



# Quest

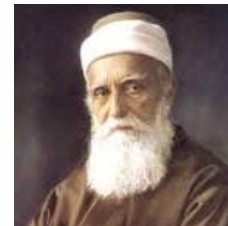


---

**Journal of the Australia New Zealand  
Unitarian Universalist Association**

**Winter 2013**

---



## THE NEW WORLD RELIGION

The Bahá'í Faith has much in common with Unitarianism and Universalism, so it's strange that most of us know little or nothing about it. Like ourselves, the Bahá'ís believe that all religions have the same ultimate goal and that their various holy books contain words of wisdom that all people can benefit from. Consequently, they promote religious tolerance and mutual understanding between people of different faiths. This year, as those of the Faith celebrate the sesquicentenary of its foundation, let us redress our neglect and hear what they have to say.

Their story begins in Persia, where Siyyid `Alí-Muhammad was born to a merchant family in Shíráz in 1819. He was brought up by his maternal uncle, who claimed descent on both sides of his family from Mohammed and his grandson, Imam Husayn, icon of the Shi'ite branch of Islam. As a young man, Siyyid took a great interest in the study of his religion and, in about 1840, he made a pilgrimage to Karbala in present-day Iraq, where Husayn had died in battle in 680 CE. There he fell in with a sect that proclaimed the imminent return of the Mahdí, an Islamic end-times figure equivalent to the Messiah.

When the sect's leader died in 1843, his disciples went in search of the Mahdi and one of them determined that Siyyid was the man they sought. The latter took the name, 'the Báb (Gate)', saying he was the gateway to Truth and the initiator of a new prophetic cycle. He travelled to Mecca to proclaim his mission, then back to Persia, where he continued to gain adherents and the Islamic clergy demanded his arrest. In 1847, the Shah summoned him to Tehran but, before they could meet, he was banished to a series of prisons on the northern border. Everywhere the Báb went, his jailers became converts, so he was put on trial in Tabriz in 1848.

The authorities were reluctant to execute him, due to his popularity, but the prime minister gave the order in 1850 after a number of Bábí uprisings were crushed. A firing squad of Christians only managed to sever the rope he was suspended from and he disappeared in the smoke. While some thought it was a miracle, he was soon found and successfully shot by a Muslim squad. His remains were dumped outside the town gates to be eaten by animals but his followers covertly retrieved and hid them. Over time, they were secretly moved via Baghdad, Damascus and Beirut to Acre in Palestine, where they were entombed in 1899.

One of the Báb's most active followers, Mírzá usayn-`Alí Núrí, was born in Tehran in 1817 and joined the movement in 1844. He took part in a Bábí conference in 1848 that debated whether to retain Islamic law or regard the Báb's message as beginning a new dispensation – with his help, the latter position was adopted. He was briefly imprisoned in that year and again in 1852, that time in the Sáyáh-Chál (Black Pit) dungeon in Tehran. There he had several mystical experiences, including a vision of a 'maiden from God' who told him he was the Messenger of God whose arrival the Báb had foretold.

Mírzá was released after four months and ordered to leave Persia, so he and his family went to Baghdad in 1853. Many of the surviving Bábis followed and, over the years, he became their foremost leader as well as gaining support from the local authorities and Sunni clerics. An alarmed Persian government demanded his extradition in 1863 but the Ottomans moved him to Constantinople instead. Before his party left, they spent twelve days in the stately Najibiyyah Gardens, where Mírzá revealed his mission to them and took the name of Bahá'u'lláh (Glory of God). Bahá'ís celebrate the days of 21 April to 02 May as the Festival of Ridván (Paradise) and see the 1863 event as the beginning of their religion.

Bahá'u'lláh and his large party of followers arrived in Constantinople three months later. If the Ottomans had hoped to gain some political advantage from Bahá'u'lláh's presence, they were disappointed and soon moved him to Adrianople (now Edirne) in Turkish Thrace. His community relocated there and he sent messages to Bábis in Iraq and Persia to let them know. He publicly announced his program to unite the world and all of its religions, claiming to be the future leader that faiths as diverse as Zoroastrianism and Christianity believe will come, one day. He wrote extensively about the tenets of the Faith, one of which is that the Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed were earlier Messengers of God, each telling the world what it was ready to learn at that stage of human development.

This was too much for the Ottoman government and, in 1868, the Adrianople community was dispersed to every corner of the Empire. Bahá'u'lláh and his family were sent to Acre, near Haifa in present-day Israel, and confined in the citadel. As time went by, he obtained sufficient respect and trust that he was allowed outside of the city and eventually to live in a comfortable mansion. It was there that he wrote his most important books while his eldest son, `Abdu'l-Bahá, attended to administrative matters. He died in 1892 and his shrine is just outside the mansion.

By this time, Bahá'í literature had spread to the West and, in 1898, the first pilgrims arrived in Acre from the UK, the US and France to meet `Abdu'l-Bahá. He corresponded with supporters all over the world until 1908, when the Young Turk revolution freed all political prisoners in the Empire. After that, he travelled widely in Europe and North America, supporting local groups and giving public lectures. Like his father, he was a prolific writer and the Faith was well established when he died in 1920. His grandson, Shogi Effendi, served as Guardian of the Faith until his death in 1957, during which time he translated the sacred writings and established the Bahá'í World Centre at Haifa.

There are now as many as six million Bahá'ís in 200 countries and territories around the world. Their supreme body is the Universal House of Justice in Haifa. It came into operation at the first World Congress, held at the Royal Albert Hall to commemorate the centenary of Faith. Bahá'í symbols include the nine-pointed star, which represents completeness and the nine great religions, and the ringstone symbol, a stylised version of 'Bahá (Glory)' between two stars representing the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

## ANZUUA NEWS

Rev. Peter Ferguson has returned from his holiday and reported on the very different cultures and economic disparities in southern Africa. These disparities and the lack of restraint on immigrants make it very difficult for democracy to work. Around 40% of deaths are from HIV and the situation seems to be imploding. Rev. Gordon Oliver, Mayor of Cape Town and leader of the Unitarians there is not optimistic about the situation.

Pastor Rob MacPherson of Adelaide has developed a set of slides for his lay ministerial training sessions, to which Rene Hills of Brisbane has added her notes from the session held there. Those who attended were assigned to write a sermon and circulate it for collaborative feedback from Rob and the others. James Hills has started to build a website for ministerial training and the sharing of services. Rev. Peter Ferguson is circulating a draft ANZUUA policy on ministerial recognition.

The anthology, *A Southern Chalice*, has now been printed in Christchurch and copies are already being shipped to those congregations who have placed their orders with ANZUUA. The book has 120 pages of quality paper and the binding allows it to be opened flat. Copies are being sent to the ICUU and the UUA, hopefully arriving in time to be displayed at the latter's General Assembly. Any books left over from the 1000 printed will be held in Christchurch and Melbourne for future use.

Jane Brooks of Adelaide has a list of items needed in ANZUUA's insurance policy but currently not covered. This will be used to solicit additional quotes before the present policy expires.



## ICUU NEWS

### ICUU Council Meeting

#### Disaster Updates

#### Interfaith Meeting in Germany



The 2014 ICUU Council Meeting and Conference will be held on 28–31 January in the premises of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, New York. Manhasset is on Long Island, just outside of New York City's formal boundaries but only 25 minutes from Pennsylvania Station. Pauline Rooney, the ICUU Vice-President, informs us that the beautiful Shelter Rock church sits on 200 acres of ground, has substantial endowments and distributes over \$12m. each year to needy UU churches around the world.

The theme of the Conference is '*Kujenga Madaraja: Spanning Cultures*', the former being a Swahili phrase that can be translated as: 'It is better to build bridges than walls'. (Swahili is a 'bridge' in itself, used in much of East Africa to enable the many language groups to communicate with each other.) The ICUU website says: We will gather to explore how our progressive religion...can be a language of faith spanning cultures and uniting us in love and compassion. It [the Swahili phrase] 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 will include theme talks, worship services, chalice circle groups and other activities, as well as opportunities for networking and getting to know confreres from around the world. Accommodation will be available at hotels in nearby Bayside with shuttle transportation to the meeting site. On Friday, 31 January, the Conference will move to the United Nations Churches Centre in New York City for a group tour of the United Nations headquarters, after which the closing ceremony and worship service will be held in the interfaith chapel.

An international ministers conference and a training event for those involved in local religious leadership, both held at UU churches in New York City, will be among the optional activities available on the following weekend (1–2 February). Tours and other opportunities for exploration are being planned for both before and after the conference. Full details will be made available in the near future.

Pauline adds that the four days of the Conference should cost less than \$500 per person, including accommodation and some meals. Return airfares are about \$1700.

With reference to the catastrophic fire in the Central Market in Bujumbura that was reported in the previous issue, the UU Church of Burundi have expressed their heartfelt appreciation to all those who sent contributions through the ICUU or directly. Assistance has been provided to affected people in the community as well as to church members who lost their businesses in the markets. The recently built Unitarian Church in Bujumbura became a place of physical refuge as well as of spiritual support during this emergency response.

In addition, an email has been received from the UU Partner Church Council in the US thanking ANZUUA members for their contributions to the relief of the Philippine floods.

Antje Paul of the German Unitarians (and a former Member-at-Large of the ICUU Council) has informed us of an Interfaith Meeting hosted by her group in Kassel on 23 March. Its objectives were to foster mutual understanding between the various groups and dispel negative stereotypes. In attendance were members of the Old Catholics (known here as Liberal Catholics), the Bahá'í Faith, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anthroposophy-inspired Christian Community.

Each group was asked to describe its major holy days and how they are celebrated. This led to a stimulating discussion and, with the assistance of coffee and cakes, the allocated time passed quickly. The visitors seem to have enjoyed the meeting and another is planned on 26 October.

[Kassel, near Frankfurt, is home to one the 23 lay-led congregations of the German Unitarians. For those who can read German, their website is: [www.unitarier.de](http://www.unitarier.de).]

## ORIGINAL MOTHER'S DAY PROCLAMATION WAS AN ANTI-WAR MANIFESTO

By Gary G. Kohls

Julia Ward Howe, author of the Mother's Day Proclamation of 1870, was a life-long abolitionist and therefore, early on, she was a supporter of the Union Army's anti-slavery rationale for going to war to prevent the pro-slavery politicians and industrialists in the Confederate South from seceding from the Union over the slavery issue. Howe was a compassionate and well-educated middle child of an upper class family. She was also a poet who, in the early days of the Civil War, wrote "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" using many biblically-based lyrics. Howe had intended her song to be sung as an abolitionist song; however, because of some of the militant-sounding lyrics and the eminently marchable tune, it was rapidly adopted by the Union Army as its most inspiring war song, a reality that Howe likely regretted when the true nature of the world's first "total war" became clear to her.

Howe, who wrote the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in one sitting (in the early hours of November 18, 1861), later became a pacifist and antiwar activist. At the time she wrote the song, the Civil War was just starting and had not yet degenerated into the wholesale mutual mass slaughter that was made possible by the technological advances in weaponry that would eventually make cavalry charges, the bayonet and the sword obsolete.

It hadn't taken too long for peace-loving, justice-oriented and compassionate observers to recognize that war was indeed, the equivalent of hell on earth. Howe recognized that reality even before the infamous General Sherman had uttered his famous statement about the satanic nature of war. Sherman's statement indicted his era's 'Chicken Hawks': "I confess without shame that I am tired and sick of war. Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have never heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded, who cry aloud for more blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is Hell."

Women have often seen their sons and husbands returning home broken in body, mind and spirit. These men, no matter what side they had fought on and whose side claimed the hollow victory, were all equally defeated when the war ended. And none of them regarded themselves as heroes. Their minds had been forever changed. They had at last seen through the lie that war was glorious.

What was an unexpected development for many of the families of the returning soldiers – both North and South – was the fact that many of the veterans who had no visible scars were still disabled mentally, many of them getting worse after they came home. The healing effect of time didn't work like it was supposed to in the combat-traumatized victim of war. These ones commonly became melancholy, suffered horrendous nightmares, couldn't function in society and were frequently suicidal, homicidal and/or turned to a life of crime. It is a fact that many of the most infamous train and bank robbers and serial killers of the late 1800s got their start as Civil War soldiers (the members of the James gang was a good example).

Because of the inability of normal families to deal with the massive numbers of traumatized warriors, the first "veterans homes" in America were constructed for the long-term care of invalided ex-soldiers who, without society's help, would have otherwise starved to death – homeless, despairing, jobless and helpless. Many of these unfortunates were diagnosed as having "Soldiers' Heart", also known in the Civil War era as "Nostalgia", a commonly incurable malady, then as well as now, known today as "Combat-Induced PTSD" (posttraumatic stress disorder).

Julia Ward Howe was a humanist who cared about suffering people. She was also a feminist, a social justice activist and a suffragette, and it was because of her ultimate antiwar commitment that she wrote the famous "Mother's Day Proclamation" in 1870, five years after the end of the Civil War, a war that resulted in a total of 600,000 dead American soldiers, with no accurate count of the probably much larger number of those soldiers who were wounded, missing in action or committed suicide after the war was over.

The Mother's Day Proclamation was partly a lament for the useless deaths and partly a call to stop future wars. The call to action was not directed at men, most of whom would have refused to admit, because of their masculine pride, that their dead buddies had actually died in vain. Rather, the call was directed at women, who were more thoughtful, humane and compassionate than the more violence-prone male members of the species.

Sadly, Howe's original intent in calling for a Mother's Day protest against war has been censored from the consciousness of our capitalist, militarized, war profiteering culture. Howe's call to action has been watered-down to a sentimental shadow of its original intent.

Rather, Mother's Day in America has been exploited into a profit-making venture, as have most other holidays (including the originally religious ones like Easter and Christmas). Mother's Day seems to be just another annual opportunity for gift-buying, gift-giving and the marketing of non-essential consumer goods to a gullible public. No mention is made of its original purpose. What was originally a call to mobilize outraged mothers to keep their sons and husbands from going off half-cocked to kill and die for some corporate war profiteer or other has become just another opportunity for boosting the corporate bottom line.

Note in Howe's manifesto below how strongly she felt about wives and mothers never again having to be put in the position of comforting or applauding their soldier-husbands or soldier-sons when they came home from war "reeking of carnage". Howe clearly felt that mothers should never again let war-making institutions make killers out of their sons who they had raised to be ethical, humane sons with a love for humankind. The prevention of such "reeking" is so much simpler than the attempt to reverse the often untreatable consequences of the gruesomeness of combat war.

Let the people of good will begin again to promote the peacemaking vision of Julia Ward Howe in our current chaotic time of perpetual war. A good place to begin would be this Mother's Day.

---

### **Julia Ward Howe's 1870 Mother's Day Proclamation**

**Arise then, women of this day! Arise, all women who have hearts, whether your baptism be that of water or tears!**

**Say firmly: "We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies."**

**Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.**

**Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have taught them of charity, mercy and patience.**

**We women of one country will be too tender of those of another to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.**

**From the bosom of the devastated earth, a voice goes up with our own. It says, "Disarm, disarm!"**

**The sword of murder is not the balance of justice. Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor does violence indicate possession.**

**As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel.**

**Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar but of God.**

**In the name of womanhood and of humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women without limit of nationality may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions and the great and general interests of peace.**

[Abstracted from an article on the website: [www.evergreendigest.org](http://www.evergreendigest.org). To read the full text, go to the home page and key 'gary kohls julia ward howe' into the Search window. Dr. Gary G. Kohls is a retired physician from Duluth, Minnesota, who writes about issues of war, peace and mental health. Many other articles of his are also on that website and these can be found by searching his name.]

## LIVING WITH 'IT'

By Ginna Hastings

I have a secret many of you don't know about. I was born without the lower part of a leg. Just "one of those things." I walk well with my prosthetic leg, but sometimes it slows me down. It's hard getting into taxis, for example, or stairs are challenging, and running is almost out of the question. Most adults who know find it easy to make concessions. But growing up with this weirdness wasn't easy. You know kids...their fear of the weird makes them tease those who are different, and boy did I cop it! They thought I was just trying to get out of PE, which I hated anyway! The worse days were when I was between prosthetics or my leg was sore, and I had to use crutches. Friends deliberately ran away and I spent time playing jacks alone with myself many a playtime. So I have scars inside and out from this deformity.

Now I'm going to make a confession (even though we are Unitarians!). I just lied through my teeth! I have two perfectly fine legs – which two knee replacements have made so. My problem isn't my legs, it's my brain. You can't see it, but I'm missing something in my brain. Doctors haven't exactly nailed it, but it's some missing balance of brain chemistry. It's not my fault and I can't control it, though I wish I could!

Sometimes I'm totally alive, enthusiastic, energetic and wonderful. Sometimes I'm "over the top" and scare the \*!#! out of people. Some people find this off-putting! During these times I get heaps done physically. I have unlimited stamina and perseverance, and need little sleep. I talk very fast and ideas come into my head like ducks in a shooting gallery. I used to think I was "supposed" to be like this all the time! Other times I shoot off my mouth without thinking.

Then there are those times when I'm down. Blue as blue can be. Sometimes I'm so depressed I can hardly get out of bed. I let things go and couldn't care less. Other times I just have a sort of a malaise about me – like riding a bicycle on flat tyres. No bounce at all in me, and every bump seems exaggerated.

I soon realized that some people avoided me. I was "unpredictable", "volatile", "had weird ideas", and not really a person conservative people felt comfortable around. My true friends stuck by me, and I am so grateful for the handful of wonderful people who love me no matter what!

It must've been hard on my kids too, never quite knowing what sort of mother I'd be. Was I going to be angry, down, or flying around like the flying nun? My poor family!! Yes, living with me must've been confusing for my kids!

For the longest time I thought something was *really wrong* with ME. My emotions were extreme, even from childhood. People used to tell me "you're too sensitive!" My dad was fond of telling me why I shouldn't feel like I did because of all kinds of logical reasons. Logic didn't come into it! I never quite knew how I was going to feel in a situation, and his explanations only served to lower my self-esteem. I just knew I was easily hurt, and hated myself. My self-esteem easily took a battering, and boy was it low.

I guess you've figured out by now I'm bipolar. In my case it's type 2, which means I don't get so manic I do totally crazy things or get psychotic, but depression is an old "friend." When I finally got diagnosed, in a suicidal moment in 2003 at age 55, I was just so relieved. I'd seen scores of shrinks since I was 18, but they couldn't label me just right. Lithium (the most common drug for bipolar) hadn't helped a bit. Anti-depressants helped the depression, but then the highs came more often and I was definitely cycling rapidly.

Then the DSM got updated with the type 2 bipolar and *bingo* I had a real life label. It wasn't my fault. I was just born with it! My soul wasn't tainted. It wasn't my original sin or my low self-esteem. It wasn't my childhood problems, though I do think they contributed. It just is, and that's that! I call it: "it".

Now I'm on the right medication that helps, but not always. I still seem to have down times twice a year, one minor, one major. The latter is usually in late November. It's not the seasons or Christmas, it's just my cycle. It happened in the northern hemisphere the same. But now with medication my overactive brain calms down, evens out, for the most part. I'm better organized, my memory is better (although one side effect of my medication is difficulty remembering "just" the noun I want while speaking), and the real Ginna is there out front far more often. People I've met recently don't know anything is different about me.

But I'm not out of the woods by any means. In fact, last December I had a spell in psychiatric hospital for depression. This year the general dip was deeper and longer than usual. Long story short, my meds needed adjusting, and it was a bad year in events last year. Also I learned through research that regular drinking, even in the "safe range" *isn't safe for me*. I'm now practically a teetotaler. (I've heard that alcoholism can be a side effect of bipolar.) Too much stress can exacerbate things, I've learned. I usually keep more to myself when I'm down and don't let people know for a long time – my defensive pattern.

So, through all this existence of mine I have learned a few things. Be careful about what I take on. Ask for help when I need it. If socializing is too hard, it's okay not to go. I have to look for the signs of being sub-manic and calm myself down, pace myself, and make sure I get enough sleep, but use the energy to do constructive things. If I get down I have to make sure I do the basics – like the dishes and laundry and tidying up the house, just to feel I'm still in charge of my life.

Though I have had moments of being very suicidal, I met a friend in recent years whose very bipolar father committed suicide after dropping her off at Sunday school. She suffered immensely from this her entire life. It was at this time that I pledged to myself that no matter how down I got, I could NOT commit suicide because of the damage it would do to my loved ones. I also have to keep telling myself, "This too will pass!!" and hang on for healthier days. Fortunately I don't go through these dark days much these days. I have those who understand in my life, from whom I can ask for help. If I need to isolate myself awhile they understand too. But my true friends know when I need company and come over for a treasured cuppa. (Unitarian communion I call it!)

Sometimes I explain my situation to others I've recently come to know and sometimes I don't want to. I don't have to either. I'm not ashamed of my label or ME – and I've accepted it. What I accomplish in life is still my accomplishment, but I don't have to set the world on fire any more. Just living a relatively normal life is my victory over this disease, and I'm proud that, for the most part, I do. It's not always easy for my family, and I honour them for sticking by me! My friends, too. I've lost a few friends because they couldn't cope with me. Oh well, their problem!

I don't know all the statistics, but I'd be certain that no matter how many people are in your Unitarian congregation there's at least one person with bipolar disorder, either the more extreme type 1 or my type 2 which is more subtle and less often diagnosed. It's not just about moodiness. It's about an over active brain at times – either negatively or positively.

There are many great web sites that give information about bipolar disorder. According to the Sydney Morning Herald on Feb 17, 2012 bipolar disorder is 80% caused by heredity. (I have two second cousins, one on each side of my family, who are worse off than me.) 10% may suicide, particularly if untreated. Though there is no "cure" it can usually be controlled with appropriate medication and therapy and family support. Indeed, 9 out of 10 of those who do seek and follow help routines are satisfied with their progress.

The big problem is getting people to realize they DO have a problem, and that they need to persevere with treatment. Also, when people are in a manic state they think they are in a great state, and resist taking medication – up to half of sufferers! They may even get to a psychotic stage and require emergency hospitalization. Bipolar is real and serious, but it can be controlled, usually well. It is estimated that 1.39% of Australians have bipolar disorder (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007). This could mean up to a quarter of a million people. You've probably seen fewer albinos than people with bipolar disorder.

There are some modern famous people who admit to having bipolar disorder. These include Catherine Zeta Jones, Stephen Fry and Carrie Fisher. There is speculation that many famous musicians and artists had it as well, like Van Gogh. So when you run across someone who baffles you, don't treat him or her as some weirdo, as an "other". They might be bipolar. But they are people too. They might have something wonderful to add to your life and community if you are willing to show some compassion and patience. They, too, need love and acceptance. We're all part of the interdependent web of life, and that includes people with mental illness. People with bipolar disorder can add a lot to your Unitarian community too! I hope my story has enlightened you in some way. Thanks for "listening"!

[Ginna Hastings is president of the Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship in Kirribilli, Sydney. This article has already appeared in the April issue of their monthly newsletter, *Esprit*.]

## CASEY JONES – THE UNION SCAB



The Workers on the S.P. line to strike sent out a call;  
But Casey Jones, the engineer, he wouldn't strike at all;  
His boiler it was leaking, and its drivers on the bum,  
And his engine and its bearings, they were all out of plumb.

Casey Jones kept his junk pile running;  
Casey Jones was working double time;  
Casey Jones got a wooden medal,  
For being good and faithful on the S.P. line.

The workers said to Casey: "Won't you help us win this strike?"  
But Casey said: "Let me alone, you'd better take a hike."  
Then someone put a bunch of railroad ties across the track,  
And Casey hit the river bottom with an awful crack.

Casey Jones hit the river bottom;  
Casey Jones broke his blessed spine;  
Casey Jones was an Angelino,  
He took a trip to heaven on the S.P. line.

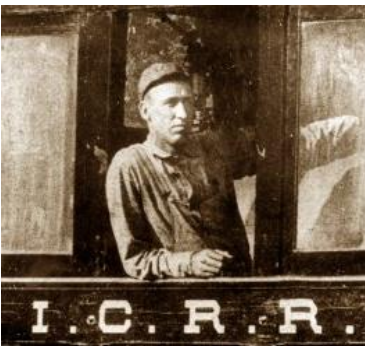
When Casey Jones got up to heaven, to the Pearly Gate,  
He said: "I'm Casey Jones, the guy that pulled the S.P. freight."  
"You're just the man", said Peter, "our musicians went on strike;  
You can get a job a-scabbing any time you like."

Casey Jones got up to heaven;  
Casey Jones was doing mighty fine;  
Casey Jones went scabbing on the angels,  
Just like he did to workers of the S.P. line.



They got together, and they said it wasn't fair,  
For Casey Jones to go around a-scabbing everywhere.  
The Angels' Union No. 23, they sure were there,  
And they promptly fired Casey down the Golden Stairs.

Casey Jones went to Hell a-flying;  
"Casey Jones", the Devil said, "Oh, fine:  
Casey Jones, get busy shovelling sulphur;  
That's what you get for scabbing on the S.P. Line."



Joe Hill (1879 – 1915)

May Day is as good an excuse as any to feature Joe Hill, the legendary union leader and lyricist. Originally from a musical family in Sweden (his real name was Joel Emmanuel Hagglung), he wrote numerous songs to existing popular tunes. This one was based on 'The Ballad of Casey Jones', composed by a black engine wiper named Wallace Saunders, and was first published in the July 1912 edition of the Industrial Workers of the World's *Little Red Songbook*. It commemorates a lengthy strike by 35,000 shopmen of the Harriman and Illinois Central Railroad System (which included the Southern Pacific Line) that started in September 1911 and lasted more than three years. You can hear the song by searching 'casey jones joe hill' on YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) – the Pete Seeger version is the best, in my opinion.

John Luther ('Casey') Jones was neither an Angelino (Los Angelean) nor an employee of the Southern Pacific Line, but Hill probably wrote the song when he was living in California. Jones was driving the 'Cannonball Express' from Nashville, Tennessee, to Canton, Mississippi, on 19 June 1900 when it crashed into a goods train. By staying at the controls and braking, he saved the lives of everyone on the train except his own. Jones' heroism was widely celebrated in song and there is no suggestion that Hill meant to sully his reputation – indeed, he was a committed union member, in his own right.

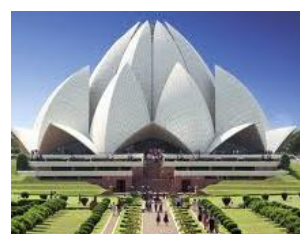


## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Sing to the jewel in the lotus, sing in the temple of love.  
Sing to the beauty he gives us, sing to the children above.  
Hearts filled with gladness, overflowing in adoration, raise our voices  
to the glory.  
Sing to the new creation, praise with our hearts full of love.  
Sing to the jewel in the lotus, praise to the Kingdom above.  
Listen, oh people, thou art in safety. Thine is the sovereignty,  
Ancient, imperishable and everlasting love.  
Dawning place of the mention of God, dawning place of the mention of God.  
Lift up our hearts to the [billions of stars?].  
Sing, sing, sing...



Sing to the jewel in the lotus, sing in the temple of love.  
Sing to the beauty he gives us, sing to the children above.  
Hearts filled with gladness, overflowing in adoration,  
Spirit will lift us, bless us, everlasting love.  
Hand by hand the water is brought, heart to heart through deed and by thought  
Age to age the servants have toiled, sacrificed, they raise from the soil  
The Temple of God, Temple of God, Temple of God.  
And now behold with eyes that are solaced  
the light that is shining from the jewel in the lotus.



Sing to the new creation, praise with our hearts full of love.  
Sing to the jewel in the lotus, praise to the Kingdom above.  
Listen, oh people, thou art in safety. Thine is the sovereignty,  
Ancient, imperishable and everlasting love.  
Sing for the earth is one country, sing in the springtime of love.  
Sing for all the religions, sing to the glory of God.  
Sing, sing, sing!



James Seals and Jack Lenz (1987)

The lyrics of this song were written by James Seals and include words from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá, while the music was composed by Jack Lenz. You can hear it sung by Dash Crofts and the 'Best Singers in Toronto' choir on: [www.bahaisongspoems.blogspot.com.au](http://www.bahaisongspoems.blogspot.com.au) (scroll down to the fifth entry, noting the pictures as you do so).

Seals and Crofts are both Texans who played with Glen Campbell and other bands from the mid-1950s until 1969. In that year, they became Bahá'ís and formed their own group, which enjoyed considerable success until they retired in 1980. They had reunion tours in 1991–1992 and 2004, also appearing at several Bahá'í gatherings. (1992 was the year of the second Bahá'í World Congress in New York City.)

Jack Lenz is a Canadian composer and musician who joined the Seals and Crofts group, playing key-board and flute. He went on to become a prolific music producer for record albums, films, stage and television, including musical scores for the Canadian children's program, *Nanalan*, and Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*. Lenz later founded Live Unity Enterprises, an organisation for producing musical and dramatic resources for the Bahá'í community, and wrote the opening music for the second World Congress.

The picture above shows the Bahá'í House of Worship near New Delhi, also called the Lotus Temple. Opened in 1986, it was designed and built by the Iranian architect, Fariborz Shaba, to the specifications that govern all Houses of Worship. Thus, it has a circular base and nine sides, each with a door and made up of three marble-clad 'petals'. The building stands on 10.5 hectares of grounds and is surrounded by nine ornamental ponds and gardens – please see Google Images for an overhead view of its stunning floral appearance and pictures of the interior, which can seat 1500 worshippers with room for another 1000.

The Temple receives four million visitors a year – more than the Taj Mahal – and is open to all. As in all Houses of Worship, readings, chants and songs from any faith can be conducted but no sermons, ritualistic ceremonies or musical instruments are permitted.

## WHAT IS THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS?

By John Winterflood

[Text from an address to the Perth Unitarians on 20 January 2013.]

In religious circles the word *gospel* is used very often, but when you try to find out just what is meant by the word, you tend to get quite different answers. However the vast majority of them point back to something to do with Jesus. So what I would like to explore today is what is the original, authentic gospel message that we would have heard from Jesus, himself, had we been around when he was.

The word ‘gospel’, of course, means ‘good news’. Since Jesus commanded the spreading of his gospel in the great commission, this task is one of the primary reasons that Christian churches exist. So firstly, we might consider what the mainline Christian churches promote as being the gospel.

Regardless of denomination, the church’s gospel message always includes as central the death and resurrection of Jesus. We don’t have to look at modern churches to find this, we can look at the very earliest writings belonging to some of the very first Christian churches. In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian church (dated around 55 AD), we find him reminding the church of the gospel that he himself received (when he was taught the Christian faith) and that he had passed on to them “as of first importance”. He says: “By this *gospel* you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain” (1Cor15:2). Then follows what appears to be a very early church creed in codified form that scholars confidently date to 30 AD, within months of Jesus’ death (James Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 855). It goes as follows: That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, That he was buried, That he was raised on the third day.... (1Cor15:3) and so on.

While it is easy to see why the resurrection of Jesus is good news, it is difficult to see how his death by crucifixion could ever be considered good news. For this reason the present day church’s gospel message almost always includes some atonement theory on why Jesus’ death for our sins was necessary, what benefits ensued, and consequently why his death can also be regarded as good news for mankind.

Now I want to point out something that, while being obvious, is rarely considered and, when it is considered, is usually found by well-informed Christians to be almost impossible to accept. And that is that Jesus’ death and resurrection (much less any theory for its necessity) could not have formed any part of *Jesus’ gospel message*. Since this is so difficult to accept, we need to spend some time proving it before we attempt to find out what Jesus’ gospel did include.

Jesus’ public ministry started very soon after he was baptised by John the Baptist and very early on he indicates that “proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God” is the reason that he was sent (Lk4:43). Many times during his ministry he indicated just how important his message was: whoever believes will “have eternal life” (Jn3:16) and “will live even though they die” (Jn11:25). Very soon, he has twelve close disciples who stay with him day and night, and who he coaches to live and preach this gospel with him. In Luke 9, Mark 6 and Matthew 10, they have been trained to the point where they are sent out preaching this gospel without Jesus having to be with them. We read that they “went from village to village proclaiming the gospel” (Lk 9:6). When they returned, “they told Jesus all they had done”. So here the apostles have become familiar enough with Jesus’ gospel to be able to preach it without his help.

Quite late in Jesus’ ministry, we have Peter’s famous confession that Jesus is the son of God. If we look at Matthew’s account, we see some interesting things. Firstly, Matthew tells us that it was “*From that time on*” (Mt16:21) that Jesus began to explain that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die. So it is not until this late stage of his ministry that Jesus first mentions anything about his death and resurrection. Then look at Peter’s reaction: “Never Lord! This shall never happen to you.” It is obvious that the very idea of Jesus dying was most unexpected and abhorrent to Peter. So clearly it cannot have been a component in the version of the gospel that they had been taught and had been preaching from village to village for a couple of years!

We might notice another thing resulting from Peter’s confession and that is that Jesus “strictly warned and commanded them not to tell anyone” that he was the messiah and the son of God (Lk9:21, Mk8:30, Mt16:20). So this was another thing that could not have been included in their gospel message. This is particularly remarkable because this very thing that Jesus strictly forbade them talk about later became a central element of the gospel accounts (“Jesus the Messiah” Mt1:1, Mk1:1). And the church later burned people at the stake (e.g., Michael Servetus) for refusing to agree with the most extreme interpretation of Jesus being the son of God!

Another thing that we often find Jesus specifically instructing people not to talk about are the miraculous events: After healing a man with leprosy, he said: “See that you don’t tell anyone” (Mt8:4, Mk1:44). In a large crowd, in which he healed all who were ill, he “warned them not to tell others about him” (Mt12:16). After restoring sight to two blind men, he sternly warned them: “See that no one knows about this” (Mt9:30). Another miraculous event which he forbade them from talking about until after he had risen from the dead was his transfiguration (Mt17:9). So all the accounts of miraculous events which are included in all versions of the gospel from the apostles onward were not part of Jesus’ essential message.

Sometime after Peter’s confession, we find in Luke 10 that a second generation of gospel messengers – 72, this time – have been ordained and are taking the gospel to more towns and villages. At this point the gospel preaching movement has gained sufficient breadth and momentum to not require Jesus’ continuing involvement, and it is at this time that he left the 72 to continue their evangelizing and “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Lk9:51) with his disciples – knowing and warning them that this will be his exit from the ministry. If Jesus’ death and resurrection was to be part of the message of the 72, then they should also go there to witness it. But their gospel message was the same as that of the twelve in their earlier preaching.

A short time later and just a very few days before his death, while warning his disciples of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus says “this gospel of the kingdom must first be preached to all the nations” (Mk 13:10, Mt24:14). This gospel to which he is referring can only be the one which they have all been preaching up to this time – and which still cannot contain any mention of his “dying for sins” – because they are still not believing that he is about to die, much less rise again.

Then some short time after he has died and risen from the dead, he gives what is called “the great commission” (Mt28:19), in which he simply instructs his disciples to *continue* doing what they have been trained to do all along – and that is to “preach the gospel to all the nations”.

So let’s summarise briefly what we can be certain that Jesus’ gospel message did *not* contain:

- No mention of Jesus being the Messiah, or the Son of God.
- No mention of Jesus’ death or resurrection and certainly no theory of atonement.
- No promotion of the miraculous events having to do with his life.

In short very little *about* Jesus at all! And yet if you go to any modern Christian source to find out what is the gospel, you will find first and foremost that the gospel is equated to: (1) some theory of atonement, or (2) that it is about Jesus being the promised messiah, or (3) son of God, or (4) most broadly and unspecifically, the gospel is simply ‘all about Jesus’.

So here we have a most remarkable situation. We have the Christian church universal (including the early apostolic church), whose very existence is based on spreading the gospel and yet promoting a gospel which would seem to have very little in common with the gospel message that Jesus himself must have taught his early disciples to preach and that he commissioned his followers to spread to all nations!

So what on earth was Jesus’ gospel message to mankind?! We know what it did not contain. What is there left of importance that it could have contained? The apostle John, in his first letter, gives a one-line summary of Jesus’ entire message. Here is what he writes: “This is the message we have heard from him (that is Jesus) and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all” (1Jn1:5).

So according to John the main element of Jesus’ gospel message was all about God. Jesus’ message told about God’s character, how it was pure light, and not only in words but also as flesh and blood in action – as Jesus said: “Anyone that has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn14:9). In this respect, Jesus’ gospel *did* contain a lot about himself – in that he claimed that his Father’s character was just like his own character.

We might briefly consider some aspects of God’s character that Jesus brought out. Recall the parable of the prodigal son. He wasted his inheritance and years of his life until his situation became so bad that he longed to return to his father’s house to become a hired servant. But, rather than having to bear anger or do penance for his foolishness, his father saw him from far off and ran to welcome him back as his son, giving him the best clothes, and held a feast of rejoicing for his safe return. We can remember that Jesus demonstrated this aspect of his Father’s character by his own willingness to “receive sinners and eat with them” (Lk15:2).

We might also remember the parable of the lost sheep and the lost piece of silver. The Jews had heard of a God who would forgive repentant sinners if they approached Him in just the right way. But not until Jesus came did people hear about a God who went in search of lost sheep, who went out looking for sinners, and who rejoiced when he found them willing to return to the Father's house.

We might consider that the ultimate demonstration of this aspect of his Father's character was Jesus' willingness to die in an attempt to reach some of the most thoroughly lost of his sheep – the Pharisees and religious rulers that hated him. He promised them the "sign of Jonah" which should convince anyone: "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days" (Jn2:19). And then he gave them the sign by allowing them to put him to death without resisting and then rising again. As Paul said, "perhaps for a good man, one would dare to die", but Jesus demonstrated God's love for his lost sheep by dying in an attempt to save these, his bitter enemies, from their evil ways. While most of these religious leaders were not saved by this sacrifice of his life, many many others have been touched and drawn to God (i.e., reconciled to Him) by this demonstration of love.

John then continues from his one-liner – and it is difficult to know if he is continuing to summarise Jesus' message or if he is starting to add his own comments. But it doesn't matter which, as we can step through John's summary and simply look for the content in Jesus' teachings. John continues with: "If we claim to have fellowship with God and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth." (1 John 1:6).

So here is a second element that we can recognise: Jesus' message was all about having *fellowship* – or a rewarding *two-way* relationship – with God, and that this relationship is incompatible with "walking in darkness". This scarcely needs to be proved but the exercise is very rewarding because, once you start to look for it, it becomes very obvious that this two-way relationship with God formed the major part of Jesus' spoken gospel message.

In his sermon on the mount, Jesus said: "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven" (Mt6:1), but instead, if you do these things in secret, "then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Here is the two-way aspect of the relationship – you do something just to please the Father and He gives a reward in return.

When talking to the woman at the well, Jesus said: "whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (Jn4:14) And to a crowd in the temple courts he said something quite similar: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me...rivers of living water will flow from within them." (Jn7:38). Here the reward he offers would seem to be almost overwhelming.

In Jesus' gospel, teaching this reward of a two-way relationship with God is always coupled with living to please Him. To the same crowd that he just spoke of "rivers of living water" he also said "anyone who *chooses to do the will of God* will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (Jn7:17). Here he is offering experimental proof of his assertions. Try it and see for yourself. This is almost science except that the result can only be measured subjectively. At the last supper Jesus said: "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching", with the reward being "My Father and I will come to them and make our home with them." (Jn 14:23)

So what Jesus is saying is that if we follow his teaching and example, which may well require some costly effort, then our Father God lets us know that we are indeed his children by filling us with joy and changing our character to be like His. Once this joy is felt in a significant measure, it can become so very addictive that eventually it overrides and subdues all other desires, so that we want to live only to please Him.

The germination of and growth into this state Jesus' calls the "kingdom of heaven" or, synonymously, the kingdom of God which "is within you" (Lk17:21), and he speaks about it more often than anything else. He tells more than a dozen parables describing aspects of it: the parable of the sower, wheat and tares, mustard seed, yeast, hidden treasure, pearl of great price, net of fishes, unmerciful servant, workers in the vineyard, wedding feast, ten virgins, talents, and the growing seed. All of these parables start with "the kingdom of heaven is like" and go on to describe aspects of this relationship. His gospel is also often called the gospel of the kingdom and the evangelists taking this message are called messengers of the kingdom.

Besides being promised by Jesus, this two-way relationship is everywhere spoken of in Christian song and literature by those who have experienced it for themselves. An instant example might be the well known and loved hymn in which the chorus goes: “And he walks with me and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own; and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.”

And of course this two-way relationship with God is not only dependent on hearing a particular message from Jesus. It was known and experienced long before Jesus came – as is evidenced by much of the Old Testament. It is also promoted to some degree by all of what we might thus term “true” religions. But Jesus was the first to teach just how welcoming God is to sinners who want to change their lives, and Jesus provided the best instruction and example of just how to enter into this “kingdom of heaven” relationship.

After speaking of fellowship with God, John then speaks of fellowship with one another: “But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another”. Here I believe we have the third and final element of Jesus’ message. That love of, and fellowship with God must inevitably show itself in love for our fellow creatures. As John says later on in this same letter “everyone who loves the father loves his child as well”. (Jn5:1) This is also an obvious component of Jesus’ teaching as most would know from his golden rule of “do as you would be done by” (Mt7:12), or what he listed as the second greatest commandment: “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Mt22:39).

Most people would also be familiar with the parable of the good Samaritan. This was told to expand the meaning of neighbor in this second greatest commandment and showed that our neighbors include those we might traditionally hate and despise. This was very surprising for Jesus’ day but is now widely accepted among people raised in the Christian tradition. However, while we may make an effort nowadays to behave lovingly towards people more distant from us, some of us are apt to forget that those much nearer to us – such as our spouses, or employers, or our government agents (such as the tax man!) – are also our neighbours and should be loved as ourselves!

John finishes with “and the blood of Jesus, his son, purifies us from all sin.” Since John has just spoken of God being light, and recalled to mind the character of God demonstrated by Jesus, we can immediately rule out any dark idea that demands suffering and shedding of blood to appease the offence of sin. Also John here is speaking of *purifying* us from sin – that is, removing the tendency to sin. Having one’s penalty paid does not equate to removing the tendency to re-offend. So the sacrifice idea cannot be John’s meaning.

By “the blood of Jesus”, I believe John is referring to Jesus’ lifeblood, or his life’s purpose, which life John sees now in hindsight, was spent to the death, in teaching and demonstrating to his followers how to purify sin from their lives – by living to please the Father. As Jesus finally resolved to the shedding of his blood: “Yet not my will but Thine be done” (Mt26:39), a path his disciples must be prepared to follow (Lk14:27).

So Jesus’ gospel may be summarised as follows: Firstly, that God is our Father and His character is that of the best father imaginable. Secondly, that if we follow our elder brother Jesus’ instruction and example, then our Father lets us know that we are indeed His children by filling us with joy and changing our character to be like Him. This is what Jesus speaks of so often and calls the “kingdom of heaven (or God)”. Thirdly, and as a consequence of God being our Father, we should regard all mankind as our brothers and sisters, and behave as lovingly towards them as our elder brother Jesus did. And these three elements, I believe, together with his living demonstration of them, encompasses the whole of the gospel message of Jesus.

If Christians gave a higher priority to this gospel message of Jesus, and a much lower priority to the enormous superstructure of doctrine and dogma that has been added to Jesus’ original message starting from the earliest apostolic church, then I believe we could find unity and fellowship with sincere practi-tioners of all religions which promote trying to have a two-way relationship with our Creator. There is no doubt that “the demons” (Ja2:19) could dogmatize doctrine more fully and correctly than any theologian. But since they are unwilling to “do the will of the Father” as Jesus taught, it doesn’t do them one scrap of good.

[Dr. Winterflood is a physicist, currently with the Gravity Gradiometry group at the University of W.A., and has had a long-term layman’s interest in the fundamentals of religions connected with Christianity.

We trust our readers are familiar with the Biblical notation for such books as Matthew (Mt), Luke (Lk), James (Ja), Romans (Rom) and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians (1Cor), and also know that numbers like 26:10 refer to the chapter and verse.]



# ANZUUA 2013 Conference Auckland, New Zealand 26-28 October

## ‘The Fourth Principle: A Free and Responsible Search for Meaning’

### PROGRAM

**Friday, 25 October:** Lay Minister Training Day at the Auckland Unitarian Church, led by its minister, Rev. Dr. Matt Tittle, and Pastor Rob MacPherson of the Adelaide Unitarian Church.

Social evening for all conferees at a local restaurant/bar.

**Saturday, 26 October:** Conference at Ferndale House (below left) with the following confirmed speakers:

Rev. Eric Cherry, Director of the UUA International Office (see next page);

Bill Cooke, Director of International Programs, Center for Inquiry (CFI), Executive Director of CFI–New Zealand and Senior Editor of *Free Inquiry*;

Rev. Bill Darlison, President of the UK General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches; and

Rev. Dr. Matt Tittle, Consulting Minister, Auckland Unitarian Church.

One or more of these will speak on Sunday afternoon. There will also be some workshops on the Saturday.

The Conference Dinner will take place in the evening.

**Sunday, 27 October:** Worship Service at the Auckland Unitarian Church (below right).

Afternoon program of speaker(s) and workshops still to be finalised.

**Monday, 28 October:** ANZUUA Business Meeting.

### REGISTRATION

The cost of the Conference per person is \$NZ 220 before 30 September and \$NZ 280 after that date, which covers transportation to/from the venues, morning and afternoon tea on all days, Saturday lunch and the Conference Dinner. That last can be attended by non-registrants for \$NZ 40. You can register on-line using the conference website: <http://anzuua2013.weebly.com>.

That website already contains information about hotels near the church and links that will be helpful to those wishing to see more of Auckland and the rest of the country. More details will be added over time, so please check it every week or so.



## INSPIRED BY INDONESIAN UNITARIANS

By Rev. Eric Cherry

The Unitarians of Indonesia are an inspiring part of our global faith with tremendous commitment, good organization, an evangelical attitude, and a strong focus on ministry with youth and young adults. It was a pleasure to visit with them for four days in April 2013.

*Gereja Jemaat Allah Global Indonesia* (JAGI) – the Unitarian Christian Church of Indonesia – was founded in the mid-1990s by Rev. Aryanto Nugroho and currently has around 500 members. Rev. Nugroho has published highly regarded theological books and is very well connected in interfaith circles and with national leaders.

JAGI is headquartered in Semarang, where the church owns and operates a large building that houses the sanctuary, classrooms, offices, a library, and space for a future NGO. A maternity clinic – *Bhaki Ibu* – operated by the wife of the founder of the church sits across the street from the church building; Mrs. Nugroho estimates that she has been a midwife at more than 200,000 births.

JAGI is administered by a National Leaders Board that includes a Council which supervises a Board of Elders and an Executive Board (responsible for daily operations). JAGI has eight ordained ministers and an executive director. It consists of four Churches (Semarang, Jakarta, Solo and Sukorejo-Pasuruan) and three Mission Areas/Fellowships (Yogyakarta, Surabaya and Klaten). Semarang is the most established congregation and the center of JAGI.

Worship services are held on Saturdays, in the Sabbatarian tradition, with charismatic and engaging worship leaders. Sabbath begins with a prayer service, followed by religious education in age groups, followed by an intergenerational worship service. After worship, the community gathers for lunch. And, after lunch, various church activities take place. The Youth and Young Adults meet each Saturday afternoon for two hours.

JAGI's Unitarian theology is based on strong monotheism and relies on Jewish and Christian scripture. JAGI doesn't celebrate traditional Christian holidays (Christmas, Easter) but does celebrate Passover and the Lord's Supper (twice a year). JAGI recommends a kosher diet for its members but does not enforce this strictly.

Ministry with Youth (including Young Adults): JAGI is realistic about its future – its leaders want to build strong Unitarian families whose children will become committed Unitarians. They hold terrific activities for their youth – including annual camping excursions. And the youth have strong bonds – in fact, the entire Unitarian community is closely bonded and committed.

Ellen Kristi, the Religious Education Director, is well versed in cutting-edge educational practices that she uses for the Sabbath School classes. She hopes to eventually establish a Unitarian school. JAGI is now familiar with UUA RE curriculum and plans to mix/match pieces of it that can help their Sabbath School. The older youth – university students – are very interested in creating connections with Unitarian youth in other countries.

It is exciting and inspiring to know that JAGI is growing our global faith in Indonesia.

[This article (with pictures) appeared in the 10 May 2013 issue of *iNews*, the electronic periodical of the UUA's International Resources Office. JAGI has been a Provisional Member of the ICUU since 2005. All of the JAGI congregations are on the island of Java, as shown on the map below.]



## REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS

Adelaide UC had Hew Parham, actor and clown trainer, speak to them on clowning and spirituality as a fitting contribution to the city's annual 'Mad March' festival. Their pastor, Rob MacPherson, conducted a lay ministerial training workshop with good group interaction and feedback.

Auckland UC's new minister, Rev. Dr. Max Tittle, opened with an interactive service entitled: "Why Am I Here? (and why are you?)". Energy and numbers have increased, evidently in response to having a full-time minister again. A recent pledge drive was very successful in raising both funds and donations of working time. They also have a social lunch on the first Sunday of each month.

Blenheim UF are celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary but the congregation is short of younger people. There is some chance that a group could be started in nearby Nelson that would provide mutual support.

Brisbane UUF plan to restart their Chalice Circle meetings, based on Adelaide's 'Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life' program. People delivering services are starting to use the training from Rob MacPherson's session there and recent meetings have had good attendances. Their Annual Retreat will be held at the end of July at the usual venue at Springbrook in the Gold Coast hinterland. They have also reinvested \$400 repaid on KIVA microloans into 16 small businesses run by Asian women.

Christchurch Unitarians are having good turnouts, especially for the first Sunday of each month. Chris Stedman's speaking tour (see last issue) is confirmed and UU groups will be able to invite him after his dates with the Interfaith community are established. (The latter are the principal funder of the tour.) Another Mid-Winter Day beachfront event is being planned.

Melbourne UC's address on International Women's Day talk was given by Joan Coxsedg, former Member of Legislative Council. The Victorian Ministerial Advisory Group didn't accept submissions from Unitarians until Peter Ferguson intervened, after which Peter Abrehart was granted a 30-minute audience. Everything is going well with the church and there are a large number of external groups using the church during the week.

Perth Unitarians are concerned about the fracking for gas in southwestern WA and heard an address in April by Michelle Andrews, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Minerals and Petroleum. In May, Rev. Peter Ferguson spoke about the dead people resurrected from the cemetery who walked around Jerusalem on the day of Jesus' crucifixion and other strange stories in the Bible that preachers seldom mention.

Sydney UC is now printing their *SUN* magazine and *Quest* in colour. Recent speakers have been the psychotherapist and author, Sharon Snir, and Tian Gerrard, who has produced two videos on the life of the Cambodian political cartoonist, Bunheang Ung. The computer theatre system continues to be of use to these and other presenters.

Spirit of Life UF are excited about potential interaction with the Muslim community representatives.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Ginna Hastings recommends three websites for people wanting to help friends or relations with (or even suspected of having) bipolar disorder: SANE Australia, bipolar-lives.com and Beyond Blue. She stresses that medication is essential to control that illness – a diet rich in fish and fish oils can help but 'mind over matter' approaches are totally ineffective.

The map on the previous page was the best I could find but it only shows the locations of the congregations in Jakarta, Semarang, Solo, Surabaya and Yogyakarta. Sukorejo-Pasuruan is south of Surabaya on the north coast of East Java and Klaten is in Central Java to the east of Yogyakarta. Java is the most populous island in the world and home to 60% of Indonesia's population.

As always, my deepest thanks to those who contributed to this issue. The Spring instalment will come out at the beginning of September and I want it to be a special one for the upcoming Conference. So, please send any input you have to: michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au.