time to discuss the nominated proposals and inform their delegates of the groups position on any issue.

So if you have a motion, proposal, remit or resolution, start putting it together now so we can complete the process in a timely manner.

#### **Order of the Flaming Chalice**

At Perth it was decided that we would create the Order Of The Flaming Chalice to honour the contributions that people have made to ANZUA. Nominations are now open, so start thinking who you should like to honour. Contact your ANZUUA delegate with your suggestions.

## **Under The Southern Cross**

One of the projects that the management team are looking at is the possibility of publishing a service resource, provisionally titled "Under The Southern Cross", which will include writings and music from this part of the world. The contents can be from other sources, or by our own members  
Here is an example:

### **Meditations**

**By Robert Halsey**

(1)

Spirit of advaita,  
flowing in me and beyond:  
I am a single throb,  
a single pulse beat,  
a single beat  
in a single breath  
in the beautiful  
unfolding beauty and power  
that reveals something  
of you as you are:  
that is a part of your self-revelation  
and your choice to remain a mystery  
so that we respond to you in faith.

I thank you for everything that ever was,  
in the past;  
I thank you for all that exists as it does:  
I thank you for the tide that will  
take everything along with it  
into the millions of years to come  
as we keep coming into Be-ing  
you and I.

(2)

This is the hour when my world recedes and leaves me in a silence  
I've created for myself in which I can hear myself breathe and listen  
to the beating of my heart.  
I wait for a connection to what lies deeper in me than anything else  
I can think of, and it extends all the way down and beyond me, past  
the 400 million suns and their attendant galaxies:

I know that I am part of it all but just what part I don't know and I expect  
that I never will, but that doesn't matter;  
it fills me with a growing excitement that nourishes and calls to me  
to know the beauty of my ordinariness and my infinitesimal being.

I know this silence is a prayer to and in you, my God.

(3)

Whenever I search for my past,  
I find myself alone  
with a stranger I barely recognise as me,  
and I cannot recall how often or if ever  
I remembered you.  
But you are past and present,  
and in my future where this  
other stranger, me,  
will find you, even stranger  
and as ineffable as you are today,  
but closer than ever we'll be  
as we are today.  
Hold me close, let me feel you near,  
hear your breath in every wind that blows,  
and see the shadow of your smile,  
hovering over death's dark door,  
and feel your presence into which I dissolve  
only to live another life in you.

## **UNITARIAN MINISTERS IN 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY NEW ZEALAND**

**By Wayne Facer**  
(The first in a series)

A number of Unitarian ministers came to New Zealand in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly, none came to New Zealand with the intention of establishing a church.. A brief sketch of each minister is given below, shown in the order of their arrival.

### **Thomas Fyshe Palmer (1747-1802)**

Educated at Cambridge University, graduating MA, BD. A former Anglican curate he became a Unitarian minister at Montrose, Scotland. He was a member of the *Friends of Liberty* society in Dundee, which published a call for universal suffrage. For this he, and others, were convicted of sedition and sentenced to seven years transportation to New South Wales, 1794-1800. In 1801 left Sydney for Britain on the *Plumier*. The *Plumier* repaired for about 6 months at Coromandel in 1801. During the time he spent in Australia he appears to have become disinterested in religion so it is unlikely he took religious services while in New Zealand. The *Plumier* sailed to Fiji and then on to Guam where Palmer died. In 1845 a monument was erected to the "Scottish Martyrs" in Edinburgh on which Palmers name is inscribed.

*Further Reading:* L. Baker Short, "Thomas Fyshe Palmer: from Eton to Botany Bay," *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 1964, vol. XIII, 2, 37-68.

### **George Skey (1796-1851)**

George Skey's father was a Russian merchant who had settled in London and married Charlotte Carpenter from Bradford. George was their only child. In 1821 he married Myra Partridge and they had four sons. He was the Unitarian minister at Colyton, Devon between 1824 and 1826 and then at Hinckley 1831-32. He left for Australia in 1837, by 1838 was known to be in Adelaide and arrived in Auckland in 1840. In 1847 he held a government land grant for a fishing station on Rangitoto. He went to California in 1849 and died at Stockton in 1851. He appears to have travelled alone, leaving his family in England.

*Further Reading:* Surnam Index 1108, Dr Williams Library, London. (I am grateful to Russell Pegler for transcribing this file.)

### **Thomas Gilbert (1799-1894)**

Born in Kent, where following the death of both parents he was raised by his grandfather, the Rev. George Gilbert a minister for 60 years known as the Apostle of Sussex. While brought up in rigid Calvinist doctrines Thomas became Unitarian while studying. He was pastor of the Unitarian General Baptist Church at Northam for nine years, then minister of the General Baptist Church at Ditchling, Sussex. In 1851 he sailed on the *Simlah* and settled in New Plymouth. He opposed the Taranaki war of 1860 on conscientious grounds believing all war to be unchristian. He was accused of cowardice for refusing to serve in the military, despite being legally exempt as a minister of religion. He left Taranaki for Nelson where he was a teacher at the Clifton Terrace School for eleven years. He then became librarian of the Nelson Institute for the next seven years. He views on religion changed and he became President of the Nelson Freethought Society. After a sojourn in New Plymouth of four years he returned to Nelson in 1889 where he remained until his death. He left six sons, two daughters and numerous grandchildren.

*Further Reading:* "Death of a Venerable Unitarian in New Zealand," *The Inquirer*, 9 February 1895, 85-86. "Obituary: Death of Mr Thomas Gilbert," *Taranaki Herald*, 30 November 1894, 2. Thomas Gilbert *New Zealand Settlers and Soldiers*, London: A.W. Bennett, 1860.

© Original Artist  
Reproduction rights obtainable from  
[www.CartoonStock.com](http://www.CartoonStock.com)



"He'll need time to adjust —  
he was a Unitarian."

## Letter to the Editor

Hello,

This is in response to a report in the last Quest Spring 2008 entitled "Imagine ANZUUA without Conferences" written by Jane Brooks. Jane talks about the enormous carbon emissions air travel causes, and considers the ease of meeting through SKYPE - and not having face to face conferences.

Nothing can take the place of seeing, hearing, touching, feeling, smelling a conferences; its nuances, its atmosphere, ambience, and connecting to it's ideas and the people.

Why don't people consider travelling by car with passengers to the next conference? That way, you cut down on carbon emissions and cost, you have time to chat and share ideas preparatory to arriving. On arrival one meets others and expands on those ideas. Billeting also cuts down costs and keeps the ideas flowing. I went to the Melbourne conference in which I shared a car and ideas with the rest of the crew. On arrival I was billeted where I once again shared ideas and projections and got the flavour of the state I was staying in.

For me, SKYPE would not nourish in quite the same way. SKYPE is good for checking on facts and figures but doesn't feed the soul. A conference to me is a celebration of the soul being together with other souls expanding their consciousness together.

Thank you,  
Barbara Willow  
Adelaide

Your views are welcome on any issue, so please forward them to me at [units@clear.net.nz](mailto:units@clear.net.nz).

I am also keen to get book, film or TV reviews, as well as cartoons.

Remember, Quest is your newsletter, so get involved and send me stuff!!!

Thank you  
Derek McCullough  
Editor