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## **THE FALL OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**

Perhaps, ‘fall’ is the wrong word to use, given that the Church of Ireland still exists. However, it was disestablished 150 years ago by an Act of the Westminster Parliament in 1869, the provisions of which came into force on 01 January 1870. As will be explained, the Irish Church Act constituted a major downgrading, both politically and economically, of a church that had scant legitimacy since its foundation in the 1500s. It was also the final stage of the Catholic Emancipation process in Ireland that began in 1778.

The Church of Ireland was established by King Henry VIII (pictured at left) in 1536, modelled on the Church of England that he had created in 1534. He made himself and his successors the heads of both Churches and ordained that only archbishops and bishops of those Churches could hold seats in the House of Lords in both countries’ Parliaments. Unlike in England, where Henry had been able to take over the Catholic Church and seize its properties, his Irish Church was initially confined to Dublin due to the absence of cooperative clergy (still less, Irish-speaking clergy) elsewhere.

Other than supplanting the Pope and appointing his own bishops and archbishops, Henry made no changes to the doctrines and practises of his Churches. His successors, Edward VI and Elizabeth I, inserted some Protestant elements into the Book of Common Prayer, while leaving enough familiar material in to satisfy the traditionalists. This compromise led to the High and Low Church factions which exist to this day; thus, the Church of Ireland sees itself as both Catholic and Reformed, even though it is officially Protestant.

Over time, all of the major Catholic churches changed hands – though they often had few, if any, members – and the monasteries were dissolved, but an outright ban on Catholicism was impossible to enforce. The Church of Ireland attempted to convert the rest of the country by commissioning the first Irish-language translations of the New (1602) and Old (1685) Testaments, and also of the Book of Common Prayer (1606). This met with scant success among the native Irish and even the Protestant settlers who were brought in from Scotland and Wales preferred to remain Presbyterian and Methodist, respectively. They were allowed to have their own churches under the same doctrine of ‘nominal conformance’ that tolerated Catholic worship.

While the Church of Ireland still imported clergy, there were also Irish-born ministers such as the leading theologian, James Ussher (pictured at centre), who became the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All

Ireland in 1625. (This was the same man who calculated that Creation began in 4004 BCE!) In 1615, the Church drew up its own confession of the faith, which as similar to but more Calvinistic than the Church of England's Thirty-Nine Articles. When the latter were formally adopted in 1634, Ussher made sure that they were in addition to the Irish Articles, not a replacement.

Ireland was then caught up in the English Civil Wars and suffered a disastrous invasion by Cromwell's forces in 1649–52. The Restoration of King Charles II in 1660 brought severe repression of non-Anglicans throughout his realm, complete with Penal Laws that made meetings of 'Papists, Presbyterians, Independents or separatists' illegal. In Ireland, those laws were loosely enforced and, after 1666, Protestant Dissenters and Catholics were allowed to resume their seats in the Irish Parliament.

This lenient situation was not to last, unfortunately, because the Jacobite-Williamite War of 1689–91 (more about that on p. 6) marked the beginning of what is called the Protestant Ascendancy. Under the terms of the Treaty of Limerick, James and his Irish supporters left for France and their landholdings were confiscated by the Crown – only a small number of the nobility were able to stay in Ireland and retain their lands by swearing allegiance to William III and Mary II.

The Bishop's Banishment Act of 1697 expelled the Catholic bishops and clergy who were members of Orders from Ireland, leaving only the 'secular clergy' to run the churches. The 1704 Test Act restricted public office and government jobs to members of the Church of Ireland. Despite these and other inducements, such as preferential inheritance, it is estimated that fewer than 15–20% of the population were even nominal Church members. Thus, the requirement to pay tithes for the upkeep of the established church was bitterly resented by Catholics and Non-Conforming Protestants alike.

By the mid-1700s, some 95% of Irish land was owned by members of the Church of Ireland. However, this was a period of increasing support for Irish autonomy, even on their part. In 1749, Bishop George Berkeley (better known for his philosophical writings) issued an address to the Catholic clergy, urging them to work with his Church in the Irish national interest. At the political level, the government in Dublin began to see Catholic Emancipation as a counterfoil to the aspirations of such overt nationalists as the United Irishmen.

As a result, a series of pro-Catholic reforms took place from the late 1700s, beginning with the reintroduction of bishops, convents and schools in 1778–82. Restrictions on property and voting rights were also relaxed between 1778 and 1793, followed by the restoration of professional and office-holding rights from 1793 to 1829, when the Roman Catholic Relief Act was passed. (By that time, the Irish Parliament had been abolished and incorporated into Westminster in 1800.)

Of course, the right to vote and stand for office was still severely restricted on class grounds. Moreover, none of these measures altered the established status of the Church of Ireland or the tithes it collected from the whole population. This had led to anomalies like the supposed minister at Bessborough in 1833 receiving £1,000 per year, despite the fact the parish had no Protestants or even a church. Public indignation finally boiled over in the civil unrest known as the 'Tithe War' in the 1830s. While this was mostly bloodless, the outcome was the Tithe Commutation Act of 1838, under which the costs were reduced and converted to rents that the landlords forwarded to the authorities. This put an end to confrontational confiscations of produce and goods but it didn't solve the basic problem.

The Church of Ireland was still grossly overstaffed, with 22 bishops, including 4 archbishops (all with seats in the House of Lords, remember), for an official membership of 852,000 – less than that of a single Church of England diocese. The 1833, the Church Temporalities (Ireland) Act reduced these to 12, as well as making financial changes. It remained for the government of William Gladstone (pictured at right) to pass the Irish Church Act of 1869 that put an end to this travesty,

The Act was passed despite furious Conservative opposition in both Houses, to the point that Queen Victoria had to mediate with the House of Lords. Deprived of their generous income, existing Church of Ireland clergy were granted a life annuity. The Church of Ireland's properties were transferred to the Crown with compensation paid but, in the immediate aftermath, parishes faced great difficulty in local financing. Still, the Church of Ireland managed to survive and it is likely to do so in future.



International  
Council of  
Unitarians and  
Universalists

## ICUU NEWS

### Asia-Pacific Conference

#### Philippines Pilgrimage



As was forecast in the last issue, the first conference of U\*Us in the Asia-Pacific region was held in the UU Church of the Philippines' headquarters of Dumaguete City on 23–27 October. Co-organised by Dr. Rica Lamar of the Unitarian Union of North East India, Rev. Tet Gallardo of the UUCP, and James and Renee Hills of ANZUUA, its theme was 'Ancient Diverse Wonders'. The event was attended by about 75 participants from Australia, Canada, India, the Philippines and the US. A full report will appear in the next issue.

It is intended to hold these conferences every two years, in between the years of the ICUU's Council Meeting and Conference. The next Asia-Pacific Conference will be held in 2021, either in India or Singapore.

Possibly encouraged by the success of that event, Rev. Gallardo has issued a new invitation for next year: "Dear friends, May I please invite you to come to a pilgrimage of UU Philippines in 2020. Come and see the counter-narratives and experience the lived religion of Filipino UUs – radical hospitality, beloved community and ethnic diversity. You will get to see 2 unique festivals, 2 world class destinations, join a 3-day retreat on Beloved Community and visit 10 UU churches in 10 full days.

The goals of this pilgrimage are: to experience the counterculture that is the Filipino Beloved Community, to assess how UUism is lived throughout the communities, and to learn to discover the counternarratives of the oppressed. ... Lived Religion is the ethnographic and holistic framework for understanding the beliefs, practices, and everyday experiences of religious and spiritual persons in religious studies."

The Pilgrimage is scheduled for 16 – 25 October 2020, using Dumaguete City as a base. The festivals are *Buglasan* (Festival of Festivals) in Dumaguete and *Masskara* (Festival of Masks) in Bacalod City. Other venues during the Pilgrimage include the Apo Island marine sanctuary, Sipalay and Daniugan Island. (The latter two are where the Beloved Community retreat will be held with a number of trainee ministers.) The UUCP congregations that will be visited are all in East Negros and attendees will be staying the night in some of those locations.

This is a serious study tour, with required reading beforehand and some audio and video presentations during the proceedings. The cost for the ten days is \$US 1500, though James Hills advises that ANUUA members will get a 10% discount. Unfortunately, only 15 people will be able to attend, so please be quick to register if you are interested. For full details and the means to register, please see the information at this link: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lQd1dHE6p4fJ-chGwBnmngRVsrtVCSqtWa\\_GAtYuOA8](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lQd1dHE6p4fJ-chGwBnmngRVsrtVCSqtWa_GAtYuOA8).

## ANZUUA UPDATE

[At the risk of pre-empting the next article, James Hills sent the following on 02 October.]

There has been activity you should know about at ANZUUA (the Australia and NZ UU Association). The Brisbane UU Fellowship's representative to ANZUUA and recently elected Secretary of ANZUUA, Elaine Weaver, has unfortunately had to move back to the USA. James Hills of the Brisbane Fellowship will fill both of these roles, as he had been in those positions up until the recent ANZUUA BGM on 21 September.

One of the purposes of ANZUUA is to facilitate communications within the UU community in Oceania. To this end, the "What's Happening" tab on the ANZUUA website (<http://www.anzuua.org/>) now has a few summaries of what went on at the recent lively ANZUUA conference. The summaries are in the form of blog posts, and anyone can sign up and make comments on these posts. New threads can be started by submission and we would like to make it possible for all ANZUUA congregational representatives to be able to post new material. The ANZUUA Committee encourages all UUs in Australia and New Zealand to make use of this communication channel for issues of mutual interest.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2019 ANZUUA CONFERENCE

As was explained in the previous issue, the Conference was hosted by the Brisbane UU Fellowship and held at their usual annual retreat venue, the Theosophical Society Retreat Centre in the Springbrook National Park on 23–25 August. It was attended by members from Auckland and Blenheim in New Zealand, Brisbane, Melbourne (two congregations) and Sydney (two congregations). There was also a member-at-large from Toowoomba.

The venue is an interesting place to get to, as the only road there is from Surfers Paradise and there are no public transport alternatives. Some attendees came in hired cars from Coolangatta Airport while others drove down from Brisbane. The Friday afternoon was a ‘meet and greet’ followed by a welcoming ceremony and brief worship service. The BUUF’s Convener and ANZUUA Secretary, James Hills, spoke as follows:

Welcome to this gathering place in Springbrook. The roots of this meeting ground today go deep, for we meet on the land of the Yugambeh kinship group, the traditional custodians of this land, and it is fitting we pay respect to their elders, past and present, and honour their spiritual connection to country.

A long, long time ago Jabreen, the creator of this land, sent water to fall on the land and to give it life. It flowed towards the ocean, its energy changing as it went, flowing gently here, cascading there; nurturing the needs of all living things along the way. This place became the homeland of the Yugambeh people who lived in this area and shared ceremonies and celebrations, while carefully managing and using its rich natural resources.

For us, our Unitarian churches are, likewise, are also a spiritual community and we share our heritage of ceremonies and celebrations. We want to be a community that finds ways to be strong and offer shared support to help all who come to us to find and follow their own spiritual path, a path that helps you see more clearly, love more abundantly, and collaboratively works toward a better future.

It’s one thing to be intellectually aware that everything is connected to everything in the interdependent social economy of creation, that everything we do or don’t do affects everything else and thus has consequences. It’s another thing to sense that that deep interconnectedness is really real, not an airy concept, and that even contemporary physics reinforces that we are connected to everything all the way out in the universe and all the way down at the sub-atomic level.

The landscape of the Springbrook Plateau is a remnant of the northern side of a once huge shield volcano that dominated the region about 23 million years ago. The volcano was built up of highly mobile basalt lavas and centred on Mount Warning, stretching across about 80 km. At about 2 km high, the volcano poured lava over 6000 sq km (north to Tamborine, south past Lismore to Coraki and west to Kyogle). Some lava flows were 270 m deep. Later eruptions are responsible for the sheer cliffs of Springbrook Plateau.

About 10 million years ago the volcano began to die. The remaining lava plugged the numerous vents and, over the millennia, weathering and water erosion have relentlessly sculpted the volcano to form a classic erosion caldera landform. The Mount Warning caldera – the crescent of perpendicular cliffs extending from Springbrook to Lamington Plateau and the Tweed Range above the Mount Warning vent valley – is the largest and best of its age in the world. From the Best of All lookout, we can visit the grand scale of this magnificent landform.

The three Antarctic Beech trees that grow in the Springbrook National Park are in the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage area, living remnants of a long past history. These trees are approximately 2000 years old. Before European settlement, the sub-tropical rainforests in Queensland and New South Wales were some of the most extensive rainforests in Australia.

Antarctic Beech trees grow in only two places in Australia, Springbrook National Park being one of these places. This species of tree once covered Antarctica before its present iced-over state. As Gondwana broke apart 180 million years ago and the South became colder, the Antarctic Beeches worked themselves up to adapt to more suitable climates. These trees grow by coppicing, sending out new shoots radially from the base of the original trunk, and these shoots eventually grow into clones of the parent tree forming a ring of trunks, all belonging to the one tree.

[James' service also included a Reading and a poem, which you can see on p. 7.]

The Saturday morning commenced with an address by the Acting President, Rev. Clay Nelson, followed by presentations from the Melbourne Unitarian Church on the Australian Human Rights Charter and from Brisbane UUF on the Our Whole Lives program on relationships and sexuality developed by the UUA. After the Morning Tea break, discussion groups were formed using the World Café format:

"The World Café format offers structured conversations intended to facilitate open discussion and link ideas among a large group of people, accessing our collective intelligence. Participants move to different tables as they continue the conversation in response to a set of questions posed by the facilitators." Clay Nelson described it as speed dating for UUs!

Each group wrote their responses down and subsequent groups added to them. The set topics were:

1. What would you like from your congregation that you're not getting now?
2. What is your source of spiritual inspiration and/or guidance?
3. How do you describe Unitarian-Universalism to other people?
4. What do you think happens after death? Have you always believed that?
5. How do you know what is right and what is wrong?

[A more detailed discussion of the World Café format and the responses from the conferees can be seen on the ANZUUA website – more about that later.]

The afternoon sessions was the Biennial General Meeting, at which a new ANZUUA Executive was elected: Acting President, Rev. Clay Nelson of Auckland UC, was confirmed as President; Connie Gibbons of the First UU Fellowship of Melbourne became the Vice-President; Elaine Weaver of the Brisbane UUF became the Secretary, replacing James Hills; and Peter Abrehart of Melbourne UC was re-elected as Treasurer. (See pp. 11/12 for the President's Report to the BGM.)

Provision was made in the mornings and the early Saturday afternoon for attendees to explore the beautiful bushland and visit an impressive waterfall in the National Park, which many took advantage of. There was also the Best of All lookout that James referred to earlier and, since everyone had come by car, they were able to drive further into the region.

It was also decided that future ANZUUA Conferences should be held every year, starting with another one at the Springbrook venue at about the same time of year in 2020. Attendees should be aware that all the food is vegetarian and that smoking and alcohol are not permitted on the premises (but there is a nice little bar up the road from there). Further, they need to bring their own bed linen and towels.

On the Sunday morning, there was a Worship Service led by Rev. Clay Nelson. This featured a Flower Communion in which every participant brought a natural item from the surrounding forest and explained what it meant to them. After lunch, everyone went their various ways.

[Most of this is adapted from the material Elaine Weaver put on the ANZUUA website – just click on the 'What's Happening' tab for the full version and also some recent input from Connie Gibbons on future directions for ANZUUA.]

## THE VICAR OF BRAY



In good King Charles's golden time  
When loyalty no harm meant  
A zealous high churchman<sup>1</sup> was I  
And so I gained preferment<sup>2</sup>  
To teach my flock I never missed  
Kings are by God appointed  
And damned are those who dare resist  
Or touch the Lord's annointed.

When Royal Anne became our Queen  
Then Church of England's Glory  
Another face of things was seen  
And I became a Tory  
Occasional conformists base  
I blamed their moderation  
And thought the Church in danger was  
By such prevarication.



*Chorus*  
*And this is law that I'll maintain*  
*Until my dying day, Sir.*  
*That whatsoever king may reign*  
*Still I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir!*

When Royal James possessed the crown  
And popery came in fashion  
The Penal Laws I hooted down  
And read the Declaration  
The Church of Rome I found did fit  
Full well my constitution  
And I had been a Jesuit  
But for the Revolution.

When George in pudding time<sup>3</sup> came o'er  
And moderate men looked big, Sir.  
My principles I changed once more  
And so became a Whig, Sir.  
And thus preferment I procured  
From our new faith's defender.  
And almost every day abjured  
The Pope and the Pretender.



When William was our King declared  
To ease the nation's grievance  
With this new wind about I steered  
And swore to him allegiance  
Old principles I did revoke  
Set conscience at a distance  
Passive obedience was a joke  
A jest was non-resistance.

The illustrious house of Hanover  
And Protestant succession  
To these I do allegiance swear  
While they can keep possession  
For in my faith and loyalty  
I never more will falter  
And George my lawful king shall be  
Until the times do alter.



<sup>1</sup> High Anglican

<sup>2</sup> appointment to clerical office

<sup>3</sup> just in time



This delightful song is of unknown authorship but must have been written in the early 1700s, given that it refers to King George I (whose reign was 1714–1727). The tune is that of a song called 'Country Gardens', composed by Thomas Walker for use in his *Quaker's Opera*, which first played in 1728. However, the archetypal vicar of Bray-on-Thames (in Berkshire) is thought by some to have been an earlier cleric, Simon Alwyn, who survived more drastic swings during the reigns of Henry VIII, ('Bloody') Mary I and Elizabeth I. Others nominate the more contemporary Simon Symonds, who was similarly adept during the times of Oliver Cromwell, Charles II, James II and William III. Search the title on: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and select the Stanley Holloway reference for a truly engaging (though incomplete) rendition – it is set in a tavern and comes from his 1937 movie of the same name.

The second verse refers to the Penal Laws that had earlier forbidden people to worship anywhere but in Anglican churches and required an oath of allegiance to that faith for anyone seeking civil or military office. These were repealed by King James II, a Catholic, and his Declaration of Indulgence of 1660 applied to Catholics, non-Anglican Protestants, Unitarians, Jews, Muslims, other faiths and even atheists. Sadly, James and his Stuart dynasty were deposed by Parliament in the Glorious (or Bloodless) Revolution of 1688, which then declared William of Orange as king in his place. This led to the disastrous Williamite-Jacobite War in Ireland, where James was still recognised as king.

James and family went into exile in France and his descendants became 'Pretenders to the Throne', posing a genuine threat to later English monarchs because they had considerable support in their ancestral Scotland. Indeed, the first of two Stuart-led Scottish rebellions occurred in 1725, one year after King George I died.

## THE WEB OF LIFE

There is a living web that runs through us  
To all the universe  
Linking us each with each and through all life  
On to the distant stars.  
Each knows a little corner of the world, and lives  
As if this were his all.  
We no more see the farther reaches of the threads  
Than we see of the future, yet they're there.  
Touch but one thread, no matter which;  
The thoughtful eye may trace to distant lands  
Its firm continuing strand, yet lose its filaments as they reach out,  
But find at last it coming back to him from whom it led.  
We move as in a fog, aware of self  
But only dimly conscious of the rest  
As they are close to us in sight or feeling.  
New objects loom up for a time, fade in and out;  
Then, sometimes, as we look on unawares, the fog lifts  
And then there's the web in shimmering beauty,  
Reaching past all horizons. We catch our breath;  
Stretch out our eager hands, and then  
In comes the fog again, and we go on,  
Feeling a little foolish, doubting what we had seen.  
The hands were right. The web is real.  
Our folly is that we so soon forget.

Robert T. Weston

## SOMETIMES

Sometimes  
if you move carefully  
through the forest

breathing  
like the ones  
in the old stories

who could cross  
a shimmering bed of dry leaves  
without a sound,

you come  
to a place  
whose only task

is to trouble you  
with tiny  
but frightening requests

conceived out of nowhere  
but in this place  
beginning to lead everywhere.

Requests to stop what  
you are doing right now,  
and

to stop what you  
are becoming  
while you do it,

questions  
that can make  
or unmake  
a life,

questions  
that have patiently  
waited for you,

questions  
that have no right  
to go away.

David Whyte



## WILLIAM JOSEPH McELDOWNEY

By Wayne Facer



William Joseph McEldowney (1889-1967) was an accountant and lawyer before switching – in mid-life – to the Unitarian ministry. Raised among Methodists and Presbyterians, he was in his forties when he started attending Unitarian services in Wellington, New Zealand. Attracted to the ministry, he enrolled at Manchester College, Oxford in England. Unique in the British Unitarian movement, McEldowney was the only New Zealander trained at Manchester College who would remain in the United Kingdom his entire ministerial career. He served churches at Warwick, Chester, Newcastle-under-Lyme, and Sussex.

He was born in Wellington, New Zealand in 1889. His father, Jacob McEldowney, had emigrated to New Zealand from Tyrone, Ireland. His mother Roberta Hewitson (née McDowall) had come from Scotland. A sister Iva Helen Letitia was born two years later. The family was well off, his father, along with two uncles – Alex and John McEldowney – owned extensive commercial property on Jervois Quay, Wellington City. The quay property had previously housed major goods importing firms. The three brothers entered into business as warehousemen and wholesale merchants in 1911 and developed a national distribution network. Experienced in the wholesale business, they travelled to Sydney and London to purchase stock for the Wellington venture. One uncle, John McEldowney had been a draper at Marton, north-west of Wellington, for over 20 years before joining his brothers in business. Highly regarded in his community, McEldowney's uncle had served on the borough council and as an office holder in the local Presbyterian Church for 23 years.

McEldowney had a varied experience of churches while growing up. He would later recall that “When I was about 11 years of age I used to go to a Wesleyan Sunday School, which was about 100 yards from my home. My people were Presbyterians, but my grandmother was more or less an invalid and the Presbyterian Church was too far for her to walk to so she went to the Methodist Church, which meant that I was... at home in both Methodism and Presbyterianism.” As he grew older however, he began to “. . . notice a real difference in the social standing of the Wesleyans compared with the Presbyterian at St. Andrews Church. I had sense to realise that for all their glibness those Methodists had no better characters than the Presbyterians I knew.”

McEldowney was educated at Wellington College for three years; the oldest high school in Wellington, it had been founded by the Governor General in 1853. In 1906 he entered Victoria University College to study law. After completing his first two years of law with very satisfactory results (first class and second class passes) William went into the family firm as an accountant, leaving his law career in abeyance. His sister boarded at Wellington Girls' College from 1908 to 1911 where she studied art and played sports. She was an outstanding tennis player. She was also a committee member of the Christian Union. After leaving school Iva taught at the boy's preparatory school established by Miss Somerville, which later became the Anglican Wellesley College. She resigned in 1913 to spend more time on her painting studies before leaving for England in 1914 where she studied at the Slade School of Art.

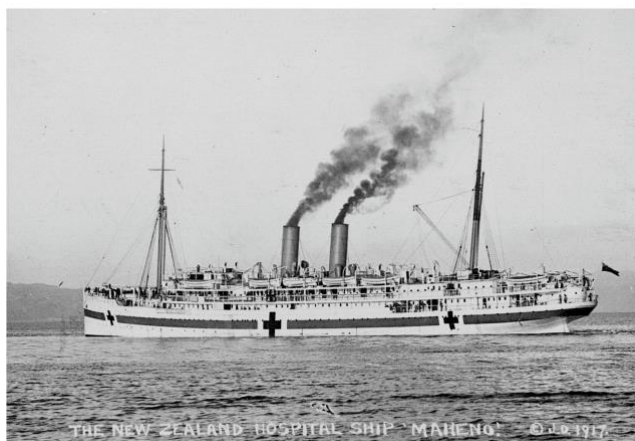


Photo by J. Dickie • Brodie Collection • La Trobe Picture Collection • State Library of Victoria, Australia



When war broke out in August 1914, McEldowney was 25 years old working as an accountant for McEldowney Brothers. He was in no rush to enlist but when he did, in November 1915, he joined the New Zealand Medical Corps. For the duration of the war he served as an orderly on the Hospital Ship *Maheno*. The ship had eight wards, two operating theatres, a sterilisation room, X-ray room and laboratory, and could accommodate over 400 wounded or ill patients. The first charter took the ship to Gallipoli, where bullets hit the deck. William joined the ship for its second charter from Egypt to bring patients back to New Zealand. It then sailed to Southampton, England to ferry wounded from France to England during the Battle of the Somme. McEldowney served on all subsequent charters until the war's end. The *Maheno* along with its sister hospital ship *Marama* had transported 47,000 patients by the end of hostilities. During his war service, half of which was spent overseas, McEldowney's religion of record changed: It was the obligatory Church of England when he enlisted but Congregationalist at war's end. He was transferred to Napier Hospital in 1918 on active service with the rank of corporal until being discharged in March 1919. Later that year his law degree (LLB) was conferred by the University of New Zealand.

Home in peace time, the newly qualified solicitor decided he no longer wanted to work in the family business so he set about building a law practice. His practice in the centre of Wellington city grew and with its success he began family life, marrying Ida Evaline Daniell in the Methodist Church at Masterton in 1925. The couple travelled to Britain after the wedding for an extended holiday, and their first child Roberta, always known as Bobbie, was born in Kensington, London the following year.

The family returned to New Zealand, and in 1928 another daughter, Helen, was born. Life was good for William and Ida; the children were healthy little girls and William's law practice continued to prosper. He found time to support his university college, acting as judge and adjudicator for the Victoria University College Debating Society, and was a selector for the national university competition team. He gifted 400 volumes on seventeenth and eighteenth century New Zealand colonial history to the Victoria University College Library. His gift was acknowledged at the same university Council meetings that recorded the donation by Sir Robert Stout of a large number of pamphlets on public issues. Sir Robert had recently retired as New Zealand's Chief Justice and was President of the Wellington Unitarian Free Church. But disaster was to strike this little family in June 1930 when Ida became ill with aplastic anaemia, a blood disease which had no effective treatment, from which she died that September. Her funeral service was conducted by the Rev. Robert Howie at St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Wellington.

By 1931 McEldowney was an active member of the Wellington Unitarian Free Church. He spoke at community meetings as well as church services in Channing Hall on a monthly basis. His topics included poverty and the slums, theological subjects, the work of the League of Nations, humanism, and political history. He visited Auckland in 1932 and 1933 and gave sermons at the Auckland Unitarian Church. In 1931 William was elected President of the League of Nations Union in Wellington, a position he would occupy until he left for England in 1934. In that capacity he was an advocate for the League and world peace, which he thought could be brought about through the work of the League.

Meanwhile his sister Iva, who had returned from London at the end of the war, was exhibiting her paintings at art society gatherings. Soon she went back to the continent where she studied under M. Emile Renard (1850-1930) and painted in France and Northern Africa. Her work was hung in the Royal Institute of Oil Painters and was greatly admired. By 1932 she was a pupil of the celebrated Dutch artist Miss Jo Koster. Under her tutelage she mastered drawing techniques, finding subjects in Brittany, Holland and the Balearic Islands. While residing in St Ives, Cornwall with Miss Koster, Iva became engaged to Thomas Enoch Williams, MA (Oxon) a master at King's School, Chester. They were married in December 1933. Like Iva, Tom painted and after their marriage they jointly exhibited.

In 1934 after four years active involvement with the Wellington Unitarian Church, McEldowney decided to go to Manchester College, Oxford (Harris Manchester College after 1996) to study for the ministry. In doing so, as a widower with two young daughters, he was influenced by the fact that his sister Iva had already settled in Chester and could help raise the children. He entered the College in October 1934 on his own foundation, without any scholarship, and completed his studies over three years. He won the Mansfield-Evans Prize for philosophy at Manchester College. His first ministry was at the High Street Chapel, Warwick. In 1938 he became minister at Matthew Henry's Chapel, Chester where he remained until 1944. In 1942 he was President of the Chester Free Church Ministers' Fraternal, indicating the regard in which his colleagues held him. From there he took up the Unitarian ministry at Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, where he remained for seven years.



Newcastle-under-Lyme Meeting House.

By now his daughters were young adults. McEldowney made a journey back to New Zealand in 1947 with his younger daughter Helen. His eldest daughter Roberta was studying architecture at Liverpool University. In 1949 she married Dr. John McIntyre and they migrated to Canada in 1956. Helen married John Davey a local dentist in 1952. Meanwhile in the 1950 British general election he had stood as a Liberal candidate in the Stafford and Stone electorate, but he only polled a distant third.

McEldowney's next ministry was at the Westgate Chapel, Lewes, Sussex. This was the chapel where Tom Paine author of the *Rights of Man* was married. This was his last ministry, 1953–56. In 1956 he retired and returned to Chester. Now he had more time to visit his family in Canada and to write. Between 1952 and 1966 he contributed articles to *The Inquirer* and *Faith and Freedom* on subjects ranging from “Katherine Mansfield” to “The Age of Enlightenment and Human Virtues”. His last article was published in 1966 entitled “An Apostle at Grips with Human Existence”. He began writing a major work, *Unitarianism in America – From Biblical Literalism to the Authority of Reason and Religious Experience*. Alan Seaburg, librarian at the Crane Theological School at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts was very helpful with this project. The two first met in 1960 when McEldowney visited the library to do research for the book. Seaburg invited him to dinner, they became friends, and over the next four years they often corresponded about the work. Unfortunately, the book was never completed though some of the research was used in McEldowney's journal publications.

William McEldowney was a scholarly minister, with interests in Unitarian history and European existentialist philosophy. He made a unique contribution to the British Unitarian movement, being the only New Zealander who trained at Manchester College and then remained for his entire professional career in the United Kingdom. A memorial bowl in his name was donated to the Newcastle-under-Lyme Meeting House.

The Harris Manchester College Library at the University of Oxford in England holds class photographs and college files for McEldowney while the Andover-Harvard Divinity School Archives in Cambridge, Massachusetts have a ministerial file for McEldowney which includes correspondence with Alan Seaburg and draft chapters of McEldowney's planned book. Correspondence and meeting records are found in the Newcastle-under-Lyme Old Meeting House archives in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, England. Records of McEldowney's service in the New Zealand Defence Force are in Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kawanatanga ([archives.govt.nz](http://archives.govt.nz)). College records were found for *New Zealand University Graduates 1870-1961* on-line at [shadowsoftime.co.nz](http://shadowsoftime.co.nz).

McEldowney's journal contributions include, “Unitarian Theism – Is It Christ Centered?” *Faith and Freedom* (1962); “The Age of Enlightenment and Human Virtues” *Faith and Freedom* (1963); “Memories and Reflections” *The Inquirer* (1952); “Early Memories of Worship” *The Inquirer* (1953); and “An Apostle at Grips with Human Existence” *The Inquirer* (1966). Alan Seaburg provided a personal reminiscence. Stella Blazier kindly provided typed copies of correspondence concerning WJ McEldowney and minutes of monthly meetings held in the Newcastle-under-Lyme Old Meeting House archives, 1944–1951.

[This is adapted from Wayne Facer's article on the Dictionary of UU Biography website ([www.uudb.org](http://www.uudb.org)), with the permission of the author and the website administrator, David Ross. Wayne is with the Auckland Unitarian Church and has written numerous articles on prominent New Zealand Unitarians which are also on the DUUB website. He studied economic history and worked in university administration and health economics before completing a postgraduate degree in religious history. A review of his book, *A Vision Splendid* on the life of Rev. William Jellie, appeared in the Autumn 2018 edition of this journal.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I welcome you on behalf of the ANZUUA Management Committee and our hosts, the Brisbane UU Fellowship, to our 2019 Biennial General Meeting.

Much has happened since our last gathering in Adelaide. By far the biggest change was the decision by the Adelaide congregation, one of our largest, to disassociate from ANZUUA. The given reason had to do with questions about what happened to the monies in the Bottomley Fund. Our treasurer will address this issue later. Their decision had several implications for us as an organisation.

First, their minister, Rob MacPherson, was our president. In light of his congregation's decision, he resigned. Based on a letter in *Quest* shortly after our last Biennial it was clear that he had little confidence that ANZUUA had a future worth pursuing and was not eager to serve as president. As I was the vice-president, I assumed his duties.

Second, our finances have been impacted by their departure. The good news is that a review of our income and expenses showed we were still financially viable.

Third, Adelaide's departure became an opportunity for us to re-examine our mission and purpose in light of our resources. This led to using this biennial to ask who are we now and where are we going? This beautiful, primal setting is the perfect place for such ruminations, as it invites us to consider our connections and commitments to one another to further Unitarian Universalism in Australasia.

Adelaide is not the only loss of a member congregation. The UU Fellowship of Christchurch is no longer sustainable. The Blenheim fellowship is small but gives a foothold in the South Island. In the North Island, a group of Wellington UUs strive to meet on a monthly basis. Auckland Unitarians are now the most viable UU presence in New Zealand. While they are flourishing now, they are struggling with what happens after health or aging requires my stepping down. In Australia we have six congregations, two in Melbourne, two in Sydney, one in Perth and one in Brisbane. Three of the six are fellowships that meet once or twice a month.

I am painting this picture of who we are now to give us sense of our starting point as an organisation. We were founded in 1974 with three purposes: To be a networking organisation whose prime purpose has been to facilitate communication and coordination among its member churches and fellowships. This has been achieved, to whatever extent, through the Biennial Conference, the *Quest* journal and the website. We do face a challenge as to the continuation of *Quest*. Michael McPhee has done an extraordinary job of producing a high-quality quarterly journal for many years, but he has made clear that he will need assistance if he is to continue to do so.

Another stated purpose has been to found new groups. In the last 20 years ANZUUA has started 'from scratch' only one new group – the Perth Unitarians. New groups have emerged in Sydney and Melbourne, but organically rather than through ANZUUA's efforts. So, achieving this purpose would seem to be largely eluding us as an organisation.

A third purpose has been to help grow existing groups. This would be, I suppose, an especially urgent aim as it relates to small and emerging groups. Sadly, we have not had the resources to achieve this goal in any meaningful way. One question to consider this weekend is how we might better meet this expectation.

Growth in general has also been eluding us. Our total numbers of members have fallen below 400. Relative to regional population growth, this means we're shrinking. I am not much of an artist but the picture I've painted for UUism in Australasia and ANZUUA, in particular, is somewhat dire, yet this is the reality facing us. However, I don't despair. I am filled with hope by the work of our individual congregations and fellowships.

I am reminded of a motif that runs through Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the God of History working through a remnant of the faithful to accomplish the divine mission. This was not always something that happened quickly. I think of the early church where Jesus supposedly appointed twelve apostles to carry forth his mission to establish the kingdom of heaven now on earth. They didn't do it overnight. It would take over two hundred years before there was a significant number of people who called themselves Christian and sought to follow his Way.

Then there is the remnant of Transcendentalists who challenged Arian and Socinian Unitarians ideas about God, miracles, the authority of Scripture, and the divinity of Jesus. Thanks to Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller and especially Theodore Parker, Unitarian ideas we take for granted today were first articulated. But those ideas were soundly rejected at first. It would take nearly a hundred years before they were accepted by most Unitarians. I believe we are the remnant promoting progressive religion in Australasia. Our presence is small now, but the world will increasingly need to hear our voice of reason to find the hope we offer through our member congregations.

We are called to be patient. We need to remember that if we no longer existed who in the religious world would replace our advocating for immigrants, the first peoples of the land, the Rainbow community, human rights and the work of the UN, the poor, gender equality, world peace and most importantly the protection of mother earth? Who would there be to challenge life stifling patriarchy, neo-liberalism, income inequality, homelessness, colonialism and white nationalism? Who would offer a spirituality not based on dogma and doctrine, but on the divine spark within each of us calling us to trust we can make a difference individually and collectively against all the odds.

We are here in this idyllic setting to remind each other to stand fast in the face of the many obstacles before us. They cannot defeat us, unless we let them. It is not in our nature to let that happen for there is much work to be done.

## FOOTNOTES

Just with the inspirational items on p. 7, Rev. Robert T. Weston Sr. should be a lot more famous than he is. He was a Unitarian Universalist minister from 1929 and served congregations in Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, (Louisville), Nebraska, Florida and California. He was in the US Army in World War I and served as a US Navy chaplain in World War II. He retired from the ministry in 1973 and died in 1988.

More importantly, he wrote books of poetry and meditation, and made many contributions to UUA hymnals, usually in the form of Responsive Readings. ‘The Web of Life’ is from his book, *Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood*. It is all the more surprising that so little can be found about him on the Internet – I couldn’t even find a picture of him.

David Whyte was born in Yorkshire in 1955 and studied marine zoology at Bangor University in Wales. During his twenties, he worked as a naturalist and lived in the Galapagos Islands, after which he led anthropological and natural history expeditions in the Andes, the Amazon and the Himalayas. He moved to the United States in 1981 and began a career as a poet and speaker in 1986.

From 1987 he began taking his poetry and philosophy to larger audiences including consulting and lecturing on organisational leadership models in the US and UK, exploring the role of creativity in business. Whyte has written seven volumes of poetry and four books of prose. It is not clear which of his books ‘Sometimes’ was published in, but it dates from 2012 and his two publications in that year were *Pilgrim* and a revised edition of *River Flow*.

Whyte has honorary degrees from Neumann College in Aston, Pennsylvania, and from Royal Roads University in Victoria Canada. He is also an Associate Fellow of Templeton College and the Saïd Business School at Oxford. He now runs the Many Rivers organisation, which has published some of his books, and Invitas, the Institute for Conversational Leadership, which he founded in 2014. In recent years, has lived in Washington State in the US.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

At the risk of repeating myself, I still need an assistant and more input in the way of articles before I can get this journal back on track. At the very least, the sort of assistance I require is someone to edit articles to fit a set number of pages and/or to write a short article to fill out a given page – I can provide the raw material. Anyone who is interested, please write to me at: [michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au](mailto:michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au).

This Spring edition should have come out in September but my circumstances simply did not allow for that. However, I would hate to just skip an issue, so I will try to produce a Summer issue by the end of January.