



Quest



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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FAMILY FARMING

The UN General Assembly voted in December 2011 to devote 2014 to issues affecting peasant farming, especially in Third World countries. As the IYFF website (www.familyfarmingcampaign.net) explains:

“43% of the active world population is employed in agriculture. The percentage is increased to 53% in developing countries. In sub-Sahara Africa, 80% of farms are family owned and worked. On a world level 1500 million homes live from farming.

“But Family Farming is much more than an agricultural economy model: it is the basis of the sustainable production of food, of the management of the environment and its biodiversity, a fountain of the important cultural dimensions of each people, a fundamental pillar in the integral development of nations.

“Family Farming has to face a series of challenges: the difficulty of access to resources and raw materials, the aging of the population and the lack of generational takeover (abandoning of the land by children), lack of commercialising, training and financial services, price volatility, little or no participation in decision-making processes, etc. All this reflects the lack of recognition of the strategic role it carries out.

“The data speaks for itself: in developing countries three of every four poor people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their subsistence. Women own less than 2% of the land and receive less than 5% of the meagre technical assistance provided to farmers. The food crisis...in recent years has brought a tendency change, causing a certain international interest in Family Farming. There is, before us, a unique opportunity to re-launch Family Farming in the world.”

The IYFF was conceived after the Peasant Forum held in Rome in February 2008 and the campaign for its declaration was led by the World Rural Forum (www.ruralforum.net – logo on left), a Latin American body that now has representatives from other parts of the world on its Board of Directors. The WRF gathered the support of 360 national organisations in 60 countries and presented its case to the UN. It also organised a World Conference on Family Farming in Bilbao, Spain, in October 2011, which was attended by farming and agricultural leaders from 42 countries. Once the IYFF was declared, its implementation was given over to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in conjunction with other UN agencies, such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

The objectives of the IYFF are to:

- Promote policies in favour of the sustainable development of Family Farming by adopting concrete and operative measures and strategies, making budgetary allocations.
- Reinforce the legitimacy of the farming associations to represent the interests of Family Farming and to be heard in, and, associated with, the making of farming policies.
- Increase the awareness of civil society and of all the social agents of the role of Family Farming.
- Achieve the recognition of the role of women in Family Farming and of their specific rights.
- Advocate and defend an international economy of food products based on rules which foster development and food security in all countries.
- Promote investigations associated with sustainable rural development, giving it human and financial resources.

The official launching of the IYFF took place on 22 November at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. The program includes five Regional Dialogues, commencing with one for Europe and Central Asia in Brussels and concluding with a Global Dialogue at the FAO headquarters in Rome in October, at which the work of the regional meetings will be collated.

According to the FAO's website (www.fao.org), the IYFF "aims to raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farming by focusing world attention on its significant role in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development, in particular in rural areas." It adds that: "Family farming is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour, including both women's and men's. Both in developing and developed countries, family farming is the predominant form of agriculture in the food production sector."

Further: "Family farming preserves traditional food products, while contributing to a balanced diet and safeguarding the world's agro-biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources. [It] represents an opportunity to boost local economies, especially when combined with specific policies aimed at social protection and well-being of communities."

Speaking at the official launch, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva stressed the huge productive potential of family farmers, many of whom are now among the world's most vulnerable populations. "We need to reposition family farming at the centre of national and regional development programs. [Governments should be] offering technical assistance and policies that support the productivity increase of family farms; placing appropriate technologies within their reach; improving their access to land and water, credit and markets; and creating an enabling environment for further investments."

FOOTNOTES

The IYFF now has its own website, the English version of which is: www.familyfarmingcampaign.net/en/. On it, you can read the Declaration that came out of an international conference of farmers' organisations that was convened by the World Rural Forum in Abu Dhabi in January. Its purpose was to articulate "the main demands which will be the subject of negotiations with governments and international institutions throughout the [International] Year."

The Declaration reaffirms that: "Family Farming can and must become the cornerstone of solid sustainable rural development, conceived of as an integral part of the global and harmonised development of each nation and each people while preserving the environment and natural resources. However, for this to be achieved Family Farming requires genuine public support which is non-existent today in most countries...[a] support which ensures the access to and control of land, water and other natural resources, to nearby markets, credit, investment and agricultural extension as well as equitable responses to the specific needs of rural women and youth." (Those last refer to equal treatment of women and incentives for rural youth to remain on the land.)

The fifth global meeting of the Farmers' Forum, held in Rome at the end of February, included a special side event for the IYFF. Provision was also made for the discussion of more structured operational partnerships between IFAD and fishers' organisations, as negotiations to formulate the first International Guidelines on Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries will take place later this year.



ICUU NEWS

UK Annual Meetings

CUC and UUA Conferences

Transylvanian Environmental Dispute



For those who wish to go overseas in our winter months, you can get an early start by attending the Annual Meetings of the UK General Assembly on 13–16 April. The venue is the four-star Whittlebury Hall hotel and conference centre in the rolling countryside of Northamptonshire in the East Midlands. The keynote speaker will be Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism, and the annual John Rely Beard Lecture will be given by the prominent Unitarian historian, Alan Ruston. There will be many other activities, including entertainment in the evenings, plus the venue has a 36-hole golf course, a swimming pool and a gymnasium. Please see: www.unitarian.org.uk and click on the ‘Annual Meetings’ picture at the bottom of the home page for full details and registration forms.

See some more of Britain and Ireland, or get to Canada early and tour the lovely Maritime Provinces before the Canadian Unitarian Council hold their Annual Conference and Meeting in Montreal on 15–18 May. The theme is ‘Building Beloved CommUunities: Sacred Spaces Beyond Walls’ and they seek to explore “how we expand our UU community beyond congregational walls, how we remain relevant into the future, and being radically inclusive.” To that effect, the Confluence Lecture (sponsored by the UU Ministers of Canada) will be co-delivered by Rev. Jeff Brown, chaplain at the University of Toronto and former minister of the Unitarian Congregation in Mississauga, and Rev. Carly Gaylor, community minister at a welfare centre in Hamilton (both cities are in Ontario).

The keynote speaker will be Rev. Meg Ryan, senior minister of the UUA’s Church of the Larger Fellowship, which ministers to people that don’t have a congregation to attend by means of podcast worship services, its weekly *Quest for Meaning* e-zine and many other online facilities. She is also a founding member of the public advocacy campaign, Standing on the Side of Love, which provided the central theme of the 2012 ANZUUA Conference in Brisbane. Unusually, the venue is the Sheraton Airport Hotel – but anyone who goes there has to see more of that remarkable French-Canadian city and, especially, its Unitarian Church that was established in 1842. Registration is cheaper before 30 March and you can even win a free pass! Please see www.cuc.ca/acm-2014 for more details.

Those who really like touring will have a whole continent of choices before the General Assembly of the UUA in Providence, Rhode Island, on 25–29 June. This has to be the largest gathering of Unitarians in the world – just try to imagine 2000 people in a conference centre filled with stalls and displays set up by all their different special interest groups. There will be over 100 workshops, lectures, panel presentations, film screenings and worship services, plus business and social justice hearings. With the theme, ‘Love Reaches Out’, the focus will be how to engage the increasing number of people who have no religious affiliation. The annual Ware Lecture will be delivered by Sr. Simone Campbell, National Coordinator of the Catholic social justice lobby, NETWORK, who is also an attorney and a poet. For more information, see: www.uua.org/ga.

As the UUA webpage points out, Rhode Island is an excellent choice of a venue. They write: It was founded in the 1600s by Roger Williams, a refugee from religious persecution in Massachusetts who established the world’s first outpost of full liberty of religion and conscience, the first to insist on an absolute wall of separation between church and state, the first to treat native Americans as equals and publicly repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery [known to Australians as ‘*terra nullius*’], the first to create a fully democratic system of governance.

In other news, our Transylvanian confreres are supporting the local community in Ro ia Montan , where a multinational company called Gabriel Resources wants to dig the largest open-cut gold and silver mine in Europe, flattening four mountaintops in the process and using large amounts of cyanide in the extraction process. Public protests have prevented the Romanian parliament from approving this lucrative project and now a government tribunal has denied it an Archeological Discharge Certificate. (One of the mountains has some of the oldest Roman gold mine galleries in the world and is being proposed for recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.) Please see the short video, *Life Over Gold*, at: vimeo.com/838758.

21st Century Dissent

By Rev. Bill Darlison

'Resist much, obey little.' Walt Whitman

At the end of September I was in Edinburgh for the celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of Unitarianism becoming legal in Scotland. Aberdeen Unitarians had put together a little historical review of the events preceding legalisation in 1813, and it was fascinating to hear about all the theological arguments and legal wrangles which eventually led to Unitarian emancipation. But it all seemed so foreign to our contemporary experience. It's hard to get back into the mind-set of our Unitarian forebears who risked so much – life and livelihood – in order to gain the right to worship as their conscience dictated. All those arguments about the Trinity, the nature of Jesus, redemption, the authority of the Bible, seem like so many historical curios to us moderns who have enjoyed decades of freedom from religious constraint.

It seems strange to recall that in 1697 the 20-year-old Thomas Aikenhead was marched from the Tolbooth jail close by Edinburgh City Chambers (where, ironically, we had been invited to a reception with the Lord Provost of Edinburgh) there to be hanged at the gallows for denying the Trinity, the last person in Britain to be executed for heresy. Or that Thomas Emlyn, one of my early predecessors in Dublin, and who was the first person anywhere to use the word Unitarian, was imprisoned for two years in 1702 for blasphemy. Or that Joseph Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen – who had been minister in Mill Hill Chapel in Leeds – had been burned out of house, home and laboratory, and forced to flee for his life to America because of popular hostility to his theological views. Or that once Unitarians had been barred from the great universities and the professions. Or that our churches and chapels had to be set back from the main roads, almost out of sight. (The church in Whitby has a little trapdoor opening into a tunnel which would allow worshippers to escape from potential threats from angry mobs, and one charming little Welsh chapel which I visited a few weeks ago was built up a mountain two centuries ago and must have been ridiculously inaccessible to all but the most determined and devout.)

Things are very different now. I spent fourteen years as Minister in Dublin, in Catholic Ireland, and received very little hostility. There were a few scrawlings on the front door of the church in my early days there – one said, 'Nutters' Church' and another 'Queers' Church' – but there was no official opposition to us. The Dublin Unitarian church, built in 1863, is very centrally placed, a well-known landmark in the city, and its members are very prominent in Irish public life – University lecturers, writers, journalists, actors, musicians, politicians. I received a Christmas card every year, personally signed by the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, and I was invited to all the major church and state functions. The 150th anniversary of the Dublin Unitarian church building was celebrated in June this year with a Sunday morning service televised live throughout Ireland. We have indeed become respectable. In May, Morag and I, along with two other prominent Unitarians, were invited to attend a garden party in Buckingham Palace. How respectable and conventional can we get?

Times have changed. We are no longer pariahs. We are no longer excluded from things. We are no longer perceived as a threat to the religious stability of Britain or anywhere else. We are no longer perceived as dissenters because there doesn't seem too much to dissent from. Many of the Anglican clergy and even some Roman Catholics are Unitarians in their Christology, and although we espouse 'progressive', left-wing causes, such as abortion rights, the right of gay people to marry and the right to assisted suicide, we are only echoing the views of many thousands, maybe many millions of people, inside and outside the orthodox churches.

What's more, the 'Atheist Assemblies', which started a few months ago in London and have spread to many big cities around Britain and beyond, have stolen some of our thunder. I learned two weeks ago that two prominent Unitarians in England are considering organising such an assembly in their home city. And these assemblies seem to be very popular, with hundreds attending the early 'services', most of them (to judge from photographs) under the age of 50. And why wouldn't they be popular? There are powerful and charismatic speakers, contemporary music, artistic expression, drama, and the aim is to promote the very community spirit that has been an appealing feature of the theistic religious organisations. Whether they endure or not remains to be seen, but at the moment they certainly seem to be vigorous and growing, and they have a strap-line which wouldn't be out of place in a Unitarian context: 'Live better; help often; wonder more.' They'll be here in Auckland soon, if they're not here already.

Where does that leave us? Is our day over? Are our dissenting days finished? Should we pack up and sell off our beautiful churches, give the money to deserving causes, and join some other organisation? Some people, I know, are thinking like this. We've served our function; we've done our bit; we've led the way. Now it's time to pass the baton and to retire gracefully.

But let's not be so hasty. I think we have a lot of dissenting still to do. Not from the dominant conventional religious systems. They have no power over us now, and no power over our communities. Roman Catholicism is, in many ways, a spent force (although, mark my words, it has the energy to recover), and Anglicanism is viewed by many, in Britain at least, as something of an ageing uncle – harmless and well-meaning, but rather boring.

Our dissent, in part, must be from the prevailing mind-set of our time, the prevailing religion, which pretends it's not a religion, which dominates so much of the contemporary intellectual climate, and is almost endemic among the so-called 'chattering classes'. It's the view that all the *major* questions about the nature of our existence have been satisfactorily answered; that the religious approach to life, as previously conceived, has been outgrown. This was a view I heard expressed very eloquently in a video I picked up on Facebook recently, which featured a short lecture by the late Christopher Hitchens. Religion, he said, belonged to the infancy of the human race, when people knew nothing. Now, with our increased understanding of the way the world works; now that we know that the earth is round, not flat, that it is in orbit around the sun, that sophisticated life forms developed from primitive ones, that germs, not devils cause disease, we have no need for religion.

Hitchens's point-of-view – clever, smug, condescending, arrogant – is a version of what might be called Prosaic Naturalism – the belief that the universe and everything within it can be explained by postulating billions of serendipitous accidents occurring over billions of years. This is the prevailing religion of our time – the religion that says it is not a religion - and it is pervasive and influential. It's the religion of virtually every columnist on the *Guardian* newspaper; it's the religion of many of our celebrated western intellectuals; it's the religion of many of our prominent comedians. And it seems to hold a very significant place in contemporary Unitarianism.

I heard another version of it on Irish television a couple of months ago on a programme called *Would You Believe*, which was devoted to Abie Philbin Bowman, a friend of mine, who used to attend the Dublin Unitarian Church a decade or so ago. Abie, who is undoubtedly one of the brightest people I've ever met, is now a stand-up comedian, and his targets seem to be religion in general and the Catholic Church in particular. One of his gigs was called *Jesus, the Guantanamo Years* and another, *Pope Benedict: Bond Villain*. On the *Would You Believe* programme he was asked about his religious beliefs. He said he didn't have any. He gave his explanation for the Universe and Everything in four words: 'Big Bang, Evolution, Randomness'. And that's it. That's the Prosaic Naturalist's creed in a nutshell. Big bang, evolution, randomness. That's why we're here, and there's no need for a god, for a design, for a purpose. It all came out of nothing and presumably it will all go back to nothing.

But why Abie and others like him think this isn't a religious belief beats me. He has no sure proof of any of his three propositions. The Big Bang seems likely, but 50 years ago scientists were proposing the Steady State theory, the notion that matter had always existed, not that it emerged spontaneously out of nothing. And physicists, who deal in these things, are not nearly so prosaic in the accounts they give as are their acolytes, and not nearly so confident of their conclusions as Christopher Hitchens and Co. Nils Bohr the Danish physicist who died in 1962, and who was a Nobel prize winner, and a leading thinker in the quantum revolution in physics, for example, said, 'The opposite of a correct statement is a false statement. But the opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth.' Or, as he said to his colleague, Wolfgang Pauli, 'Your theory may be crazy, but is it crazy enough to be true?'

Evolution may well be true too. I am not qualified to judge, but to suggest that it is purposeless and proceeds exclusively by means of natural selection, and that we as a species arrived purely fortuitously, seems to me to be entirely unwarranted, and has all the hallmarks of a religious dogma. It's certainly defended as a dogma and the way in which those scientists who find difficulty with it are excluded from certain University posts would seem to suggest that the thought-police are still active.

About fifteen years ago there was a television series in Britain and Ireland called *Fr. Ted*. It was a satirical attack on the Catholic Church and probably did as much to tarnish the reputation of Catholicism in Ireland as

anything before or since. In one of the episodes, a bishop has a conversation with Fr. Dougal, a rather endearingly simple-minded young priest. ‘Are you having any doubts about your faith, Father?’ asks the bishop. ‘Well,’ replies Dougal, ‘you know that bit about God creating the world in six days, and Adam and Eve bringing sin and death into the world, and God sending his son to die on the cross for our salvation? And about the Last Judgement and heaven and hell?’ ‘Yes,’ replies the bishop. ‘Well, that’s the bit I’m having trouble with.’ I could respond similarly to questions about the prosaic naturalist’s creed. ‘You know that bit about there being nothing and then everything came into existence in a split second and then after billions of years the earth was formed and after billions more years life was generated out of non-living matter and then life developed into the multifarious forms we see around us today and eventually after billions more years produced human consciousness and how all this came about because of a series of accidents? Well, that’s the bit I’m having trouble with.’

And I’m having trouble with it because it’s preposterous. I don’t know how or why everything came into existence and developed as it did, but I know that (in Abie’s words) ‘big bang, evolution, randomness’ – taken as it stands – is not the answer. It is absurd, demeaning, and nihilistic. I cannot bring myself to accept that the 100 billion cells in those three pounds of matter inside my head, and the consciousness that these generate and express, are the product of chance. I cannot bring myself to believe that my life and yours are ultimately purposeless and meaningless. Why can’t I bring myself to believe these things? Because my experience of life and my reflections on that experience convince me that there is some point to it all, that life is not just, in the words of Macbeth, ‘a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing’.

As I get older, the world intrigues and perplexes me more and more, and I’m finding it difficult to hold on to my old prejudices, and much easier than hitherto to rest content with my confusion, and to trust my own experience more than the opinions of others. I’m open to all kinds of possibility: to the possibility of life after death, the existence of angels, reincarnation, and numerous other ideas which are scorned in our materialist, reductionist culture. I can’t prove them, and I’m not really too bothered about trying. What does this make me? I found the answer in an article by David Eagleman:

Beyond the dogmatism of strict atheism and religious fundamentalism lies a third option. I call myself a possibilian. The idea of possibilianism is to explore new, unconsidered hypotheses. A possibilian enjoys awe at our existence, is not opposed to holding mutually exclusive ideas and is comfortable with uncertainty. Possibilianism is simply an appeal for intellectual humility. I think it’s possible to appreciate and study the mysteries around us without dogmatism. In the end, comfort with uncertainty may prove critical for our systems of education, law and civilisation.

I’m happy to be a possibilian. A few years ago I came across an article in the *Guardian* by Fred Sedgwick called ‘Why I Love my Cat’. The reason he gave was that his cat – called Stanley, by the way – was endearingly stupid. If he found out that it was raining at the back door he would immediately demand to be let out at the front door, in the belief that although it may be raining at the back it may be fine at the front. Stanley Sedgwick is a possibilian. He refuses to be cowed by convention; he holds out strongly against the tyranny of tradition.

The fact that it’s raining at the back probably does mean that it’s raining at the front, but it may not be, and those of us who have stood, dry, on one side of the street watching the rain pour down on the other – an experience which most of us have at least once in a lifetime – will have to agree with Stanley Sedgwick that choices in life do not always fall neatly into simple categories of either/or. ‘It’s either raining or it’s not raining’ may be a good rule of thumb for day-to-day activities, but there are occasions – rare though they may be – on which we have to be prepared to consider the third option, that it is both raining and not raining at the same time. Remember what Nils Bohr said: ‘The opposite of one profound truth may be another profound truth’.

Here’s something to test your open-mindedness. Some years ago, when I was writing a piece called *How to Write an Anti-God Book*, I was amused to find that the two most confrontational atheistic voices of the time – Richard Dawkins in Britain and Daniel Dennett in America – were both born under the zodiacal sign Aries. Dawkins was born on 26th March and Dennett on 28th March. Then, in 2007, Christopher Hitchens entered the fray with his *God is Not Great*. Hitchens was born on 13th April. Around the same time A.C Grayling published *Against All Gods*, and I wasn’t at all surprised to find that he was born on 3rd April. That’s four out of four.

However, the birth date of one top American atheist eluded me. Sam Harris, whose book *The End of Faith*, published in 2004, was in the *New York Times* bestseller list for 33 weeks, had always refused to discuss personal details, so I couldn't find his birthday. Until August, when I learned that according to a recent (2012) biography he was born on 9th April 1967. Another Aries. Students of astrology won't find this too surprising. Aries is not specifically related to atheism – members of any sign can be atheists, and many Aries people are believers – but Aries is connected with ardour, enthusiasm, confrontation and with an almost pathological desire for personal freedom. These men are not just atheists; they are, in typical Aries style, *crusading* atheists, fighting against what they see as obscurantism and tyranny.

Of course, many self-styled rationalists will dismiss all this as primitive 'mumbo-jumbo'. 'Astrology is bunkum' is the current orthodox opinion, slavishly repeated by those who would have us believe that they think for themselves. The fact that five of the most prominent atheistic voices in the western world were all born under Aries is just a coincidence, they'll say. They have to say this to maintain their naturalist dogmas that the universe is ultimately meaningless and that our lives are just the product of random forces.

All dogmas are dangerous, but they are most dangerous when people aren't even aware that they are subscribing to them. Virtually everyone you meet who says 'Astrology is bunkum' has never even read a page of serious astrology. Richard Dawkins certainly hasn't, as his ignorant comments on it in *Unweaving the Rainbow* demonstrate. But shouldn't genuine rationalists, genuine freethinkers, genuine inquirers, genuine Unitarians and others who, like Dawkins, claim that we must follow the evidence wherever it leads, have another look at phenomena such as this, but this time with a genuinely open mind? The universe is a strange place. As the British scientist J.B.S. Haldane said, 'It's stranger than we think; stranger than we can possibly think.'

Let's face it. Despite loud protestations to the contrary, we don't know much more about what's going on than those so-called ignorant and primitive people patronised by Christopher Hitchens. I don't, you don't, Richard Dawkins doesn't, Sam Harris doesn't (although it's possible that Christopher Hitchens has a better idea than the rest of us, now that he's dead). In the rather colourful vernacular of the biologist Craig Venter, 'The fact is, we don't know shit'. And Venter is no doubt right. But as long as we can steer clear of the glib reductionism which seems so prevalent among the intellectual elite of our time, and keep our minds open; as long as we remain suspicious of dogma in whatever form it presents itself, and as long as we continue, in the words of the hymn, 'to bid the mind in search of truth, adventure boldly and explore' we will be honouring our forebears, who were ready to suffer persecution rather than surrender their intellectual freedom to some prevailing orthodoxy .

We Unitarians have a duty to reflect deeply on our own lives; to question everything, particularly those things which, in the words of Walt Whitman, insult the soul. This is our tradition; this is our on-going task; this is Unitarianism. And it's the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

[This is the transcript of Rev. Darlinson's keynote address at the ANZUUA Conference in Auckland. As he has indicated, he is the Minister Emeritus at the Dublin Unitarian Church, but he is also the current president of the UK General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.]

ANZUUA NEWS

Pauline Rooney and Henri van Roon have returned from an adventuresome time at the ICUU Council Meeting and Conference in New York (see pp. 14/15 for more on that). ANZUUA has collected about half of the \$2000 that was pledged for the ICUU's valuable field work in countries with emerging congregations and it is hoped that the rest (if not more) will be received in the near future.

Henri also met with the UU-UNO office to propose that an international conference on climate change and environmental issues be held in our region this year. ANZUUA has formed an investigatory committee consisting of himself (Auckland), Jan Tendys (Spirit of Life), Peter Ferguson and Kathy Nielsen (both of Perth). Henri has some alternative ideas drawn from his visit and contacts made – one option is to join the Climate Change Lobby, which has a lot of Unitarian support.

The project to upgrade the ANZUUA website has received the attention of Adelaide UC, who are doing the same with their own site and have suggested the two bodies combine their efforts. There was general support for James Hills to continue talking to Sandy Biar with a view to collaborating on web sites.

[To the tune of ‘All Creatures of Our God and King’.]

All creatures strange come to our church,
Come with the truth and come to search.
We can use ya; we can use ya.
Come, followers of left and right,
Come, come to switch and come to fight.
We can use ya, in the pews, ya,
We’ll confuse ya, not accuse ya. Alleluia!



Come to stay silent, come to speak,
Come, come to give and come to take,
We can use ya; we can use ya.
Come shake your head or come and nod,
Come atheists, come to praise God.
We can use ya, in the pews, ya,
We’ll amuse ya, not refuse ya. Alleluia!



Come early to arrange the flow’rs,
Come late to join the coffee hour,
We can use ya; we can use ya.
Come, come to sleep, come to take notes,
Come seeking wisdom, or misquotes.
We can use ya, in the pews, ya,
We’ll enthuse ya, not excuse ya. Alleluia!



Come join our church for many reasons,
Church of all people, for all seasons,
We can use ya; we can use ya.
Diverse we seem, but we are one,
There’s nothing new beneath the sun.
We can use ya, in the pews, ya,
We would choose ya, and not lose ya. Alleluia!

Rev. Christopher G. Raible

MESSAGE OF WELCOME TO THE UU CHURCH

As we welcome our new members and visitors, it is only fair to let them know what we Unitarian Universalists are like and what we expect.

- We are friendly. If you are not friendly, out you go!
- We are genuine people. Even our phonies are real phonies.
- We are always sincere, even if we have to fake it.
- We aren’t sure how ambivalent we should be.
- We believe in tolerance and cannot stand intolerant people.
- We are optimists. Anyone who doesn’t look on the bright side depresses us.
- We are more non-competitive than other groups.
- We believe in equality; everyone is as good as the next person and a whole lot better.
- Every Unitarian is a feminist, so he has to watch his language.
- The organization is run democratically because the president insists on it.
- We have our critics, but they are paranoid.
- We are prompt about being late to meetings.
- Dogmatism is absolutely forbidden.
- Freedom of belief is rigidly enforced.

And to this wonderful place we joyfully welcome you.

[Please see ‘Acknowledgements’ on p. 15 for background information on these items.]

POKAREKARE ANA

*P karekare ana
ng wai o Waiapu,
Whiti atu koe hine
marino ana e.*

*(Chorus)
E hine e
hoki mai ra.
Ka mate ahau
I te aroha e.*

*Tuhituhi taku reta
tuku atu taku r ngi,
Kia kite t iwi
raruraru ana e.*

(Chorus)

*Whati whati taku pene
ka pau aku pepa,
Ko taku aroha
mau tonu ana e.*

(Chorus)

*E kore te aroha
e maroke i te r ,
M k k tonu i
aku roimata e.*

(Chorus)

They are agitated
the waters of Waiapu,
But when you cross over, girl,
they will be calm.

*(Chorus)
Oh girl
return to me,
I could die
of love for you.*

I have written my letter
I have sent my ring,
so that your people can see
that I am troubled.

(Chorus)

My pen is shattered,
I have no more paper,
But my love
is still steadfast.

(Chorus)

My love will never
be dried by the sun,
It will be forever moistened
by my tears.

(Chorus)



This will be our St. Valentine's Day offering, which is known in Australian as the 'Maori Love Song'. Anyone who doesn't know the tune should search the Maori title on YouTube (www.youtube.com). While the authorship is disputed, the song is thought to have been composed in an army camp at Auckland during World War I. Possibly, the lyricist (or one of them) came from the Waiapu Valley (pictured above) in the northeast corner of the North Island.

However, it is acknowledged that the song was arranged and made popular by Paraire Tomoana in 1917. He was born not later than 1875 in the Hastings/Napier region further down the east coast and became a member of the Young Maori Party group in his high school. Despite having a deformed foot, he was a formidable athlete, playing rugby, tennis, cricket, grass hockey and golf – in that last, he was the undefeated champion of the Maori Golf Tournament for over ten years. He went on to become the coach of the national All Blacks rugby team (so named because of their uniform) in 1904.

Paraire was a pioneer composer in the new 'action song' genre, generally derived from European tunes but with Maori words and rhythms. During World War I, he helped raise money for the Maori Soldiers' Fund by organising a song and dance group, which performed around the country. (That fund supported the reintegration of soldiers who returned and assisted the families of those that did not.) Many of his songs are well-known and popular, even today, and one became the slow march of the Royal New Zealand Navy.

An accomplished writer and translator, Paraire edited *Te Toa Takatini* and other Maori newspapers. He was an acknowledged authority on Maori history and lore, traditional music and even weather prediction. Over 40 to 50 years, he attended every important Maori gathering in the lower North Island, also serving as chairman of the Tamatea Maori Council from 1936 until his death. (He became secretary of that body in 1901 but his length of service in that capacity is unclear.) He died from a stroke in 1946 and is buried in the Waipatu Cemetery in Hastings.

CARBON CAPTURE STORAGE IN SOUTH WEST HUB

By Dominique Van Gent

[The author is the Coordinator Carbon Strategy, Strategic Policy in Western Australia's Department of Mines and Petroleum, who will address the Perth Unitarians' on 06 April. Kathy Niessen adds:

This is the International Year of Family Farming and young people are becoming more and more interested in the science of farming, not as an income earner but from an environmental point of view. The Commonwealth Government has given \$52m. for research to survey properties, crown land and state forests in South West Hub – a cluster of farming towns around Bunbury and our food bowl. The land will be cleared of native vegetation in areas where a seismic 3D survey is to be done to establish geological potential for the storage of carbon dioxide. From what I understand, a grid of 200 metre squares of the property (with owner's permission) will be cleared and drilling will take place on each coordinate.

Controversy – why are all the participants in this project mining companies; i.e., Griffin Energy, Verve Energy, BHP Billiton, Worsley Alumina, Wesfarmers Premier Coal, Perdaman Chemicals & Fertilisers, and Alcoa Australia? To reach the storage area for CO₂ at a depth of 3000 metres in the Lesueur sandstone, the drilling goes through shale strata – will test samples be taken at this time for future production of shale oil and gas? Will this assist climate change or will the amount of energy required in converting CO₂ to liquid use more energy than the original amount of energy used in production.]

Our population has a need for electricity, domestic goods, food processing and industrial products. In Western Australia the large industrial centres of Collie, 200 km south of Perth, and Kwinana, 30 km from the Perth CBD, supply that demand and produce carbon dioxide (CO₂) as a by-product of their operations. This CO₂ is currently emitted into the atmosphere and is one of the greenhouse gases.

Around the world, scientists and governments have recognised the need to limit the atmospheric carbon level. The reduction of emitted CO₂ requires a range of strategies and approaches including the use of renewable energy, end use fuel efficiencies, greater operational efficiencies, particularly in the use of fuel, and fuel switching. Another of these pathways is carbon capture and storage (CCS).

The State and Federal Government have joined with industry to investigate the opportunities for CCS in the South West of Western Australia. The focus is on an area in the Shires of Harvey and Waroona, some 120 km south of Perth, where the unique subsurface represents an opportunity to permanently store the CO₂ by 'geosequestration'.

The South West Hub carbon capture and storage project is an important component of Australia's international commitment to address greenhouse gas emissions. As Australia's first CCS Flagships project, the objective of the South West Hub is to investigate the feasibility of capturing CO₂ from industry and then redirecting that CO₂ into deep underground reservoirs where it would remain permanently stored.

To date the project has proven a success, harnessing State and Australian Government resources (\$52 million) which are combined with local industry's desire to reduce carbon emissions, under an umbrella of commitment to community involvement. Research has focussed on an area of the southern Perth Basin in the Harvey and Waroona Shires, where the underground stratigraphy differs from that found in other parts of the Perth Basin which stretches from Geraldton to Busselton. Each stage of the research has exposed more information about the underground formations and has supported the continuation of the project.

Industry has established a Joint Venture which will determine the commercial arrangements and investigate pipeline and compressor options. The ultimate test of the feasibility will be a decision by industry to commercialise the project; a decision which will not be made until such time as the area has been more fully investigated and is unlikely before 2017.

HOW THE SOUTH WEST HUB EVOLVED

Desktop studies as part of a nation-wide search for potential reservoirs conducted from 2000 first drew attention to the potential for geosequestration in the Lesueur Sandstone formation. A more intensive desktop study in 2007, which ruled out the Collie Basin, led to the West Australian Department of Mines and

Petroleum developing a program of data acquisition which involved a 2D Seismic Survey in 2011 and a three kilometre stratigraphic well drilled in 2012.

Researchers from the CSIRO, the University of Western Australia and Curtin University have provided technical and scientific advice on the data acquisition program to ensure that the formations are appropriately characterised. These data acquisition programs target aspects of the underground formations that scientists are uncertain of, and will be used to inform a future commercial decision to be made by the industrial partners in 2017.

INVESTIGATING CARBON STORAGE

The desk-top studies identified the Lesueur Sandstone Formation as a potential geosequestration reservoir due to the unique nature of the sub-surface; there is an uplift in the stratigraphy which brings the target formation closer to the surface than in surrounding areas. The geophysical data also showed that important local freshwater sources such as the Yarragadee aquifer were eroded from this area millions of years ago. The CO₂ injection target is the Lower Lesueur at a depth below 1,500 metres. The formation consists of 1,500 metres of sedimentary rock formed by ancient rivers and it is an aquifer containing salty water – much saltier than seawater.

The CO₂ can be pumped in at pressure and will remain liquid-like at depths below 800 metres. The sandstone is porous and permeable, which allows the CO₂ to be trapped as tiny bubbles of supercritical fluid. Other trapping mechanisms include some of the CO₂ being dissolved in salty water and some of it bonding with other minerals to form carbonates. The Upper Lesueur contains shaley intervals which are expected to provide an overall seal on top of the reservoir, further restricting and preventing the movement of CO₂ towards the surface.

The extensive stratigraphic characterisation of the area is continuing with a 3D Seismic Survey running in February this year and a further drilling program planned for 2014/15. Currently the South West Hub is collecting and analysing core and data. Each stage of the research, which has exposed more information about the underground formations in this area of interest, has supported the continuation of the project. A decision to proceed to trial injection is at least two years away and will only be made if further studies support the permanent storage of CO₂.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community engagement has been ongoing since 2007, before any data acquisition went ahead. In 2011, 67 community members attended a workshop facilitated by the CSIRO. Subsequent publications, community information forums and the establishment of the Lesueur Community Consultation Committee have maintained a connection with the community and offered opportunities for knowledge to be shared and questions to be answered. A Land Access Team has been working with landowners in the area who have agreed to access to their properties for the 3D survey.

As an example of the ongoing community consultation, a vibroseis vehicle was exhibited at the 2013 Brunswick Agricultural Show where demonstrations of seismic data acquisition in operation proved popular with showgoers. In December last year, a short 2D seismic research survey, conducted by Curtin University, was run along 8 kilometres of Riverdale Road, land that had been part of the previous 2D Seismic Survey. The South West Hub held a community information day and chartered a bus for direct viewing of the UniVib and data collection in action.

This is all part of the South West Hub project, sharing the research and development about a local project which promises to have a global impact on atmospheric CO₂. More information can be found on the Department of Mines and Petroleum website at: www.dmp.wa.gov.au/ccs.

Australia has a CCS research project in Victoria. Located between the Great Ocean Road and Warnambool, it is similar dairy country to the Harvey area. More information can be found at: www.co2crc.com.au/otway.

[Kathy Nielssen refers you to the DMP's 'Environment' page: www.dmp.wa.gov.au/9525.aspx and also to: www.dmp.wa.gov.au/documents/Harvey_1_Research_Outcomes_Sept_17.pdf for a highly technical report on the test well results.]

‘Anyone for tennis?’ – The story of the Auckland Unitarian Tennis Club

By Wayne Facer



The Auckland Unitarian Church had been undergoing some reorganisation. While preparing the Jellie Room for renovation, which held the remnants of the once extensive Jessie Heywood memorial church library, a silver tennis cup was discovered in a wall cavity. The cup was the worse for wear and in need of restoration; it contained a note in the hand of Frank Castle (1898–1986): “Won by Messer’s Pat Hobson & Ray Ferner. Edendale Tennis Club formerly Unitarian Tennis Club.” The cup was an Auckland Suburban Tennis Association trophy which dated from 1927 and had been awarded to the Edendale Tennis Club for 1931–1932. What did it mean, who were the winners and what was the story of the Unitarian Tennis Club?

On the 26th May 1910 Michael Dromgool sold one rood and 21 perches of land, or just over a third of an acre, on Grove Road in Sandringham. The purchasers incorporated the Unitarian Tennis Club which operated on the property until July 1924 when, at a special meeting, it was agreed to dissolve the Club and hand the property back to the Trustees of the Auckland Unitarian Church.

The Edendale Lawn Tennis Club held its first annual general meeting on 18th August 1924 at the Auckland Unitarian Church, where Raymond Ferner (1894–1969) was elected the first President, a position he held until 1936. The church then sold the property on 19 November 1924 to the Edendale Tennis Club Incorporated, while retaining a mortgage over the land in the names of three of its Trustees: George Reed (1868–1941), James Ferner (1860–1950) and Charles Newland (1863–1946). Sir George Fowlds (1860–1934) a liberal Congregationalist, great friend of the Rev. William Jellie (1865–1963) and the Auckland Unitarian Church, became one of the Vice-Presidents.

During the fourteen years of its existence the Unitarian Tennis Club made a notable contribution to the social life of the Auckland Unitarian Church and the game of tennis in Auckland. In its first year the club is recorded as having had “a very successful season, and in order to keep the club together the club has inaugurated a series of dances to be given during the winter months, the first of which took place in the Druids’ Hall, Newton.” During the evening the Rev. Jellie presented the trophies won during the tennis tournament. The supper table was a study in violet and gold, the club’s colours. (These are still the colours of the Edendale club.) The second year’s annual dance attracted 70 couples to Munroe’s Hall in Ponsonby, with Butterworth’s orchestra providing the music.

Year after year the Unitarian Tennis Club took part in the inter-club competitions between members of the Churches' Tennis Association. Unitarian v. Tabernacle, men's doubles and ladies doubles; combination doubles all featured, Unitarian v. St David's, Unitarian v. Epsom, and so on. The results show the Unitarian players acquitted themselves well, often winning matches and sometimes competitions.

And what is known of the two cup winners? Little is known about Pat Hobson, other than that he appears on the Certificate of Title as one of the original purchasers. He, his wife, son and daughter were all early members of the church.

Raymond Ferner, on the other hand, was very well known. A member of the Ferner family who were active in the Auckland Unitarian Church over many decades, Raymond was one of three children of Nellie (1869–1930) and her husband, James. A solicitor at the time the tennis club was formed, Ray went on to become Mayor of Mount Albert and, during his term from 1933 to 1936, was appointed to the bench as a stipendiary magistrate. The Borough Council recognised the significance of his mayoralty in 1938 by changing the name of Belmont Avenue to Ferner Avenue. In his retirement at Tauranga, he was awarded the OBE for his services to local government and the legal profession.

The Edendale Tennis Club has continued successfully over the years. It has added to the land area, developed hard court surfaces and built a pavilion. It has remained a family oriented club with members in junior, intermediate and senior age ranges. It continues to operate two astro-grass turf courts and has flood lighting so that members can play at night. The cup won over 80 years ago by Ray Ferner and Pat Hobson is now our only tangible connection to this tennis club.

REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS

Adelaide UC are recording their services on: unitariansa.podbean.com. Their pastor, Rob McPherson took a holiday in January, during which time other members led the services. They are also upgrading their website and focusing on growth.

Auckland UC's new minister, Rev Matt Tittle, unfortunately had to return to the US due to complications affecting his visa. However, this did not prevent them from having a successful Christmas party. They are also running a pilot study to train teachers in Samoa to assist children with dyslexia and ADD. The project has the support of the Samoan government, which has provided ten computers for the purpose.

Brisbane UUF are the proud owners of a congregation banner, designed and quilted by the River Road UU Congregation in Bethesda, Maryland. It was presented to them by Lyn and John Kelly of that congregation at their Christmas party on 22 December.

Christchurch UUs have a plan to be less 'churchy' this year. They have also formed a Possibilitarian Club (presumably inspired by Rev. Darlison's address on pp. 4/7). Derek McCullough is taking a sabbatical

Melbourne UC had visitors from the Philippines in December. Neri Colmenares, a human rights lawyer and member of that country's Congress spoke on 'The Human Rights Situation in the Philippines'. The federal government is 'auditing' church and secular groups that provide social services, which MUC suspect will adversely affect the most vulnerable members of our society (more about that on p. 16). They also want to increase the sales of their *Beacon* magazine to over 1000 subscribers.

Perth Unitarians have been contacted by the Humanist Society of WA, who would like them to join forces against proposals to teach Creationism in public schools. Their first meeting in February was addressed by Prof. John Winterflood on environmental issues.

Spirit of Life UF are also experimenting with a 'non-church' service format once a month, with just one song and the seating being in a circle. They are also continuing Kiva loans.

Sydney UC's Christmas service featured two musicians (piano and violin) and four operatic singers from the Sydney University Conservatorium, who also led the carol singing after the catered lunch. The pianist was their previous Music Director, Chad Vindin (known as Daniel Ryan in *A Southern Chalice*), who is currently studying for a Master's degree at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

KUJENGA MADARAJA: Spanning Cultures



New York became the world Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist community hub when 120 participants from 25 different countries gathered on January 27–31 for the Council Meeting and Conference of the International Council of Unitarian Universalists (ICUU).

This was the first time that the biennial meeting was held in the United States, with the main meetings convening on the campus of the UU Congregation of Shelter Rock in Manhasset, New York. Fifty members of the congregation volunteered to look after the participants, which included feeding our esteemed guests American cuisine during their stay; a thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings was held as well.

The theme, *Kujenga Madaraja*, is a Swahili phrase that can be translated as: It is better to build bridges than walls. It reminds us of the potential of our language of faith to transcend the cultures that may separate us if we can discover and master multicultural skills and perspectives.

The program included theme talks from Beth Zemsky, a renowned expert on cross-cultural competencies, worship services led by Unitarians from a variety of cultures, chalice circle groups and other activities, as well as opportunities for networking with sisters and brothers from liberal faith communities from around the world.

Worship highlights included a sermon on Coalition Faith as a theological underpinning for religious liberals relating across cultures, offered in tandem by ICUU staff members Rev. Steve Dick and Rev. Jill McAllister as part of the Opening Ceremony. Another highlight was an innovative morning devotional led by Rev. Tet Gallardo that used movement and personal space to give participants a taste of life in the Philippines, and the impact on their faith.

The entire conference moved to the United Nations on the final day for a service in the chapel of the United Nations Churches Centre led by Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana from Burundi, which featured personal testimony from colleagues working for peace and cooperation across cultures in their communities. This was followed by a workshop in the UN Churches Conference Centre arranged by the UU-United Nations Office, with a panel that included Maarit Kohonen Sheriff (Finland), Deputy Head of the New York Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bani Dugal (India), Principal Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the UN, and Bruce Knotts (USA) Director of the UU-UNO.

Community Church in New York City that evening was the site of the Closing Ceremony which featured a concert by UU singer Peter Mayer and the installation of the ICUU Executive Council for the next two years, which is comprised of President Rev. David Gyero (Romania), Vice-President Pauline Rooney (Australia), Secretary Lara Fuchs (Switzerland), Treasurer Galen Gisler (USA) and Members-at-Large: Inga Brandes (Germany), Rev. Brian Kiely (Canada) and Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana (Burundi).

A weekend meeting of international ministers at All Souls Church in New York City followed the conference. The gathering focused on pastoral care across cultures, further development in ministerial training around the world, and opportunities for networking and collaboration across borders.

The UUA was well represented at the ICUU Conference, with President Rev. Peter Morales and Rev. Abhi Janamanchi sharing their personal cross-cultural ministerial odysseys. Additionally, workshops featuring Rev. Eric Cherry, Rev. Terasa Cooley and Rev. Meg Riley were also held.

The next Council Meeting and Conference is planned for July 2016 in the Netherlands.

[Abstracted from the UUA's webpage: www.international.blogs.uua.org. With the new Executive Council, Rev. David Gyero is with the Transylvanian chapter of the (ethnic) Hungarian Unitarian Church, Galen Gisler currently works at the University of Oslo and Lara Fuchs is with the European UUs. Pauline Rooney of Adelaide is serving a second term as Vice-President and Rev. Brian Kiely is the outgoing President.

With reference to the cross-cultural experiences of the UUA representatives, Rev. Peter Morales is the first Latino president of that organisation. Rev. Abhi Janamanchi is Indian and a third-generation member of the Unitarian-Hindu movement, Brahmo Samaj. He is the Senior Minister of the UUs of Clearwater, Florida, and served as President of the International Association of Religious Freedom from 2006 to 2008. Rev. Eric Cherry, Director of the UUA's International Office addressed our recent ANZUUA Conference in Auckland. Rev. Teresa Cooley is their Program and Strategy Officer and former Director of Congregational Life, a branch of the UUA that supports the health and growth of congregations and new communities. Rev. Meg Riley is the Senior Minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, already mentioned on p. 3 in connection with the Canadian Unitarian Council – but see the next page, as well.

Given that the ICUU hasn't convened in the US since the foundation meeting in Essex, Massachusetts, in 1995, Shelter Rock was an appropriate venue. Founded by four families in 1941, the Congregation has had its present large building and grounds at Manhasset on Long Island since 1986. Shelter Rock has three ministers, one of whom is in charge of Religious Education, and their own art gallery! They also host the Veatch Program, a grant-making body that funds all manner of social justice and community projects with amounts as large as \$US100,000. Their funds come from a bequest made by Caroline Veatch, an early member whose late husband was an oil geologist, in 1953. Their website: www.uuscr.org is worth a visit.

We hope that Pauline Rooney and Henri van Roon will give us their personal reflection on this momentous gathering in the next issue.]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 'hymn' on p. 8 was first published in Rev. Christopher Raible's *Hymns for the Celebration of Strife* (1990) – a play on the UUA's *Hymns for the Celebration of Life*. Another classic of his – 'Coffee, Coffee, Coffee' – appeared in the Autumn 2013 issue of this journal and more can be expected in the future. Rev. Raible is Minister Emeritus of the UU Congregation of Jamestown, New York, and one of three minister children of Rev. Robert Raible.

The words of 'All Creatures of Our God and King' are from St. Francis of Assisi's 'Canticle of Brother Sun', which was written shortly before his death but not published for 400 years. It was rendered into English by Rev. William H. Draper of the UK in the early 1900s and set to the music of a 17th Century German hymn. If you search the title on YouTube (www.youtube.com), you can hear it performed by the choir of St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in Edinburgh or see some other impressive video renditions.

The only Google results for the 'Message of Welcome' piece cite the www.commonplacebook.com blogsite of Stephanie Mineart, a web designer who lives in Indianapolis. It has sections featuring photographs, jokes, news commentary and even recipes, but there is no apparent Unitarian connection.

PEOPLE'S COMMISSION OF AUDIT

The Melbourne Unitarian Church is deeply concerned about the Commission of Audit established in October 2013 by the Abbott Government. Given its limited terms of reference and the membership of the panel, whose members seem inclined to give the government what it wants, there is a very real danger that it will function largely as a 'razor gang' and recommend very large cuts to services likely to hurt those least able to afford such cuts.

The Unitarian Church believes that if there is a need for a Commission of Audit, it should be one that genuinely explores the proper role of government and considers the social purpose of government income and expenditures. Such a review would also look at the effects of privatization and other harmful decisions made by governments going back to the early 2000s.

We are so concerned about this process that we believe the time is right to establish a People's Commission of Audit which will look at the widening gap between rich and poor, and at positive ways in which we can once more become a democratic and just society committed to a 'fair go' for all. However, after discussion with Prof. Rob Watts (RMIT) and Mary Crookes (Victorian Womens' Trust) we realized that, while establishing a People's Commission of Audit is urgent and essential in the long run, there was a case for starting with a short, sharp response to the Abbott government's Commission of Audit.

We have asked the Australia Institute, based in Canberra and committed to 'new ideas and practical policy solutions that a progressive Australia needs', to develop such a response...a short, simply written, graphically well-designed brochure which will be widely publicized and distributed both by mail and electronic methods. They were quite excited about the project and have asked us to prepare a brief for them to address. (This work will cost \$15,000). They are currently developing this report for release some time in late March.

This report will then be followed up by other kinds of work including developing a People's Commission of Audit and building a coalition of people and organizations opposed to budget cuts and the erosion of democracy in this country.

[Abstracted from an insert that was placed in recent issues of *The Beacon*. Peter Abrehart, President of ANZUUA and Chairman of MUC, adds that: "The majority of the \$15,000 required was raised very quickly from Beacon readers and other church and community groups. The Melbourne Church committed to meet any shortfall with funding, which has proved to be unnecessary."]

ICELAND DREAMING

Travellers on their way from the British to the Canadian conferences (see p. 3) will have just enough time to join the Church of the Larger Fellowship's tour of Iceland over 05–14 May. From their website: Enjoy an insider's trip to the best – and most mystical – spots of Iceland, hosted by Rev. Stefan Jonasson and Rev. Meg Riley as chaplain. Day trips, walking tours, museum trips, and dream sites are all part of this spectacular trip. For details visit: www.clfuu.org/iceland-dreams/.

Rev. Jonasson is the minister of both Arborg and Gimli Unitarian Churches in Manitoba, as well as co-chair of the CLF's Board of Directors. While there are no Unitarian churches left in Iceland, both towns were founded by Icelandic immigrants. Those people made a great contribution to early Unitarianism in Canada – as recently as 1946, six of the eleven Unitarian churches were Icelandic.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue hasn't quite worked out as I had wanted but I'd rather risk a few typos than bring it out a week late – I do take pride in meeting my deadlines. Certainly, it has been a surprising issue for me and I just wish I had known about some of the international input a bit sooner, as that required a fair bit of research.

As always, my thanks to the various contributors, and please keep your material coming. The Winter instalment will come out at the beginning of June and I always like to have plenty of copy in hand. So, please send any input you have to: michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au.