

## **A Southern Chalice - a brief history 27 June 2022**

The story of how A Southern Chalice came into being started in Transylvania. As part of an ICUU symposium, I had been invited to present a paper on a southern hemisphere perspective and to take an evening service. For the service all the readings and music was from Australia and New Zealand, including Michael Leunig and Bill Wallace. After the service several people approached me asking about these inclusions. This confirmed for me the realisation that there was a place for a service book of our own making and rooted in our own experiences. As I wrote in the preface, while we have excellent resources, particularly the UUA's Singing the Living Tradition and GA's Hymns for Living, they are from elsewhere, with midwinter Christmases and spring Easters.

So at the next ANZUA conference in Perth in 2007 the idea was discussed informally to gauge support, which led to a formal resolution at the 2009 Sydney conference to produce a book, with the working title of "Under the Southern Cross". A committee was duly appointed, comprising Renee Hills from Brisbane and Christine Whelan and me.

Our immediate task was twofold - to find the \$11,000 budget needed, and if that was successful, find the right person to compile and edit it. We identified two possible sources of funding - the UUA's Fund for International Unitarian Universalism and the Wellington Fund, administered by the British GA. We applied to both and were successful in getting \$9,500. The balance was provided by each ANZUUA group agreeing to buy their copies at \$10 each.

In the second task, of finding someone suitable to compile and edit it was made easy by the availability of Andrew Usher, from Sydney. And so began the formidable task of sourcing the material. While Andrew concentrated on that, the committee had other, more prosaic tasks, such as deciding on what format, size and the name. We opted on an A5 spiral bind so that it could lay open flat and be held in one hand. We also included 10 blank pages at the back so that each group could add additional readings and songs of their choice. And we settled on "A Southern Chalice" as the name.

Andrew did a fantastic job of sourcing local material, which included holding a workshop at the 2011 conference in Brisbane, where all delegates spent time composing possible contributions. He also secured copyright approval from non-congregational contributors such as Michael Leunig and Glenn Colquhoun. The printing was done in Christchurch, benefiting from the sharp prices printers were offering as they recovered from the earthquake.

And so, by the Auckland conference in 2013, it was ready to distribute. The process had taken 7 years from concept to fruition, with lots of little bumps along the way. One of them involved getting a signed letter from the President of ANZUUA, Peter Fergusson, for the FIUU application. As luck would have it he was due to visit Christchurch in early March, three weeks before the deadline. However, in February 2011 the big earthquake hit Christchurch, and the complete funding application, including the letter, was on my computer which lay in the rubble

that used to be my house, and Peter's trip was cancelled. Fortunately, I salvaged my computer and the funding committee accepted our excuse for the lack of the letter.

The result is one that we can all be proud of. I have used it in subsequent services in Europe, where it is very well received. We also got some orders from groups in the United States. I encourage you to make good use of A Southern Chalice - it is full of good, local readings and music.

Derek McCullough