THE THIRTY YEARS WAR

In a recent feature article, the French Wars of Religion between 1562 and 1598 were described as the second bloodiest religious war fought in Europe, with about three million people who died from violence, disease and famine. However, the worst of all was the Thirty Years War of 1618–48, in which eight million people lost their lives. That tragic figure reflects the much larger theatre in which the war was fought and the many countries that were involved in it.

Ironically, the war started between Catholic and Protestant states in the Holy Roman Empire but, over time, many of the great powers in Europe became involved and the fighting raged from Italy to the Baltic Sea. Yet more ironically, Catholic France entered the war supporting the Protestant states due to its determination to curb the power of the Austrian House of Habsburg, which had dominated the Empire for generations.

At that time, the Holy Roman Empire was essentially Austria and the territories it controlled in the north of Italy, Switzerland, Bohemia, a slice of eastern France known as the 'Roman Road' and all of the future state of Germany. For this reason, the Habsburg Emperors' titles always included Archduke of Austria and King of the Germans, though they were often the kings of Bohemia, Hungary and Croatia, as well.

The German lands were a 'crazy-quilt' of duchies, free cities, bishoprics and petty lordships, ranging in size from the Duchy of Bavaria to single villages. Lutheranism had made a large impact, especially in the north, since about 1500 and there had been some actual warfare early in that century. That was defused by Emperor Charles V, whose Peace of Augsburg of 1555 authorised the ruler of each polity to determine which (if any) religion it should have *(Cuius regio, eius religio* – Whose region, his religion).

That arrangement only applied to Catholics and Lutherans, but the yet more reformist doctrine of Calvinism became an emerging force in Germany from 1560 onward. By 1613, four northern states had converted to that faith, most notably the Margraviate of Brandenburg (centred on Berlin) and the Rhine Palatinate.

Another 'hotspot' was Bohemia, where the heirs of Jan Hus had won their religious freedom in 1436 and the aristocracy was solidly Protestant when Emperor Matthias, who had no heir, had his staunchly Catholic cousin, the future Emperor Ferdinand II (pictured at far left), made their king-elect in 1618. The Bohemian nobility revolted against his infringements on their liberties and elected Frederick V of the Rhine Palatinate (second on left) to be their king.

Galvanised by the death of Matthias in 1619, there were Lutheran uprisings in Austria itself but they were suppressed by Bavarian troops. The Bohemians were defeated at the Battle of White Mountain (near Prague) in 1620, after which 27 estate holders were executed and most of the others were exiled. Troops from the Spanish Netherlands (i.e., Belgium) invaded the Rhine Palatinate and drove Frederick V into exile in the Dutch Republic in 1622. Ferdinand II proceeded to purge Austria and Bohemia of Calvinists, and Lutherans, ordering them to either convert to Catholicism or leave those realms.

With the entire Rhineland under Catholic control and Spain trying to reconquer the Dutch Republic, King Christian IV of Denmark and Norway (pictured at centre) felt that he had to support his fellow Lutherans in Lower Saxony. That state was on his southern border, as he was already the Duke of Holstein and he had taken control of Hamburg in 1621 (both of which were in the Holy Roman Empire). In 1625, having been assured of support from Britain and France, he led an army of 52,000 men into Germany.

Unbeknownst to Christian, Ferdinand II had engaged Albrecht of Wallenstein (pictured second from right) and his mercenary army of 50,000 on the condition that they could plunder any territories they captured. In spite of some German forces joining Christian, they suffered serious defeats at Lutter in Lower Saxony and the Dessau Bridge on the Elbe in 1626. Wallenstein then advanced through Mecklenburg and Pomerania in central Germany into Denmark, though he had no ships with which to take Copenhagen.

The powerful Danish navy neutralized the Imperial ports on the Baltic Sea and the resulting impasse led to the Treaty of Lübeck in 1629, whereunder Christian IV regained his territories but had to cease supporting the German states. As the Empire subjugated more and more territory in the northeast, King Gustav II Adolf of Sweden (pictured second from right) felt the need to protect his borders. Having already sent financial support for Christian IV's campaign and assisted his naval blockade, he made an alliance with the Duchy of Pomerania in 1630 and brought his army through there into (Protestant but neutral) Brandenburg.

In 1631, having gained qualified support from Brandenburg, Gustav moved south but he was too late to prevent an Imperial attack on the city-state of Magdeburg, which was destroyed along with most of its populace. He then had a major victory in the Battle of Breitenfeld (near Leipzig), after which his forces moved southwest to attack Bavaria, the largest of the Catholic states, while their Hessian allies invaded the Rhineland.

The Swedes got as far as Nuremberg in 1632 but Imperial forces drove them back into Saxony and Gustav II died in the Battle of Lützen (again, near Leipzig). The fighting moved north and south for two years until the Protestant forces were decisively defeated at the Battle of Nördlingen (just north of Bavaria) in 1634. This led to the Peace of Prague, negotiated in 1635, whereunder the rights of the Protestant states were restored and the Swedish forces were withdrawn (though some remained in Pomerania).

This inherently unstable arrangement was quickly upset by the entry of France, which had long felt encircled by the Austrian Habsburgs on its eastern border and Spanish Habsburgs, who also controlled Belgium and the north of Italy. Louis XIII's chief minister, Cardinal Richelieu (pictured at far right), had sent large sums of money to support the Swedish campaign, as well as assisting the Dutch Republic. In 1635, France attacked the Spanish Netherlands and, a year later, its forces entered Germany. Their few successes were short-lived, however, and Imperial forces ravaged the northeast of France before the tide turned in 1640.

In 1636, Richelieu made arrangements with Sweden for a renewed offensive, which commenced in time to thwart an Imperial attack on Brandenburg. Emperor Ferdinand II died in 1637 and was succeeded by his son, Ferdinand III, who favoured a negotiated peace. Instead, the last decade of the war involved more engagements across more countries than in any previous phase. The Swedes fought their way through Saxony to the Bohemian border in 1539/40 but were driven back before they could enter Bavaria. In 1642, they inflicted a crushing defeat on the Imperial forces in the Second Battle at Breitenfeld that won them full control of Saxony.

By 1644, the resurgent French were also advancing on Bavaria, though they suffered two defeats on the way. Their victory in the Second Battle of Nördlingen cost them dearly and they had to withdraw. The next year, the Swedes invaded Bohemia and defeated an Imperial army at Jankau, putting them at striking distance from both Prague and Vienna. However, their attempted sieges of Vienna and Brno (in Moravia) failed and the exhausted Swedes also had to retreat. They returned in 1648 and joined with a French army to invade Bavaria, where their victory in the Battle of Zusmarshausen nearly ended the war. Imperial reinforcements arrived in time to save Bavaria but a separate Swedish column captured Prague.

As mentioned in the previous issue, a series of theological dialogues has been scheduled for this year to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Edict of Torda. The first of these took place in conjunction with the ICUU's Council Meeting and Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal, in February, with the theme of 'Theology and U/U Identity'. We have now learned that the second session was held on 07 April at the Community Church UU in New York City as the final event of the UU United Nations Office's Intergenerational Spring Seminar. Its theme was 'Freedom and Resistance' and the focus was on "how U/U theology guides and sustains us as leaders and partners in Resistance movements".

The five panellists who are leading these dialogues are: Rupaia Lamarr of the Unitarian Union of Northeast India (Khasi Hills Unitarians); Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana, founder of the Unitarian Church of Burundi; Ellen Nugroho, co-founder of the Unitarian Christian Church of Indonesia; Dr. Stephanie Y. Mitchem of the UUA; and Rev. Norbert Zsolt Racz, minister of the Central Unitarian Church in Kolozsvár, Transylvania.

The third Dialogue will take place in Kolozsvár, Romania, on 07 July, in conjunction with the opening of the Hungarian Unitarian Church's new Centre for Religious Freedom in the restored former residence of the 15th Century Unitarian bishops. The last two gatherings are scheduled for 22 September and 01 November, but their locations have not yet been publicised.

The UU United Nations Office was originally conceived in 1962 by the Unitarian US Ambassador to the UN, Adlai Stevenson. (He was also the Democrat's presidential in three elections between 1952 and 1960.) It began as a network, funded by various congregations, became an independent non-profit organisation in 1971 and was incorporated into the UUA's International Resources Department in 2011. The UNO's office is in the UN Plaza in New York City and it holds consultative status with a number of UN agencies, including the Economic and Social Council and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is currently headed by Bruce Knotts, who addressed our ANZUUA Conference in Brisbane via video link in 2009.

The International Spring Seminars have been held since 2010 and, as the name suggests, involve both youth and adults in a three days of workshops, peer and expert-led panel discussions, community building activities, and worship services. They address challenging issues facing humanity today, this year's topic being the plight of 38 million refugees and displaced people around the world.

The ICUU has been issuing Global Chalice Lightings on a monthly basis since October 2003, which all U*U congregation leaders are asked to read at least once in that month. Over the years, these inspirational words have been submitted by national member groups from all over the world in any number of languages (with translations, as needed). Because May 2018 marks the 175th such Chalice Lighting, it was decided to re-issue the first one ever circulated:

> A golden thread binds us to all that has been and will ever be.
> Here the tender soul yearns.
> Here the greatest dreams are sighted.
> Here the sacred flame burns.

As luck would have it, this was submitted by the Australia New Zealand Unitarian Association (as ANZUUA was called then) with words written by Rev. Mark Allstrom, then Minister of the Adelaide Unitarian Church. He is a retired American minister who served the Adelaide church in 1997–2004 after a brief term as Interim Minister in 1995. He was also the President of ANZUA in 2001/3.

As far as we can determine, he was minister of the Hopedale Unitarian Parish in Massachusetts before coming here and later did interims at the UU Society of Black Hawk County in Cedar Falls, Iowa, the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto and the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca, New York.

TRANSHUMANISM – A POST-CHRISTIAN UU PERSPECTIVE

**By Paul Wildman and James Hills**

TransHumanism (TH or H+) can be defined as *the intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate aging and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities. Transhumanism is a way of thinking about the future that is based on the premise that the human species in its current form does not represent the end of our development but rather a comparatively early phase.*[1]

There are many humans enhanced by technology walking among us (scary, right)? We interact with them regularly; people who are significantly different to humans a century ago. These transhumans may even be related to you! Anyone with a knee replacement, an artery stent, or indeed a vaccination, is transhuman; a human enhanced from the natural state by technology. Some of the current ideas for enhancing the human go well beyond this and we will discuss these ideas in this article.

The changes people live with daily that we accept as normal have happened gradually and are generally seen as positive benefits. Other changes discussed later in the article may seem 'out there' today. However, we humans adapt quickly to changed 'normal' states so we may be more accepting in the future than how we feel now about such enhanced humans of the future. As Marshal McLuhan said, 'We look at the present through a rear-view mirror. We march backwards into the future.' Our futures are experienced and frequently determined by a past that few of us fully acknowledge or understand – including even McLuhan himself.

Transhumanism is often linked with the 'techno-utopian' idea that science and technology can be used to continually improve the human condition, enhancing human intelligence and ultimately merging the human with such technologies to give us first the TransHuman (now) and then the Post-Human (H2 by mid-2030s). This is part of the progressive aspect of the modernity, which came out of the Enlightenment of 18th Century Europe.

Examples of Transhumanism include our techno-utopian ideals of human augmentation, artificial intelligence (AI), cryogenics, cloning, medical implants, cyborgs, cognitive enhancement, life extension, defect elimination and so on. With its current momentum, TH is likely directly to affect our grandchildren well before 2030.
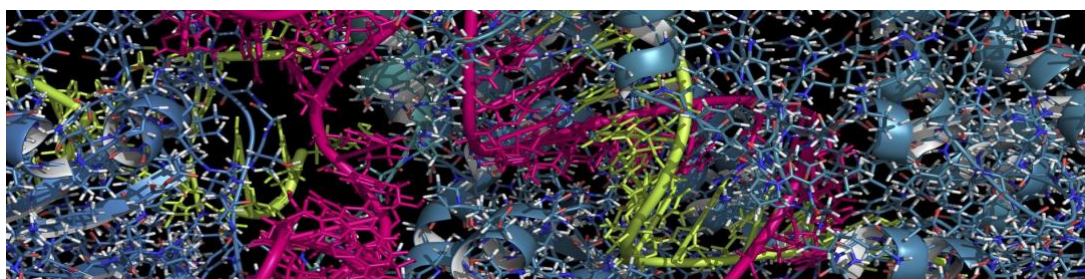
A model of the CRISPR-CAS9 gene-editing complex from Streptococcus genes[2]

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[1] https://www.facebook.com/humanityplus/ and http://hplusmagazine.com/. The TH/H+/Extropian revolution is really an outcome of the synergy between four primary component revolutions; viz., (1) Computer and Info Technology (CIT), (2) Artificial Intelligence (AI), (3) Genetics, Nanotechnology and Robotics (GNR), and (4) Gene editing to remove disability and custom design children using Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR, pronounced 'crisper'). This has nothing to do with the spiritual take that some Christians have in trying to play catch up and saying 'Christian as if Christ was always TH'. TH as outlined here is about hard Western science, which lauds the objective, empirical and experimental; it is not about Spirituality. It is crucial we do not conflate or confuse the two.

In this piece, TH has been abstracted somewhat from the other range of crises facing humanity from global warring and warming, overpopulation (by several billion), species extinction, ubiquitous surveillance/Big Brother (including IoT (Internet of Things), Weaponised AI Drones etc.), nascent AI/Algorithm aristocracy, perfidious income inequalities, terrorism and the like. For a positive take, see mind-controlled human artificial limbs: https://www.facebook.com/humanityplus/videos/10153117918616723/

[2] **Source:** https://cosmosmagazine.com/biology/what-crispr-and-what-does-it-mean-genetics and vignette: Genetic Engineering, designer babies, etc., will change everything forever. Finally the challenge to Genetic Engineering of the 'dignity of disability': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAhjPd4uNFY. What, we ask is CRISPR's logic base? Maybe a North Korean compulsory CRISPR!!? Those being engineered usually have the weakest voices and political lobbies, such as plants, fungi, bacteria, insects and cows for instance.

So who are the transhumanist explorers pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human? Some of them are wealthy people afraid to die and leave what they have accumulated. So if we could achieve the holy grail of eternal physical life, would this mean we might have to deal with the Donald Trump's eternally? Indeed, from our UU perspective, it is hoped that we can let go of our wealth and contribute meaningfully to assisting others after our careers and wealth-building activities are over. We doubt, yet dare to hope, that that this final act of 'benevolence' will in some way atone for the harm from a lifetime of capitalist externalisation of social and ecological impacts.

Singularity

Another related concept is the time of the Singularity, when Artificial Intelligence (AI) computing intelligence equals all that of all humans combined. The Singularity is a hypoth*etical moment in time (circa. 2030) when artificial intelligence and other technologies have become so advanced that it exceeds that of humanity and both merge thereby undergoing a dramatic and irreversible change* According to the hypothesis, an upgradable intelligent agent (such as a computer running software-based artificial intelligence) would enter a 'runaway reaction' of self-improvement cycles, with each new and more intelligent generation appearing more and more rapidly, causing an intelligence explosion and resulting in a powerful superintelligence that would, qualitatively, far surpass all human intelligence.

The concept is explored more fully on the Singularity website at: https://su.org/. Consequences of the singularity and its potential benefit or harm to the human race have been hotly debated, and public figures such as Stephen Hawking, von Neumann and Elon Musk have all expressed concern that full artificial intelligence could result in human extinction. This could be when humans are deemed (by higher intelligence machines with a rational logic base) to be a blight on the face of earth with our continued degradation of the planet at the expense of all other life forms and ourselves, and the order, like the Daleks, is given to exterminate, exterminate – (us)!

Transhumanism is one of the factors leading to the Singularity that is projected to produce Post Humans (PH or H2) by mid this century. With the rate of technological change being several hundred thousand times that of social change and millions of times faster than biological change (evolution), humans could well become 'obsolescent' for at least mechanical labour tasks and quite possibly many intellectual labour tasks well before 2050 – human obsolescence in our grandchildren's lifetimes. The huge concern here is that as the Singularity approaches and technology becomes in some regards sentient, then transhumans may well include a program-mable Logic Base (LB), just as driverless cars and predator drones are being programmed with one.

Logic Base

Other organisms are now being engineered with a modified logic base, as you read this. A Logic Base comprises *precepts in a culturally endorsed meaning system*; e.g., those used in child raising, common law and now in AI. In Western Anglo countries, this Logic Base includes the following principles drawn, for instance, from the logic base underlying Trump's election:

1. The world is a bad and dangerous place
2. (My) Might is (your) right
3. A saviour (Me/$) is needed
4. Simplistic either/or thinking is all that is required
5. Obedience to the centre is key
6. Violence by me is ok
7. Prejudice is necessary for my triumph
8. Our earth is dispensable
9. Exclusive self-interest is morally superior
10. Arts and Crafts (humanities) are not worth supporting
11. Commodification of human relations and indeed our planet is inevitable and good
12. Free trade is a necessity
13. Capital is free to roam the planet; labour is padlocked to the Nation State
14. Growth is Go(o)d
15. Technology 'trumps' Nature
16. *Few too many* (whereas democracy is *many too few*)
17. Only the global, centrally (read US!) defined, news etc. matters while the periphery and 'others' such as women, the indigenous, LGBTI and local etc. are dispensable.[3]

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[3] http://www.alternet.org/election-2016/trumps-worldview-mirrors-most-archaic-and-apocalyptic-christian-beliefs
Marlene Winnell 15-10-2016. All this sounds like US Exceptionalism/President Trump's philosophy doesn't it?

How do we become fully human?

Here we have the greatest challenge of all – *how to be fully human*? This is a challenge that the Christian church and (incredibly) Progressive Christianity is all but silent on.

One possible future scenario is this: sometime in the not too distant future, jobs have collapsed with many replaced by robots, driverless cars and surgeon-less operations are commonplace, with surveillance by police drones a daily fear. More crucially for our grandchildren's futures, we run the risk of being in a Terminator style war with the Robots or even with ourselves between the haves and the have-nots. All the while, our information is being stored in 'the cloud' (heaven) massaged by AI (angels) and our consciousness will be able to be transferred from this heaven to other life forms (resurrection!!).

So over the next generation, we could possibly experience a Terminator war between AI and us (Terminator series), or the planet could be munched up by Nano-bots and we all become Nano-goo (von Neumann), or even slaves to AI (Elon Musk). So how can we possibly even grasp this imminent dystopian future, let alone handle the scenario? Well, we need to start from a different logic base – our UU logic base.

How then do we live?

Let us start with our UU logic base: towards a Mutual Aid Commonwealth as a counterpoint to a Trans-Humanist bureaucratic one.
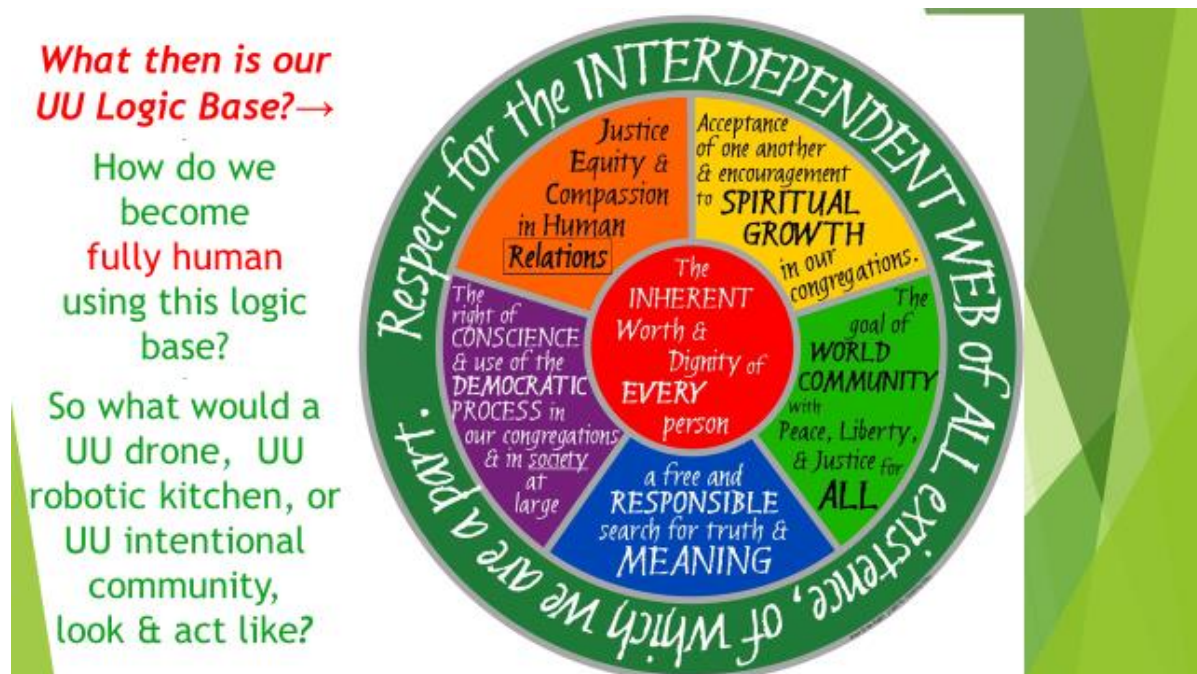
Source: P. Wildman 11-2017

Our intellect cannot bear mortality and finitude. It wants us to live forever. And it will use any available technology to do this such as Big Pharma, Nanotech, Robots, AI and Transhumanism. The 'logical' conclusion to this path could well be the suicidal elimination of the host; i.e., us. Instead, we need a 'deep humanity' to become '*fully human*'; we need a deep practical unity instead of competing against each other for limited resources.

This is where the UU Logic Base comes in. We suggest that a path forward towards a 'deep humanity' here is for a 'secular post-Christian' stop–reset–go approach using our UU logic base.[4]

Towards a deep humanity

So we encourage us all to recognise:
(1) The importance of understanding the enormity of this issue
(2) Moving this recognition to understanding and learning in our UU congregations and beyond
(3) Undertaking practical actions – with the theme of 'becoming fully human' say through workshopping in family groups, UU congregations and community group meetings with the aim of
(4) Ultimately establishing a 'becoming fully human' UU internationally aware community.

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[4] https://stopresetgo.org/

Finally it is our passionately held belief that a better-imagineered future can be ours by applying this UU logic base to enable us as citizens, parents, entrepreneurs, activists, communities and UU members to participate in networked distributed bottom-up 'fully human' initiatives around the world. So we can come out of our silos, converge and effectively share our resources to help build a better future for humanity.

[Paul Wildman (paul@kalgrove.com) and James Hills (james@brookfield.fastmail.fm) are members of the Brisbane UU Fellowship (and James is the Secretary of ANZUUA). This article has been developed primarily from the presentations by the first author to the BUUF on 12 November 2017 and the Progressive Christian Forum Group, Uniting Church of Australia: Queensland Synod on 15 June 2017. It was also published in the *SoFiA (Sea of Faith in Australia) Bulletin* last year.]

Sources and Resources:

(A) Eric Steinhart (2008) on Tielhard de Chardin on Transhumanism

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (a Jesuit paleontologist, 1881 – 1955) was among the first to consider the future of human evolution. According to Steinhart, his work advocates both biotechnologies (e.g., genetic engineering) and intelligence technologies. He discusses the emergence of a global computation-communication system. He sees the development of Transhumanity and engages this with Christian theology, while advocating for the development of a global society. Teilhard is almost surely the first to discuss the acceleration of technological progress to a Singularity in which human intelligence will become super-intelligence. He discusses the spread of human intelligence into the universe and its amplification into a cosmic intelligence.

More recently, Barrow and Tipler, Tipler, Moravec, and Kurzweil* have taken up his work. Of course, Teilhard's Omega Point Theory is deeply Christian, which may be difficult for secular transhumanists. However, transhumanism cannot avoid a fateful engagement with Christianity. Christian institutions may support or oppose transhumanism. Since Christianity is an extremely powerful cultural force in the West, it is imperative for Christianity to engage transhumanism carefully and proactively, and vice versa. A serious study of Teilhard can help that engagement and will thus be rewarding to both communities.

We encourage readers to consider Steinhart's most excellent article in the *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, available at: https://jetpress.org/v20/steinhart.htm.

* This refers to the following books: (1) Barrow, J. and Tipler, F. (1986). *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*. New York: Oxford University Press; (2) Tipler, F. 1995. *The Physics of Immortality: Modern Cosmology, God and the Resurrection of the Dead*. New York: Anchor; (3) Moravec, H. (2000). *Robot: Mere Machine to Transcendent Mind*. New York: Oxford University Press; (4) Kurzweil, R. (2005). *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*. New York: Viking.

(B) Further sources and resources

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- Sterling, B. (2017). *The Future: History that hasn't happened yet.* https://soundcloud.com/officialsxsw/the-future-history-that-hasnt-happened-yet-sxsw-2017. A brilliant 1hr my-fi cyberpunk rant on Transhumanism – well worth a listen.
- Wildman, P. http://crafters-circle.com/craft4.html on 'Transhumanism' and http://www.crafters-connect.com/craft-issue-10/ on 'Becoming Fully Human.'
- Wong, Gien. (2018). *Cape Town water hackathon and Stop-Reset-Go*. https://stopresetgo.org/. I have been working with Gien and others in a globally networked response, in particular to the water shortage facing Cape Town and a half dozen other South African towns, as well as Syria, Egypt, and Libya. *Stop Reset Go* is a South African initiative with its Deep Humanity, among other things, about becoming fully human by appreciating death while vibrantly alive and expressing this through helping others. I (PW) met Gien through this hackathon.
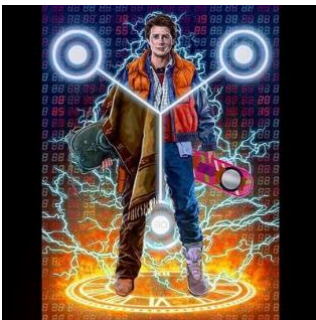
TRANSHUMANIST HUMOUR

[With reference to the previous article, these were provided by Paul Wildman (pictured below).]

I AM THE VERY MODEL OF A SINGULARITARIAN

I am the very model of a Singularitarian
I'm combination Transhuman, Immortalist, Extropian,
Aggressively I'm changing all my body's biochemistry
Because my body's heritage is obsolete genetically,
Replacing all the cells each month it's here just temporarily;
The pattern of my brain and body's where there's continuity.
I'll try to improve these patterns with optimal biology,
("But how will I do that? I need to be smarter. Ah, yes…")
I'll expand my mental faculties by merging with technology.
(Chorus)
Expand his mental faculties by merging with technology,
Expand his mental faculties by merging with technology,
Expand his mental faculties by merging with technology

And with our new technology, renewable clean energy,
Remove our pathogens and overcome hunger and poverty
In short I am a Transhuman, Immortalist, Extropian*;
I am the very model of a Singularitarian.
(Chorus)
In short he is a Transhuman, Immortalist, Extropian
He is the very model of a Singularitarian.

Charlie Kam (2007)

* According to Wikipedia, Extropianism is "an evolving framework of values and standards for continuously improving the human condition". Further: "Extropians believe that advances in science and technology will some day let people live indefinitely."

Charlie Kam is noted singer/songwriter from Chicago who is involved with such organisations as the World Transhumanist Association, the Immortalist Institute, the World Future Society and the Singularity Institute for Artificial Intelligence. He also owns and runs Greenpack Construction, a firm that builds solar-powered homes which incorporate all kinds of recycling.

Obviously, the song is based on Gilbert and Sullivan's 'I am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General'. You can see him singing it by searching the title on YouTube (www.youtube.com).

THE LAND SONG

Sound the blast for freedom, boys, and send it far and wide,
March along to victory, for God is on our side,
While the voice of nature thunders o'er the rising tide:
"God made the land for the people".

(*Chorus*:)
The land, the land,
'Twas God who made the land,
The land, the land,
The ground on which we stand,
Why should we be beggars
With the ballot in our hand?
God gave the land to the people.

(Chorus)

Hark! The shout is swelling from the east and from the west!
Why should we beg work and let the landlords take the best?
Make them pay their taxes for the land, we'll risk the rest!
The land was meant for the people.

(Chorus)

The banner has been raised on high to face the battle din,
The army now is marching on, the struggle to begin,
We'll never cease our efforts 'til the victory we win,
And the land is free for the people.

(Chorus)

Clear the way for liberty, the land must all be free,
Britons will not falter in the fight tho' stern it be.
Till the flag we love so well shall wave from sea to sea,
O'er the land that's free for the people.

(Chorus)
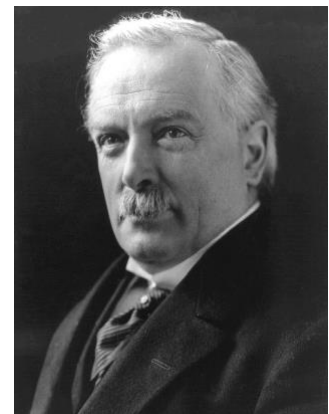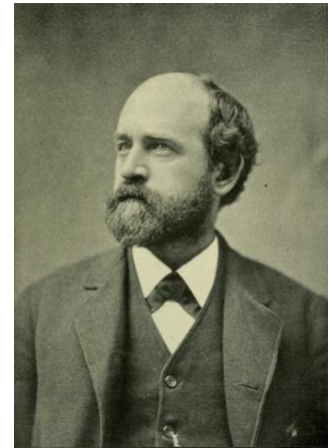
The author of this song is unknown but it first appeared in a land tax publication in Chicago in 1887, sung to the tune of the American Civil War song, 'Marching Through Georgia'. It was probably introduced into the UK by the American land tax advocate, Henry George (top picture), as he made several speaking tours to Britain and Ireland in the 1880s after his book, *Progress and Poverty*, was published in 1879. George had a socialist economic theory based on the premise that land and natural resources were public possessions that individuals should pay rent for, rather than own them.

The song became popular with British unionists and political radicals who, like George's followers in the US, saw a tax on large landholdings as both a source of government revenue that could help the poor and a means of breaking them up. It became the anthem of the Liberal Party, which had collaborated with the unions since 1885, before the Labour Party formed in 1900. The Trade Union Congress (see pp. 14/15) didn't have an anthem of its own, so 'The Land Song' may well have served that purpose in those days.

Liberal governments under William Gladstone had achieved many reforms in the late 1800s, which included greatly extending the franchise. The party became even more ambitious under the leadership of Henry Asquith, David Lloyd George (bottom picture) and Winston Churchill after 1906. Lloyd George's 'People's Budget' of 1909/10 contained many welfare measures, a progressive (rather than flat) income tax and a 20% capital gains tax on land when it was sold or inherited. The House of Lords, dominated by landowners, rejected the Budget and only relented when the land tax was dropped. Subsequent Labour governments introduced land taxes in 1931 and 1947, but they were repealed as soon as the Conservatives regained power.

APRIL FOOLS ARISE!

<div align="right">

By Rev. Clay Nelson

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[This is the text of an Address given at the Auckland Unitarian Church on 01 April 2018.]

In one of my last Easter Day sermons at St Matthew's, I opened with how difficult I found preaching on the Day of Resurrection in a Christian context:

Look out! Here comes the preacher walking the Easter sermon tightrope!

Can he balance the life-giving message of joy and hope that the ancient story of resurrection suggests, with the progressive theology and openness St Matthew's embodies?

Can he make it across safely to the other side without falling into either the dreaded, dogmatic pit of spirit killing, rigid orthodoxy, or the confusing fog of bland generalities that can mean just about anything?

We'll know in about 12 minutes.

If I thought Easter sermons would be any easier in a Unitarian context, I was a fool. There is still a tightrope to walk, only it takes eight minutes longer to do so. With Christians, I had to challenge a literal understanding of the Easter story. It wasn't about a dead man walking who died for our sins. It was dangerous ground for the preacher to tread in a hierarchical institution where, twice, delegations of my colleagues went to the bishop to demand I be tried for heresy. But is it any less dangerous to challenge Unitarians not to dismiss the idea of resurrection as so much rubbish? I guess I'll find out at morning tea.

To paraphrase Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians, "A preacher who does not preach the resurrection is a fool." But it could also be argued that preaching resurrection to Unitarians is a foolish undertaking. Reason, science and our widely held scepticism in a personal god that intervenes in human affairs blocks our ability to suspend our disbelief. It doesn't help that many Unitarians are refugees from toxic forms of Christianity that required belief in a historical and literal resurrection in order to be seen as worthy in the community's eyes. It might be fun to think about reviving the dead but we are more likely to enjoy a movie with zombies than celebrate the post-Easter Jesus walking through walls to show off his wounds.

If we must celebrate Easter at all, we would prefer to do so as a rite of spring, which has its own difficulties in the southern hemisphere. How do we celebrate spring in the autumn? You might be wondering why our service today has no Easter hymns from our Unitarian hymnal. They all refer to spring, as do all the pagan elements used to symbolise Easter. They all speak of the new life we experience after the short, cold days of winter begin to wane. It is hard to embrace an autumnal Easter with any conviction.

So, if I am denied preaching Easter as a rite of spring here in the southern hemisphere, and if debunking a literal resurrection is the theological equivalent of shooting fish in a Unitarian barrel, what should I preach? I've decided to get back on the tightrope and suggest that embracing resurrection is not an April Fools' joke. It is essential to our humanity. To make my case, let me share a more likely understanding of how the Easter story came to be.

We don't know exactly what happened after Jesus was executed. We only have Paul's account, written about 20 years after it happened, and the four Gospel accounts, the earliest of which was written about 40 years after Jesus died. They vary in some significant ways. Paul doesn't give us the story of the resurrection, he just testifies that the Risen Christ appears to individuals and groups over time. In the original version of Mark there are no resurrection appearances at all, only an empty tomb. The witnesses vary, as does the location.

Did the Risen Christ appear in Galilee or Jerusalem? Did he appear in bodily form or in a more mystical way. The earliest tradition suggests the latter. When did it happen? Mark says he was raised in three days, which would have been Monday. Luke and Matthew revise that, saying he was raised on the third day, which would have been Sunday, the day early followers would eventually come to celebrate as the day of the resurrection. Yet in John, after appearing to Mary Magdalene, Jesus didn't show himself to ten of the disciples until a week later, and to Thomas, who proclaimed him "My Lord and My God", until a week after that.

Since no one can prove me wrong, here is my theory about the first Easter. I believe that Jesus' ragged little band of followers were so shocked by his death, the last thing they expected, they took off for the Galilean hills, terrified. They returned sheepishly to their homes and resumed their former lives, perhaps with friends and family sniggering at them for being such suckers for another false messiah. But, once the shock wore off, they struggled to make sense of their experience.

Being Jewish, they did this by scouring the Hebrew scriptures, where they came to see Jesus more in the mould of Isaiah's suffering servant than a King David returning to conquer the Romans. They remembered rabbinical teachings that had been around for a century that spoke of a suffering Messiah named Simon, who would die a bloody and violent death but whom the angel Gabriel said God would resurrect in three days that he might liberate Israel.

They also lived in a Greco-Roman world that had many folk tales and myths about gods that died and were resurrected: Osiris in Egypt, Dionysius in Greece, Attis in Asia Minor, Adonis in Syria, Bacchus in Italy and Mithras in Persia, to name just a few. An interesting point about these gods is that, when they were resurrected, they came back disguised but bore marks that revealed their identity, not unlike the nail holes and spear wound Jesus would show Thomas.

Based on my experience of how we humans process major shifts in our lives, I agree with those scholars who think that it took six months to a year for his key disciples to experience Easter. I also think the story of the Road to Emmaus, which, by the way, is not a real place, explains how they experienced Easter. You may remember that two disciples not mentioned previously realised they had encountered the risen Christ after a meal, where the stranger took, blessed, broke and shared bread with them.

It was in loving fellowship around a meal that many might have experienced their first Easter, with the realisation that hate had not killed love. Not even Rome, with all its legions, could do it. The love and compassion they experienced in the person of Jesus had not died. It lived on in them. That gave them hope and courage to go on. That is what resurrection meant for them.

My view from the tightrope is that Easter is not an occasion to celebrate something that happened once long ago. It is to be celebrated moment to moment in our daily lives. It is not a fairy tale. It is in the DNA of life itself. If Christians reserve resurrection only for the Son of God, they miss the point. If Unitarians dismiss it as irrelevant, we miss the point and the hope it offers. Ironically, Christians and Unitarians both see resurrection as a Christian experience when, in truth, it is a human experience reflected in many religions.

Robert Morris speaks about the commonplace and frequently unnoticed ways that people rise above their loneliness and fear as ordinary resurrections. He points out that the origin of resurrection is the Greek word, anastasis, which he notes means standing up again and, as he put it unpretentiously: We all lie down. We all rise up. We do this every day. The same word is used in scripture for resurrection. He observes: "the resurrection does not wait for Easter."

But Easter is here. The Saxon goddess, Ostara, famous for transforming her owl into a bunny who lays golden eggs, has done her work to fill our children with wonder and delight. So, what do we want before we leave here this morning besides the chocolate eggs and hot cross buns we will offer at morning tea?

Madelene L'Engle tells of one evening reading to her grandchildren at bedtime. Her grandchild Lena turned to her and asked, "Is everything all right?" she said, "Yes, of course, everything is all right." Lena asked again, "Gran, is everything really all right? I mean really?" L'Engle says she looked at the little child in her white night-gown and realised that she was asking the cosmic question, the question that is out beyond the safety of this home full of light and love and warmth: "Is everything really all right?"

We live in a world where so much is not all right it can be hard to find any hope, even here in New Zealand, where a lot more is right than in most of the world. Just one example:. a central issue of the last election that may explain best the change in government was child poverty. While the figures vary, maybe as many as 250,000 of our children in New Zealand are growing up in poverty. That means they are not getting proper nourishment, health care, and in too many cases, education. Where is their hope? If their parents are on a bene-fit, it is considerably less than the minimum wage, which is already well below a living wage. Where is their hope? Can we tell them this Easter everything is all right? Really all right?

All too often what the poor hear is, "It's your fault." Even from those who are touched by their plight, they hear, "I'm sorry, a living wage is not sustainable. We can't afford it." Seriously, how are our children at fault for the circumstances of their birth? How are the fruits of poverty – lost potential and productivity, higher crime, increased healthcare costs – sustainable? How are we not at fault when we remain quiet in the face of higher and higher income inequality that benefits only those at the very top? When we accept goods and services from companies, churches and government entities that don't pay their employees enough to support their families, who is at fault for child poverty?

All too often, those of us who do not have to go to school on empty stomachs look at poverty and see only statistics, not flesh and blood. For us the poor are faceless. They will remain trapped in the cycle of poverty until we have a national will to look them in the eye and say "no more". Everything will be all right. Easter is here.

Peter Rollins, author of *The Orthodox Heretic*, has this to say about resurrection:

> Without equivocation or hesitation I fully and completely admit that I deny the resurrection of Christ….I deny the resurrection of Christ every time I do not serve at the feet of the oppressed, each day that I turn my back on the poor; I deny the resurrection of Christ when I close my ears to the cries of the downtrodden and lend my support to an unjust and corrupt system. However, there are moments when I affirm that resurrection, few and far between as they are. I affirm it when I stand up for those who are forced to live on their knees. When I speak for those who have had their tongues torn out, when I cry for those who have no more tears left to shed.

In the face of not everything being all right, I have decided to be an April Fool as I live in the hope of an empty tomb. I will preach resurrection, even to Unitarians. Easter proclaims grace is and has always been everywhere. The task is to make it so. We need only arise, to stand up again.

[This article will need some explanation, as Rev. Nelson has both Anglican and UU ministerial qualifications – thus, he served for nine years as Associate Priest at St. Matthew-in-the-City after he arrived in New Zealand, during which time he spoke once a year at the Auckland Unitarian Church. He then retired from the Anglican ministry and went on to lead the Unitarians.

With the references on pp. 5/6, the story of the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus and the subsequent supper is in the Gospel of Luke (24:13–35). The quotation of Robert Morris is from Jonathan Kozol's book, *Ordinary Resurrections* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2000) and the other two citations are from Madelene L'Engle's *The Summer of the Great Grandmother* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986) and Peter Rollins' *The Orthodox Heretic and Other Impossible Tales* (Orleans: Paraclete Press, 2009).]

REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS

Adelaide UC have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Channel 44 community access TV to broadcast one service per month, repeated over four weekly time slots. Two adolescent members with technical interests are being trained to shoot, record and edit the broadcasts. They have reserved time slots in the thick of conservative religious programming, in the hope that this leads to dialogue or, at worst, fire-and-brimstone responses that will gain free publicity for AUC.

During the month of April, Rev. John Clifford and his wife, Barbara, led services at the church while Rev. Rob MacPherson was doing the same in York, Leeds, and Glasgow. In his role as the president of ANZUUA, he gave talks on the state of UUism in our region and had dialogues with colleagues and church members there.

AUC intend to install up to 30 solar panels on the roof of the church and manse, which will generate income of up to $7000 a year. They are also seeking funding to upgrade the vegetable plots in the manse garden, which are shared with the local community.

As part of her international research project, 'Interfaith Childhoods', Professor Anna Hickey-Moody recently presented to the congregation about the series of art workshops she is offering to their children. The first of those workshops will take place during the October school holidays with follow-up sessions in 2019. This project promises to be an enriching experience for the children and their families

Auckland UC kicked off the new year with a Water Communion service on 11 February. Also at that time, they celebrated Pride Month with guest speakers on Rainbow Youth and the role of journalists in pushing for social justice. Some members marched in the Pride Parade and the church was made available as the venue for participants to sign in.

In March, they participated in a community St Patrick's Day event by opening the church for food, drink, children's activities, and craft booths supporting Maori culture, Palestinians and the Indian students who took sanctuary there last year. Their foci in April were Easter for Unitarians, Earth Day and Anzac Day.

Attendance remains strong and new members are joining in steady numbers. Their 2017–18 fiscal year ended with the highest pledge income ever and a strong canvass was kicked off by their third annual Quiz Night and dinner on 28 April, with over 75 in attendance.

Brisbane UUF heard member Andrew Walker on 'Mistakes and Forgiveness' in March and visiting UUA minister, Rev. Stephen Furrer, on 'Receptivity' in April. Their president, Renee Hills, led the Earth Day service later in that month, titled 'UU Earth-Centred Spirituality'. In May, member Lynn Kelly spoke on 'The Human Dilemma: How to Live with Unsolvable Questions'.

The proceeds of the International Women's Day service on 11 March were donated to the International Women's Convocation for their Faithify projects in Bolivia and the Philippines (see last issue). The agricultural engineering student they were sponsoring in the Philippines has graduated and additional funds were sent for him to sit for a professional qualifying exam. Two female secondary students will now be sponsored in his place.

BUUF also had a party on 29 April to celebrate the Celtic winter festival of *Samhain* (seasonally adjusted for the Southern Hemisphere). Their Annual Retreat at Springwood Mountain in the Gold Coast hinterland will take place on 20–22 July, with the theme of 'Nurturing: our self, our fellowship, our wider community'.

First UU Melbourne Fellowship joined the Palm Sunday March for 'Justice for Refugees' in late March. In April, their member, Alyce McCaroll, spoke from her experience as a black American Unitarian woman (now resident in Australia) on 'Racism in America'. In May, Claire Butler led the service on the theme of 'Want What You Have'. They have welcomed two new members in the last few months and have attracted several visitors to their services through FaceBook.

Melbourne UC heard Sr. Bridget Arthur, Coordinator of the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project speak on 'The Significance of Palm Sunday for Refugees' at the end of March. On 15 April, Fiona McCandless of the Centre for International Cooperation and Disarmament spoke on 'Russia: Contradictions and Conversation'.

The speakers in May included author Robert Burrowes ('Saving Life on Earth') and Victorian MLC member, Fiona Patten ('The Value of a Voice in Parliament'. On 03 June, Professor Hans Baer of the University of Melbourne's School of Social and Political Sciences will speak on 'Visions of the Future in the Age of Climate Change: Barbarism or Eco-Socialism?'.

MUC were saddened by the sudden passing of Tojo David Voisey, who was responsible for broadcasting their 'Unitarian Half Hour' program on community radio 3CR. They write: "His gentle nature and skills will be sadly missed by the Church and the wider community."

Perth Unitarians have only had monthly services this year while their minister, Rev. Peter Ferguson, was recovering from a stroke. During that time, a visiting Unitarian geneticist from Minnesota, Prof. David Mitchell, gave a PowerPoint presentation on genomic structure and a project by his students at the University of Notre Dame on antibiotic-resisitant bacteria They hope to resume the twice-monthly meetings soon.

Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship have recently heard Rev. Rex Hunt speak on 'Desert Spinifex and Lent for Unitarians' and member Carolyn Donnelly on 'The Significance, Explanation and Philosophical Background of Charles Schultz's 'Peanuts' Comic Strip'. Later in this quarter, Rev. Daniel Jantos spoke on 'Rebirths, Renewals and Renaissances' and Morandir Armson on 'Christian Resurrexit: The Strange Case of Easter'.

Sydney UC had PowerPoint presentations in April by author Walter Mason on 'The Great God Pan' and by the Secretary, Michael Spicer, on 'Secrets of Kangaroo Island'. On 06 May, there was a Music Service of traditional May Day songs featuring three vocalists. Also in that month, Mike McPhee gave a colourful video presentation titled 'A Magical Mystery Tour of the Universe'.

UNIONISM AND DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

By Mike McPhee

Historically, and not just in the United Kingdom, union campaigns to obtain decent pay and conditions for industrial workers have always been connected with larger issues, such as the right to vote, public education and other social goods. No-one today would consider a society truly democratic if it did not provide workers' rights, universal suffrage, free education and many other things that we take for granted. Yet, only a century or so ago, many of these rights and benefits were unheard of even in the most advanced countries.

The Trade Union Congress in England and Wales was founded on 02 June 1868, after the Manchester and Salford Trades Council called a meeting of all the kindred bodies in northern England. One reason for the Manchester venue was the dominance of the London Trades Council, which was seen as speaking for the trade union movement with no input from the regions. Significantly, the second TUC meeting in Birmingham in 1869 addressed such matters as the eight-hour working day, the election of working people to Parliament and free public education.

Trade unions (as opposed to craft guilds) were a relatively new phenomenon, as they had been made illegal under the Corporations Acts of 1799 and 1800. The ruling elite (only 400,000 men had the vote at that time) feared the radical thought inspired by the French Revolution as much as the possible impact of strikes on the war effort against France. These harsh conditions were relaxed somewhat after 1815 and unions were legalised in 1824, though their activities were still restricted.

Union membership and efforts to achieve better wages and working conditions increased after that time, as did interest in a national general union. In 1834, the utopian socialist, Robert Owen formed the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in London, but it got no support outside of the city and soon failed. The London Workingmen's Association was founded in 1836 by the Chartist leader, William Lovett, whose movement sought universal male suffrage, amongst other reforms.

This was the first mass movement in British history, during which petitions signed by millions of workers were presented to Parliament between 1839 and 1848. In 1842, the second Chartist petition was rejected by the Parliament and a General Strike took place that spread to 15 counties in England and Wales, plus four in Scotland. Those strikes were savagely repressed, followed by mass arrests of Chartist leaders – none of them was convicted of a serious offence and the few who still faced minor charges were not sentenced. When the third petition was presented in 1848, as many as 150,000 people rallied in London, but it was still rejected.

However, by this time, all the major railways had been built and the resulting upsurge in internal and external trade, coupled with huge growth in such industries as steelmaking and engineering, brought a period of unprecedented prosperity. These new industrial workers were able to demand good wages and conditions, and they quickly re-formed existing craft organisations into national unions. These 'new model' bodies usually had paid full-time officials and their own 'friendly societies' (credit unions).

From 1858, Trades Councils were formed in Sheffield, Glasgow and Edinburgh. The London Trades Council was formed in 1860, after a lengthy strike by building workers the year before proved the need for related unions to coordinated their actions. Its objectives were the replacement of the anti-union Master and Servant Act with a legal mechanism for the resolution of disputes and the right of working men to vote. A UK Alliance of Organised Trades was formed in Sheffield in 1866, whose failure led to the Trade Union Congress of 1868. By 1874, union membership had risen from about 100,000 in 1850 to over a million.

In 1865, encouraged by the Unionist victory in the US, the Reform League was formed to demand universal male suffrage. Led by four prominent radical unionists, it had tremendous support from the growing middle class of skilled workers, Funded by wealthy sympathisers, the League made George Howell of the Operative Bricklayers Association its full-time secretary. He advertised in the press and organised mass rallies, even as the League's 400 branches met in pubs across the country.

When a Reform Bill failed in Parliament in 1866, these demonstrations swelled to 200,000 people in London's Hyde Park. In 1867, a modest Reform Bill moved by a Conservative government was successfully amended by the Liberal opposition to extend the franchise to all male homeowners, trebling the electorate to three million in England and Wales. Similar Acts affecting Scotland and Ireland were passed in the next year. There were also redistributions in all three regions to better reflect the demography.

The Trade Union Congress lost no time in preparing to get working men elected to Parliament. Even the Conservatives were anxious to attract the new voters, so a number of Acts favourable to the unions were passed in the 1870s, including the Factory Act of 1874 that declared a 10-hour working day. Two miners were elected in the north of England as Liberal MPs in that year.

Unfortunately, the skilled workers' bodies resisted the unionisation of semi-skilled and unskilled workers until their own rank-and-files instigated a wave of strikes by those groups in 1889/90. Gasworkers, dock labourers, seamen and agrarian workers soon formed unions of their own that were admitted to the TUC. Women, with the exception of weavers and teachers, had also been left out of the union movement until the Royal British Nurses' Association was formed in 1887.

A Reform Act in 1884 had extended the franchise to 60% of the male population, which probably excluded many of the new unionists. They tended to be more militant than their predecessors and also more inclined toward socialism (especially Marxism). In 1892, the TUC called for a political party to be formed specifically to represent working people and the Independent Labour Party was subsequently formed at a conference in Bradford, Yorkshire. The ILP then formed the Labour Representative Committee in 1900, headed by Ramsay MacDonald, who would eventually become the UK's first Labour prime minister.

The LRC collaborated with the Liberal Party in the election of 1906, in which 23 of its candidates won office and the ruling Conservatives were defeated. The new MPs promptly took the name 'Labour Party' and Herbert Asquith's government introduced workers compensation, an 8-hour day for coal miners, old age pensions and reforms in public education over the next two years. In the election of 1910, the Labour contingent grew to 42, three of whom got ministerial positions; the Party also won many seats on municipal and local councils.

There were some fault-lines in the labour movement at this time, as a counter-offensive by the employers had sought to reduce wages. The new industrial unions were led by socialists and syndicalist who rejected attempts by the Labour Party and the TUC to discourage strikes, calling them 'class collaborationists'. There were also women in male-dominated unions who chafed at their leaders' lack of interest in seeking equal pay for them – again, the Liberal-Labour government was no more concerned about that than it was about female suffrage.

World War I changed all that, as the shortage of manpower brought women into work in the munitions factories and other areas that they had always been excluded from. Their union membership soared by 160%, though some seceded to form unions of their own. The government declared war powers over essential industries and forbade strikes, but the left-wing unions, who had always opposed the war, defied these bans.

In 1918, the first strike for equal pay was won by London tramway workers, which quickly spread to other towns. Also in that year, a fourth Reform Act enfranchised all males and women over 30 years of age. But massive unemployment followed the return of the servicemen and in 1919, galvanised by the Russian Revolution, there were strikes by miners, transport workers, printers and even police and the military. Glasgow and Belfast were paralysed by massive strikes.

In 1921, the TUC formed a General Council with broader powers to pursue industrial activities instead of political lobbying. It also absorbed the Women's Trade Union League, reserving two seats on the Council for them. In 1922, the Labour Party polled second to the Conservatives and it led a coalition government in 1924. Much more could be said but it will need to wait until a later issue.

(**The Thirty Years War**, *cont'd.*)

The sad part of all this is that the various warring parties had been negotiating for the previous four years to end the war. The Peace of Ulm was agreed to by France, Sweden and Bavaria in 1647 but Ferdinand III refused to accept its terms. Thus, it took until 1648 for a series of treaties, collectively known as the Peace of Westphalia (in the Rhineland), to bring this sorry period to an end.

The results of that arrangement were principally that the German states received greater autonomy within the Empire. The Protestant states were left to their own devices and they would eventually unite against Austria to form a German nation. More importantly, there would never again be a major religious war in Europe or one in which mercenaries would play a significant role.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I had hoped to begin these regular messages in *Quest* with the sort of cheery breeziness one expects in a publication of this sort. But the fact is that ANZUUA has rather a large problem that needs addressing, and *we need your help*.

Our Treasurer, Peter Abrehart, has recently been informed that the Bottomley Fund, a trust set up in 1996 to start up a basic income stream for ANZUUA's expenses, has *no funds* remaining from its original $15k deposit. This unexplained absence of funds represents a loss of about a third of ANZUUA's finances, and seriously impedes any plans we might have had to support struggling fellowships or 'seed' new ones.

This is very concerning, especially as there is little information to hand. One of three things has happened, as far as I can see:

1. Malfeasance. I'm afraid this can't be ruled out because there are large gaps in ANZUUA's financial records and the trustees who set up the fund are either unknown, uncontactable or don't remember its terms.

2. Carelessness. It's not impossible that successive executives have failed to understand how the fund was working; i.e., perhaps paying out capital and interest over time or simply paying itself out. What was taken to be interest only was perhaps the fund slowly draining. If so, it was a dreadfully ill-advised investment.

3. Theft. In the wake of the Royal Commission, bank employees who would stoop to manipulating children's savings accounts may not be above rifling the aged poorly-overseen account of a small non-incorporated association. Before we were made aware the fund was empty, the bank was making noises about winding up these old trusts and putting the funds into the organisations' current accounts. Then suddenly... oh, it's empty! Hmm.

All of these scenarios will be hard to resolve; none inspire confidence in the governance of our organisation. Perhaps the least worst is simple carelessness with other people's money. Theft at the banking end would be hard to prove or prosecute with our limited resources, and malfeasance would shatter the trust and confidence at the core of associations like this one. The absolute worst outcome would be never to get an answer, never to get to the…er... *bottom* of what happened to the Bottomley Fund. To prevent this, we need all the information we can get.

At this writing, Committee members Peter Abrehart and Claire Butler are investigating at the bank branch in Melbourne that holds the trust and we await their report. In the meantime, perhaps *someone reading this* might know a thing or two about the Bottomley Fund? If so, *we need you to tell us*. Please do not hesitate to contact me *in confidence* at robmacpherson1@hotmail.com or ring me direct on 0419 550543

My hope is that we can resolve this issue this year, and then figure out how we can raise and (more importantly) secure fresh income so that we may grow our movement in the region.

Yours in faith and service, Rev. Rob MacPherson

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Sorry if anyone was expecting this issue to come out a week earlier but I just wasn't able to manage it, this time. We really should devise a regime whereunder member groups will know when their reports are due, as I hate to leave anyone out of that vital function of this journal. Please send any material you have for the next issue to me at: michael.mcpheee@optusnet.com.au and don't wait till the end of August to do it.

I do thank the writers who provided such unusual major articles and I particularly want to introduce Dr. Paul Wildman of Brisbane. He holds qualifications in Economics, Social Administration and Adult Learning, has worked in community development in a number of Asia-Pacific countries, and is now retired from being a Lecturer at the Lismore campus of Southern Cross University.

Just searching his name will get you many articles he has written and projects he is involved in. His Kalgrove Institute is part of Kids and Adults Learning Pty. Ltd. (https://kal.net.au), which promotes participative and immersive learning in natural environments.