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THE UNITARIAN SPRING

In a recent article ('The Underground Unitarians', Winter 2016), it was seen that our denomination had existed in England since before the Civil Wars, though it was banned before and after Oliver Cromwell's reign as Lord Protector (1653–58). The few brave souls who publicly defended what was then known as Socinianism led a parlous existence and one writer, John Biddle (1615–62), died in prison.

While Unitarian churches and services were illegal, publishing books on Socinian doctrine was not. The Church of England engaged in a lively five-year debate in the 1690s, known as the First Socinian Controversy, which concluded that Unitarians were too heretical to be legalised. While they lost that round, this debate raised the Unitarians' public profile for future benefit.

Ironically, the issue was reignited by an Anglican cleric and natural philosopher named Samuel Clarke (1675–1729, pictured left), when he published a treatise called *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* in 1712. He studied the Bible in its original languages and concluded that certain crucial references to the Trinity in the New Testament had been inserted at a later time than the original texts were written. For this, he was denounced as an Arian and, although he had the support of the bishops, Clarke had to promise not to speak or write any further on the matter.

(While the original Socinians in Poland were also called 'Arians' by their detractors, that 3rd Century heresy attributed subordinate – but still divine – status to Christ. That may well have been Clarke's position but it has never been a feature of Unitarianism.)

All this time, the British Unitarians had been maintaining a low profile in various Dissenting (i.e., Nonconformist) churches, often wielding considerable influence in them. They and others like them became known as 'Rational Dissenters' because of their insistence on the use of reason in religious debates.

The Church of England became embroiled in further controversies between its liberal and orthodox wings in that period. Finally, a group of Yorkshire church leaders petitioned the Parliament in 1771 to relieve the clergy and university graduates from having to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles and to restore "their undoubted rights as Protestants of interpreting Scripture for themselves". (It must be remembered that only Anglicans were allowed to attend university in those days.)

That group included Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle, and Francis Blackmore, Archdeacon of Cleveland, but the instigator was the Vicar of Catterick, Theophilus Lindsey (1723–1808, pictured centre). Lindsey had graduated from Cambridge in 1747 and founded one of the first Sunday Schools in England in 1764. (These actually provided basic education to working class children.) He already had serious doubts about the Trinity and, when he met the famous chemist, Joseph Priestley, in 1769 he felt the need to act on his principles.

While the petition had 250 signatories (again, remember how few people could vote at that time), the Parliament refused to even accept the petition and it was rejected again in 1773. Lindsey then resigned his position and, in 1774, he began conducting Unitarian services in a room in Essex Street, near the Strand in London.

Essex House was the true birthplace of Unitarianism in the UK and its location is still the headquarters of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches today. Lindsey's inaugural service on 17 April 1774 was attended by 200 people, including Benjamin Franklin, who was the Colony of Massachusetts' agent in London at the time. The content of his sermon was widely reported but the authorities took no action then or later, thanks to the legal help of John Lee, a freethinking barrister who later became the Attorney-General of England and Wales.

The congregation grew so rapidly that it was able to completely rebuild Essex House by 1778. Incredibly, much of the funding came from Francis Dashwood, 15th Baron le Despencer and founder of the notorious Hellfire Club, and from the political radical, Thomas Brand Hollis. Lindsey started his church with a new version of the Book of Common Prayer based on the work of Samuel Clarke. He retired in 1793 and died in 1808 after publishing his fifth book six years earlier.

His last years were rendered comfortable by a bequest from Elizabeth Raynor, a wealthy member of his congregation who also supported Unitarian causes and paid for the publication of Joseph Priestley's book in 1786, titled *An History of early opinions concerning Jesus Christ, compiled from original writers; proving that the Christian church was at first Unitarian*.

Lindsey was buried at the Bunhill Fields cemetery, long favoured by Nonconformists, and he now lies in the company of John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, William Blake and Susanna Wesley, mother of the two founders of Methodism. Elizabeth Rayner was interred in the same grave in 1800, followed in 1829 by Thomas Belsham, third minister at Essex Street Chapel and Lindsey's biographer.

The second minister was John Disney, who had supported the Petition of 1771 but did not leave the Church of England until 1782. Prior to that time, he had been a maverick minister who deleted the Nicene Creed and the Litany from his services and then a magistrate. In 1783, he became the first secretary of the Society for Promoting Knowledge of the Scriptures, a broadly-based organisation that promoted Unitarian theology. In the same year, he became Lindsey's assistant minister and succeeded him in 1793. He retired in 1805 and died in 1816, having participated actively in petitioning the Parliament to legalise Unitarianism, which it finally did in 1813.

The Doctrine of the Trinity Act, also known as the Unitarian Toleration Act, was proposed as a Bill by the Whig MP, William Smith (1756–1835, pictured top right). He was a Dissenter with strong Unitarian tendencies and a close associate of the abolitionist, William Wilberforce; also the grandfather of Florence Nightingale. He entered Parliament in 1784 and supported the Dissenters' attempts to have the Test and Corporation Acts repealed in 1787, 1789 and 1792. Already a member of the Essex Street congregation, he publicly declared his commitment to the Unitarian cause. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1806 and remained in Parliament long enough to see through the repeal of the Test Act in 1828 and the passage of the Catholic Relief Act a year later.

It can be seen that the Unitarians obtained legal status by persistently 'pushing the envelope' and, on occasions defying the law. Their success was largely due to their intellectual capacity to cogently state their case to the authorities, for which they were respected. It helped that the campaign took place in an era when religious and political monopolies on power were breaking down, a process which Unitarians would help to continue.

[This is mostly from Part 2 of the author's 'Unitarianism in Europe' series of PowerPoint presentations, which traces the history of our denomination in the UK and Continental Europe from the 15th Century to the present. The next stage, as will be seen in a future instalment, was to extend our movement throughout the United Kingdom and to unite the country's churches under a national structure.]



ICUU NEWS

Council Meeting and Conference

UUA General Assembly

International Convocation of Women



From July 17-23 2016, the ICUU held its biennial Council Meeting and Conference in the Netherlands. Nearly 150 people, including a large delegation of Young Adult U/Us from around the world, gathered for planning, study, worship, celebration, and fun. Program highlights included:

-)] 'Chalice Circles' which brought U/Us from diverse cultures into conversation and relationship building throughout the week.
-)] Presentations and reflection on the Conference Theme: Sustainability and Climate Change.
-)] A participatory process to map out ICUU's mission and programmatic goals.
-)] Workshops that centered on Racial Justice work, Lay-Chaplaincy training, Developments in Liberal/Progressive Theology, Accessibility Adaptations for Religious Communities, Resources for the *Defying the Nazis* film (see p. 16), and much more.

An especially poignant moment was the recognition of the service of outgoing ICUU Executive Director, Rev. Steve Dick. Steve, who has served in this role since 2009, was honored and celebrated. And Rev. Sara Ascher was welcomed as the ICUU's new Interim Executive Director.

A new Executive Committee was elected with broad global representation: President Rev. Dávid Gyer (Hungarian Unitarian Church); Vice-President Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana (Unitarian Church of Burundi); Treasurer John (Mich) Michell (Canadian Unitarian Council); Secretary Lara Fuchs (European UUs); and Members-at-Large Rev. Darihun Khriam (Unitarian Union of NE India), Inga Brandes (German Unitarians) and Rev. Eric Cherry (UUA).

To close the event, the Unitarian Union of North East India invited the global community to the next ICUU Council meeting, which will be held in Shillong, Meghalaya, India in 2018. All are welcome!

[Adapted from Rev. Eric Cherry's report in the UU International weblog: <http://international.blogs.uua.org/>, which includes a video. Rev. Cherry addressed the 2013 ANZUUA Conference in Auckland. For those who follow ICUU matters, their website is being moved to: www.icuu.info.]

The 2016 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association was held at the Conference Center in Columbus, Ohio, over 22–26 June with 'Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect' as its theme. Almost 4000 people attended, not including members of the First UU Church of Columbus that hosted the event. There were 1716 voting delegates (plus 126 off-site) from 564 member congregations.

General Assemblies are always very colourful events – the venue is filled with stalls promoting the work of various congregations and special interest groups, and many volunteers from the hosting group assist as guides and in other capacities. Every GA opens with a parade of delegations carrying their congregational banners, which are then hung all around the room where the Plenary Sessions are held.

This year's major speakers included public radio host and author Krista Tippett (delivering the Ware Lecture), Moral Mondays leader Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards and Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza. With more than 430 workshops, panel discussions, lectures and worship services, the programming focused on three primary categories: interfaith work, racial justice, and deepening the capacities and skills of lay leaders.

The closing ceremony featured special musical guests, Rev. Osagyefo Sekou (who is also a noted academic, author and documentary filmmaker) and Jay-Marie Hill, singing with their band, The Holy Ghost.

The third International Convocation of Unitarian*Universalist Women and People of Progressive Faith (IWC, for short) will take place over 16–19 February 2017 in Pacific Grove, California. See p. 11 for details.

THE SAMOAN DYSLEXIA AID PROJECT

By Brenda Bendall

The Samoan Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project is a project in Samoa, led by Dr Paul Henriques, and supported (financially and with manpower) by the Peace and Social Justice Committee of the Auckland Unitarian Church. The project is aimed at helping Samoan primary and secondary school age children with dyslexia to advance their literacy skills by using a computer software and workbook based programme called Steps. Steps is a well-recognised and effective programme developed specifically for dyslexic students by The Learning Staircase in Christchurch, New Zealand. The Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project could not operate without their considerable help.

The Samoan Pilot Project is trialling the programme in conjunction with a government agency (Model A), which in Samoa is the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC). A second model (Model B) whereby the Steps programme will be operated through a local NGO is to be piloted in Tonga. Dr Paul Henriques, a dyslexic himself, is vital to the project with his experience and knowledge of dyslexia and the Steps programme (both tutoring children and training tutors). His passion to help dyslexic children is the driving force in the Samoan Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project, and the Church is fortunate to be part of this important work.

Introduction:

The Peace and Social Justice Group (PSJ) was set up in the Auckland Unitarian Church in 2007, and a dedicated fund, the PSJ Fund, started, with funds being pledged by members. The group currently consists of the four Committee members, Dr Paul Henriques, Henri van Roon, Brenda Bendall and Gary Bendall, with plans for the group to expand in the future. As the PSJ Funds grew, the Church was able (through PSJ) to give a substantial donation to the Cambodia Royal University of Phnom Penh. Currently the PSJ Committee is very involved with supporting an initiative in Samoa, the Samoan Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project – the subject of this article.



The Samoan Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project is an international development project with a social justice goal, much like many other international projects. It is a formal partnership with the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC), training teachers and MESC staff to be able to provide services themselves. The long term goal is to create institutional change in Samoa so its education system adequately caters for children with dyslexia. It might be helpful here to understand a little more about dyslexia.

Dyslexia Background:

Dyslexia can be defined as a variable (both in terms of symptoms and severity) learning disability which involves problems acquiring and processing language. Normally a deficit of skills in reading, writing and spelling is apparent. Phonological awareness (the ability to recognise that words are made up of a variety of different sound units) develops only partially or with difficulty and frustration.

At least 10% of the population shows signs of dyslexia with 2–3% being severely affected. Dyslexia often runs in families and is often a hidden disability, with dyslexic children labelled as stupid, lazy and/or misbehaved. Dyslexia is not correlated with intelligence and people with dyslexia can develop compensatory strengths enabling them to not only advance their learning but also make very special contributions to society.

With the right kind of assistance dyslexic children thrive. Without assistance they become alienated from school and eventually drop out. With poor reading and writing skills they fail to find employment, especially in developed countries, and can easily drift into crime. In Western countries, about 50% of male prison inmates are dyslexic, with poor literacy skills and some unable to read or write at all. The cost to the country is horrendous and the loss of human potential appalling. And it is all totally avoidable.

Dr Henriques relates his own situation: “I grew up in Lexington, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston, and as a pre-schooler I could pronounce very little correctly. Only my immediate family could understand me. When I reached school age the local primary school said I would go into the ability stream where there was little academic learning and a focus on manual skill development. Fortunately my parents were not pleased with this approach and had the resources to send me to a private, progressive primary and intermediate school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, called Shady Hill which had a very enlightened view of educational needs. The Principal took a special interest in my learning and ensured I received the right attention and encouragement to overcome the dyslexia difficulties. However even at nine years old I was three years behind in reading age. By 11 though, my parents felt I was ready for public school and so I left the private and progressive Shady Hill that had been so crucial in those early years. During my later schooling I found as long as I worked harder than my classmates I could succeed.”

“I continued to work very hard in school, completed a Bachelor’s degree in California, sailed out to New Zealand and completed a PhD at the University of Auckland, and then embarked on a career in New Zealand. I am totally aware that without that special attention from the Principal and teachers at progressive Shady Hill, things would have been very different for me. That is the source of my passion for helping children with dyslexia.”

Paul served as Head of the School of Applied Sciences at AUT University for 14 years, with his research interest focusing on overseas development assistance. He then ran a Kip McGrath after-school tutoring centre in West Auckland for four years. During that time, the Centre helped many dyslexic children learn to read and write English using a NZ developed programme, Steps. He is passionate in helping others with dyslexia, as he himself had been helped as a child, to learn to read and write.

The Project:

Dyslexic children require extra help, especially in those formative years. In 2013, inspired by a Sunday service at the Auckland Unitarian Church based on reaching outwards rather than concentrating efforts within the church community, and the huge spiritual and growth potential this can have for the church and members, the Peace and Social Justice Group decided to focus on a project that was dear to Paul’s heart, and one that Paul and Henri had been investigating for some time – helping dyslexic children in the Pacific Islands.

Contact was made with a number of agencies in a variety of Pacific Island countries, culminating in initially partnering with the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) and the NGO, Senese, to discuss a computer software and workbook based programme developed by The Learning Staircase in Christchurch, New Zealand (www.learningstaircase.co.nz), called Steps.



The Steps programme is a software package complemented by worksheets specifically designed for dyslexic people and is currently being used with significant success in over 800 NZ schools to assist dyslexic children to develop English literacy. It is also used in all Kip McGrath Centres in New Zealand. Dr Henriques is certified by The Learning Staircase to train people in how to use the Steps programme and has considerable experience in this area. For children who are way behind in their development of English literacy (eg, moderately or severely dyslexic), the programme needs to be delivered in small groups with a maximum of four students per teacher.

In Samoa, two models were investigated: A) working with a government agency, and B) working with a non-government organisation (NGO). The Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) was very keen for Paul to work through them, acknowledging the benefit for dyslexic students and the need for a programme such as Steps. It was decided to set up a pilot project using Model A and work with MESC in Samoa.

Throughout this investigative stage, Paul worked with the Director of The Learning Staircase, who very generously promised to supply the Steps software programme free of charge to Samoa. The programme is in the English language, and will be used with children in Years 7–9, an age in Samoa when much of schooling is conducted in English.

Aware that the earlier learning difficulties are addressed the more effectively they can be remedied, Paul facilitated an arrangement whereby a Samoan version of Steps (both software and workbooks) would be developed. This would enable Samoan children to be helped at an earlier age and in their first language. A Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up between the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and The Learning Staircase to undertake this Samoan version of Steps development. It was also agreed that Samoan language learners in other countries, primarily New Zealand, could use the Samoan Steps material.

Early in 2014, Paul, in partnership with MESC, arranged to give nine days of Steps training seminars in Samoa, training 18 teachers and MESC staff; and the Church, through the PSJ Committee, supplied and transported 16 computers to Samoa for school use.

The Samoan Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project was a good fit with Peace and Social Justice principles. Dyslexia is a



social justice issue, common sense dictating that providing equal educational opportunities for children with dyslexia is an equity issue and ultimately a matter of social justice. The project also complied with the Church's PSJ criteria for project selection: fitting with the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism, having a PSJ member leading it, being sustainable, having adequate funds available to support physical items needed (eg, computers, workbooks, etc), and fitting within the meaning of charitable purposes as defined in the NZ Charities Act.

Project Methodology:

The project commenced with Paul holding a training programme in February 2014 in which 14 MESC staff and four teachers were given detailed training in how to use the Steps programme, including both software and worksheets. Participants also received background information about dyslexia. They received three days of training and were extremely impressed with the multisensory aspects of the programme, how rewarding it is to use, and how well all the software activities and the worksheets fit together to provide a complete language learning package.

Four schools were chosen by the Ministry (MESC) to be part of the Samoan Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project, two primary schools and two high schools, all located in Apia, the capital of Samoa. Four students were chosen at each school (Year 7 in the primary schools and Year 9 in the high schools) for the programme. The students were identified from their results on the Year 6 and 8 end-of-year national exams.

Tutoring in the schools began in April 2014 with each teacher tutoring 3–4 students for 2–4 sessions per week. Each session lasts 40–60 minutes, and is held either immediately after school for the primary-intermediate school students, and during a free period during the day for high school students. Although many of the Year 7 students had never used a computer before, they had no trouble picking up the skills to use the Steps software, thoroughly enjoying all the activities and the built in reward system. They were also very proud to be in the privileged position of learning valuable keyboard skills and to be ahead of their classmates for once instead of lagging behind.

Project Monitoring:

Progress of the students has been monitored using Fry's high frequency words and the New Zealand PROBE assessment system (Triune Initiatives Ltd). All students participating in the programme over the period monitored showed significant improvement in reading fluency. One high school student progressed from many years behind to a reading fluency of her chronological age and was overjoyed with her advancement. The Year 7 students from the two primary-intermediate schools were very proud of themselves for finally

being able to read stories. Reading comprehension has not improved at the same rapid rate and will require some special attention. Parents were extremely pleased with their children's progress and extremely grateful, sometimes emotionally so, for the extra assistance their child was receiving.

Monitoring was undertaken by Paul, who visited Samoa every four months. During those visits, Paul also held Steps training sessions for school Principals, additional teachers and further MESC staff.

Findings to Date:

The Pilot for the Samoan Dyslexia Aid Project has been running for over two years, and the following are the findings to date. At the start, the Samoan Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project helped a lot of children; however, its success was not as great in the second year. This was primarily due to a restructuring in the Ministry (MESC) that caused the loss through redundancy of two key staff members who had "championed" the project. After a meeting with MESC and PSJ members (Paul, Brenda, Gary) in August 2015, the PSJ committed to continue the project in 2016, evaluating the project at the end of the year. They would work towards providing additional computers and Steps workbooks providing the Ministry's IT personnel kept the computers in working order, and that the workbooks were used in conjunction with the software. In January 2016, further restructuring of MESC resulted in the project not being progressed as we wished. However two primary schools and one high school wish to continue to implement the project to the benefit of students.

Current Situation (May 2016):

The Peace and Social Justice Committee felt it very desirable for the schools, the Ministry (MESC), and the Auckland Unitarian Church to keep the Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project going, albeit in a static capacity, until the Ministry were ready again to give their full logistical support. To that end, the PSJ Committee are currently investigating providing IT support through a NZ based NGO currently working in Apia, and providing new updated Steps workbooks for the three schools wishing to continue with the programme. The NGO will liaise with the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.

Future Dyslexia Aid Projects in the Pacific Islands:

The Peace and Social Justice group are now exploring the second model, Model B, for the Dyslexia Aid Project, and are looking to work with an NGO in Tonga. Paul Henriques has identified the Vava'u Library Trust in Neiafu, capital of the Vava'u Island group; and has begun dialogue with Trust members. The Trust are very keen to be involved, and have appropriate people willing to be tutors for the Steps programme and existing space in the Library that can be used for a Dyslexia Aid Centre.



It is envisaged that the Tongan Dyslexia Aid Pilot Project will develop a successful tutoring centre which will provide measurable improvements in the literacy of dyslexic students. We (the PSJ Committee) are hopeful that the project can be expanded to other Tongan centres and, optimistically, even have wider applicability.

Paul travelled to Neiafu on the island of Vava'u in June 2016 to set up the Centre in the Library, and conduct a training course for tutors. He took four laptops and one Steps workbook set which were funded by the Auckland Unitarian Church, through the Peace and Social Justice Fund. Again, The Learning Staircase is involved in the Tongan project, and we are very grateful for their continuing support, especially for providing the Steps software free of charge to South Pacific Island countries.

Conclusion:

By trialling the Dyslexia Aid Project in the Pacific Islands using the two models outlined above (Model A through a government agency; and Model B through an NGO), we hope to learn how best to implement the Dyslexia Aid Project in the Pacific Islands, with the aim of helping as many dyslexic students as possible, in the most efficient and effective manner.

[Brenda Bendall is a long-term member of the Auckland Unitarian Church, and a member of the Peace and Social Justice Group.]

ANYTHING LIKE A DAME



We've got sunlight on the sand/ We've got moonlight on the sea
We've got mangoes and bananas we can pick right off a tree
We've got volleyball and ping-pong and a lot of dandy games
What ain't we got? We ain't got dames!

We get packages from home/ We get movies, we get shows
We get speeches from our skipper/ And advice from Tokyo Rose*
We get letters doused with perfume,/ We get dizzy from the smell
What don't we get?/ You know damn well

We've got nothing to put on a clean white suit for
What we need is what there ain't no substitute for

There is nothing like a dame
Nothing in the world
There is nothing you can name
That is anything like a dame

We feel restless, we feel blue/ We feel lonely and in brief
We feel every kind of feeling/ But the feeling of relief
We feel hungry as the wolf felt when he met Red Riding Hood
What don't we feel?/ We don't feel good



Lots of things in life are beautiful but, brother
There is one particular thing that is nothing whatsoever
In any way, shape, or form like any other

There is nothing like a dame
Nothing in the world
There is nothing you can name
That is anything like a dame

Nothing else is built the same
Nothing in the world...
Has a soft and wavy frame
Like the silhouette of a dame
There is absolutely nothing like the frame
Of a dame

So suppose a dame ain't bright/ Or completely free from flaws
Or as faithful as a bird-dog/ Or as kind as Santa Claus
It's a waste of time to worry over things that they have not
Be thankful for/ The things they've got



There is nothing that you can name
That is anything like a dame

There are no books like a dame/ And nothing looks like a dame
There are no drinks like a dame/ And nothing thinks like a dame
Nothing acts like a dame/ Or attracts like a dame
There ain't a thing that's wrong with any man here
That can't be cured by putting him near
A girly, womanly, female, feminine dame

Rodgers and Hammerstein (1949)

* A wartime Japanese radio announcer who delivered propaganda messages in English.

[Some verses had to be contracted to fit the page. More commentary on the next one.]

BALI HA'I

Most people live on a lonely island
Lost in the middle of a foggy sea
Most people long for another island
One where they know they would like to be

Bali Ha'i may call you
Any night, any day
In your heart, you'll hear it call you
"Come away, come away"

Bali Ha'i will whisper
On the wind of the sea
"Here am I, your special island
Come to me, come to me"

Your own special hopes
Your own special dreams
Bloom on the hillside
And shine on the streams

If you try, you'll find me
Where the sky meets the sea
Here I am, your special island
Come to me, come to me

Bali Ha'i, Bali Ha'i, Bali Ha'i

Someday you'll see me, floating in the sunshine
My head sticking out from a low-flying cloud
You'll hear me call you, singing through the sunshine
Sweet and clear as can be
Come to me, here am I
Come to me...

If you try you'll find me
Where the sky meets the sea
Here am I, your special island
Come to me, come to me

Bali Ha'i, Bali Ha'i, Bali Ha'i



Rodgers and Hammerstein (1949)

Having failed to find a suitable Samoan song, it is hoped that the memorabilia on these pages will be appreciated by those readers who can remember this blockbuster movie of 1958 (and perhaps inspire the younger ones to learn about it). Richard Rodgers (1902–79) and Oskar Hammerstein II (1895–1960) produced many musicals between 1943 and 1959, and then started their own company to make some of them into movies. Those works included *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *The King and I*, *Flower Drum Song* and *The Sound of Music*. The stage production of *South Pacific* opened in 1949 and it was a huge success.

The story line was based on *Tales of the South Pacific*, written by the famous historical writer, James Michener ((1907–60). A Quaker who could have claimed conscientious objector status, he served in the US Navy during World War II as a historian and travelled to New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands and what is now Vanuatu. The movie was filmed mostly in Hawai'i but also on the Spanish island of Ibiza, whose islet, Es Vedrà, was the actual Bali Ha'i.

As always, video clips of these songs can be found on YouTube (www.youtube.com).

OWL IN AUSTRALIAN/NZ?

By Renee Hills

I've known about OWL (Our Whole Lives) ever since James and I visited Honolulu in 2008. On a Sunday morning we attended the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu while in transit to another island. This was our first experience of UUs outside Australia and we loved the welcoming service. Afterwards, Minister Mike Davis drove us to the airport and started talking about OWL, saying it was being used in Catholic schools in Hawaii. As I was working at the time in a Brisbane Catholic girls' school where sexuality education was woefully inadequate, I was all ears.

On return to Australia, I purchased the workshop plans for all levels of the program and used parts of it in my counselling practice at school with individual students. I mentioned it to my supervisors when the local Catholic education system was considering an acceptable program to implement in schools but my suggestions were never taken seriously.

My interest was rekindled this year after being invited to become a member of the Global Sisters Leadership Council (an advisory body to the International Women's Convocation). As I considered ways to improve the lot of women in Australia, domestic violence seemed a key issue. I recognized that a huge cultural change in the relationships between genders was required to address this issue. Discrimination and disrespect of women begins in childhood, and disrespect precedes violence. For a very moving take on this, watch 'Dear Daddy' on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dP7OXDWof30>.

In Australia, research shows that, in contemporary youth male/female relationships, violence against women is increasingly accepted. For example, 26 % of young people aged 16–24 agreed that partner violence can be excused if the perpetrator regrets it afterwards and 24% agreed that violence can be excused if the perpetrator was so angry they 'lost control'. (*Young Australians' attitudes to violence against women: Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey for respondents 16–24 years*; Anita Harris, Nikki Honey, Kim Webster, Kristen Diemer and Violeta Politoff)

I see OWL as a way of addressing domestic violence. The open and comprehensive program helps children, young people and adults make informed and responsible decisions about sexual health and behaviour. One of the understandings on which OWL is based reads: *Children learn about sexuality from how people touch them, talk to them, and expect them to behave as males and females. The messages that children receive affect their future attitudes, values, and behaviours.* Not only does OWL provide the facts about anatomy and human development; it also helps participants to clarify values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional and social aspects of sexuality.

Every OWL module (Primary, Secondary, Adult, Young Adult) reflects these core values: Self Worth, Sexuality, Responsibility and Justice and Inclusivity. Other ideals include:

-) All children should be loved and cared for, respected and valued as unique individuals.
-) Sexuality is a natural and healthy part of living. Children learn about sexuality beginning at birth and continue to learn throughout their lives.
-) All children should be loved and cared for, respected and valued as unique individuals.
-) Information about sexuality, human development, and sexual health should be presented to children in positive, accurate and developmentally appropriate ways.
-) Parents are their children's most important sexuality educators. The larger community of educators, caregivers, and health professionals can have a positive influence on children's sexual health.

Every OWL module aims to achieve these goals for their participants (children, adolescents or adults):

1. To strengthen and support the sense of self-esteem;
2. To help with understanding the place of sexuality in human life and loving;
3. To help with recognizing and appreciating bodies as good and beautiful, private and special;
4. To help give accurate information about human sexuality, reproduction and gender identification;
5. To help children prepare for the normal changes they will experience as they grow and develop;
6. To help develop interpersonal skills that will keep participants safe and healthy;
7. To help participants make decisions that respect themselves and others and that anticipate possible consequences;
8. To engage families with the OWL program in open communication about all life questions.

OWL also provides effective, safe and supportive peer group activities and education about sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment, how to critique media messages about gender and sexuality, acceptance of diversity and encouragement to act for justice. It also includes an optional religious component, *Sexuality and Our Faith*, for optional use in UU or United Church of Christ (UUC) settings.

UUs have been delivering sexuality education for more than 40 years and it is estimated that their programs have directly impacted 200,000 people. In fact, more than 7000 OWL facilitators have been trained since 2000, when OWL was first launched by the UUA and UUC. It is widely respected and used by schools, teen pregnancy prevention programs and sexual health organisations in the US. See testimonial videos from the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu here: <http://www.unitariansofhi.org/sexualityeducation>.

OWL has been taken out of the American context and culturally adjusted. For example, in May this year in the Philippines, there was a facilitators' training followed by a workshop with a large group of young people in an intensive camp setting over several days. (Normally the modules run over eight weekly workshops.) In Romania, some Unitarians are being trained as OWL facilitators with a view to delivering workshops all over the country (roving facilitators).

In Australia/NZ, we need trained facilitators before we can offer OWL. I have been assessing interest and exploring how and when training could be organised. To date, the most interest appears to be from our Brisbane and Auckland congregations. Hosting a training session involves bringing two trainers from the mainland USA or Hawaii, accommodating them, and providing a venue, catering and just a few materials. I have costed it at approximately \$7,300 to hold such a session in Brisbane. The cost could be partially met from participants paying to attend or we could possibly qualify for a UUA Faithify crowdfunding campaign (<http://www.faithify.org/>).

It may be more appropriate and cost-effective to hold the training in Auckland if there is more interest in New Zealand. We also need to decide what level of training to start with: Primary, Secondary or Adult. It would be ideal if the training session could be held in May next year, when many of the trainers are already in Hawaii for a 'Train the Trainer' program there. That way, their travel costs would be less than if they had to come from the US mainland.

UUA OWL Associate Melanie Davis has offered to present a webinar explaining more about OWL to anyone who is interested. Our Brisbane committee (Renee Hills, Janice Hayhoe and Kim Banz) see this as a logical promotion for the training event. We attended Melanie's webinar, 'Hosting an OWL Training', on 21 July and found it both informative and practical. For webinar details and any further information, please contact me at: renee@brookfield.fastmail.fm or call: +61 414 275 620.

[Anyone who has been following Renee's South American travelogues in the last two issues does not need to be told that she is the president of the Brisbane UU Fellowship. Just as we go to press, she has informed us of her acceptance into the 2017 U*U Global Conference, a partnership project of the Meadville-Lombard Theological School in Chicago and the International Office of the UUA.

Details of that leadership training course were provided in the previous issue ('ANZUUA News', p. 6) but, essentially, the online coursework will start in September; the residential component at Meadville-Lombard will take place in January next year; and follow-up mentoring will continue until May. At the end of this program, participants will prepare action plans to support the goals of their congregations/communities and identify the tools and resources that will be needed to carry out those plans.

The Chicago winter being what it is, Renee wisely plans to proceed from there to the International Women's Convocation in California in February. The venue is the Conference Grounds at Asilomar ('Refuge by the Sea') on the Monterey Peninsula, about 100 km south of San Francisco, and the theme is 'Weaving Global Partnerships...Forging a Just Future Together'. Some 500 U*U women are expected to attend, mostly from the US and Canada, but also from Bolivia, Europe (especially Romania), India, and the Philippines.

There will also be a Pre-Tour of the Carmel Mission, Big Sur beach and the Carmel Winery on Thursday, 16 February, before the opening of the Convocation that evening. A Post-Tour on Sunday, 19 February, after the midday closing will include the world-famous Monterey Bay Aquarium, San Francisco's legendary Cannery Row and a sunset dinner on Fisherman's Wharf. For more information and registration forms, please see: <https://www.intlwomensconvo.org/third-international-womens-convocation/>.

ANZUUA NEWS

The ANZUUA Council meeting 08 August was the first such videoconference under the new regime of three-monthly meetings. The Executive is still lacking a Secretary, with James Hills of Brisbane taking the Minutes and assisting with other functions.

A sub-committee consisting of Peter Abrehart, James Hills and Rev. Rob MacPherson has been formed to review the wording of two clauses in ANZUUA's Constitution. Any amendments they recommend will need to be approved at the next ANZUUA Conference.

Pauline Rooney reported that she is no longer on the ICUU's Executive Committee, having had two terms as Vice-President. However, she said she was happy to remain as ANZUUA's liaison person for ICUU matters and that offer was gratefully accepted.

James Hills and our former webmaster, Hugh Lambert of Adelaide, are co-ordinating procedures affecting the ANZUUA website. Anyone who hasn't seen it should visit: www.anzuua.org.

Rev. Rob MacPherson of Adelaide will be representing ANZUUA at the Common Dreams conference in Brisbane on 16–19 September, speaking on 'Spirituality From a Unitarian-Universalist Perspective' on the Sunday (two sessions, morning and afternoon). Rev. Clay Nelson of Auckland will also be in attendance. For information about the conference and registration forms, please see: www.commondreams.org.au.

Renee Hills of Brisbane has sent a report on the webinar with Melanie Davis of the UUA about the 'Our Whole Lives' (OWL) course and some costings for a putative 'Train the Trainers' session in our region. (See previous article.) The next step appears to be to take Melanie up on her offer to deliver an information webinar about OWL to anyone in Australia/NZ who is interested. It has been suggested that ANZUUA should invite the Uniting Church to join us.

REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS

Adelaide UC recently welcomed ten new members, including some children, which is a very encouraging trend. June is 'Unitarian Observance Month' in the congregation, and minister Rob MacPherson provided a list of 15 things that members could choose to be mindful of and work on; e.g., not to complain for a month, or not to correct others, or to really listen to others. During the month, the services focused on how everyone was getting on with their chosen way of responding to others, their successes and struggles and so on.

In July, in the depths of what has been a very cold and wet winter for Adelaide, Rev. MacPherson explored "a trinity of dark matters, essential to the human soul". These were 'Our Mysterious Past', 'Our Unknowable Future' and 'Our Unavoidable Fallibility', all under the theme 'In a Dark Time'. Those addresses are on their podcast site: unitariansa.podbean.com.

They also started a new group called 'Club 99' for people who don't want to go to something alone; e.g. a concert, the cinema or a sport event. Members can email their details to the 'Stream of Life' social committee and see if anyone else in the club wishes to join them.

The 2020 Committee, which was formed to develop a vision for the future of the congregation, has taken responsibility for organising the ANZUUA Conference to be held in October 2017. Planning is still very much at the ideas stage, so details will be provided as plans firm up.

After five years of service, Rev. Rob MacPherson is taking extended leave in October/November, travelling in Europe and elsewhere with his professor wife. He expects to be 'off the grid' for that period.

Auckland UC have now completed the long-running upgrades of their building. These included: a new accessible toilet off of the entrance foyer; an electrical upgrade; a new fire alarm system; strengthening of the sanctuary floor; new fire doors downstairs; a new code-compliant stairway requiring a new foundation; and moving a wall to make a large meeting room and a small office in the foyer.

They held a ‘non-canvass canvass’ that allowed for pledges to be made online, which began with a community supper and quiz night with over 70 in attendance and produced impressive results. Eight people joined the church after a recent ‘New Member Sunday’, making 18 new members since November. At the beginning of August, 60 people attended an all music service called ‘Jukebox Sunday’ that featured a duo playing rock-and-roll, a Beethoven sonata by their pianist and a cappella ensemble singing Gospel and Americana. It was a great success.

The Adult RE year began with looking at a comparison of progressive Christianity and Islam. Presently we are looking at *Saving Jesus from Christianity*, a program by the Westar Institute (Jesus Seminar). The group will shortly begin a study of the history of Unitarian Universalism.

The Peace and Social Justice Committee has had an uptick with nine new members joining. The offering on the third Sunday of each month is donated to PS & J work. They also held a fundraiser for the Living Wage Movement in July and contributed money to a local *marae* (Maori meeting place) that is taking in homeless families. Some members have spent time preparing meals and giving general assistance there.

Brisbane UU Fellowship have gained four new regular visitors, in addition to two Quaker members who indicated they will return. Elaine and Lisa, who attended the ANZUUA Conference in Melbourne, have re-located from Darwin and their previous knowledge of Unitarianism in the USA and Europe is welcomed.

They have had professional presentations from Rev. Bob Hill and ministerial intern Kim Banz (see p. 13). Kim also led the Annual Retreat at Springwood Mountain in July, where the attendees explored such spiritual practices as meta-meditation, *lectio divina* (divine reading) and movement meditation. Unfortunately, that event was under-subscribed due to illness and work commitments.

Record numbers (22) attended their meeting on 24 July, when Samay Zhouand shared his experience of fleeing Communist Afghanistan 30 years ago. At the age of seven, he and his two brothers crossed the border into Pakistan without adult help. They had to give up their money and food to opportunistic soldiers but, as instructed, clung to their mother’s hairbrush. When they were finally reunited with her in Pakistan, she revealed \$US 200 hidden beneath the bristles – enough to take them to their father in India and help with the journey to Australia. Samay spoke of his gratitude at being alive and the need for each one of us to ‘Find Your Hairbrush’.

BUUF are considering a Covenant of Right Relations, as implemented in Auckland and being considered in Perth. Renee Hills led a service on ‘Covenants Not Creeds’ to introduce this on 14 August. (These Covenants are meant to express expectations of behaviour in congregations.)

On 28 August, BUUF members will join with the Brisbane South chapter of Zonta International to pack toilets for the homeless, refugees and women’s shelters. (Zonta is a movement for the empowerment of women – please see: www.zonta.org and/or: www.zonta.org.au.)

Christchurch UUs held a potluck meal on 12 June to celebrate Midwinter/Mataariki. This was an occasion for sharing favourite winter memories, and reflecting on that season of their lives. They conducted their Annual General Meeting on 10 July and held an End of Winter celebration on 14 August.

First UU Melbourne Fellowship report that, on 18 June, four of their members joined a World Refugee Day march at the State Library to protest offshore detention and the use of the Border Force Act against whistleblowers into conditions in detention camps. Not only do they feel strongly about these issues, but marching with their banner provided an opportunity to mark their presence amongst like-minded people.

On 19 June, their member Hansie Jaensch spoke on injustice and human rights, exploring the concept of ‘the rule of law’: how it is enforced, by whom, to what purpose and to whose benefit. They were pleased to welcome three new attendees, two of whom had noticed them (and their banner) at the march. His concluding statement was: “If a law is unjust, a man is not only right to disobey it, he is obligated to do so”.

During July, Janine Rizzetti spoke on the First Principle – the inherent worth and dignity of every person – and combined two UUA sermons from the Internet in her presentation.

Melbourne UC had a presentation on 29 May by Lew Wheeler of the Fair Go For Pensioners Coalition titled 'Living on Fresh Air: 2016–17 Federal and State Budgets'. Other highlights were talks by Rev. Ian Smith, Executive Officer of the Victorian Council of Churches on 19 June ('Our Living Justly Allows Others the Same'), Associate Professor Hans Baer of the University of Melbourne on 24 July (Global capitalism must be replaced by an alternative system that recognises the ecological limits to economic growth) and Maree Dellora, president of the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society on 21 August (What's Changing in Cuba).

On 31 July, a fundraising concert for Launch Housing raised over \$1000 for that organisation's services to the homeless. Formed in July 2015 through the merger of Hanover (House) Services and HomeGround Services, Launch Housing is now one of the largest providers of housing and homelessness support in Victoria. It helps thousands of men, women, families, young people and children every year.

MUC are spending a considerable sum (\$13,000+) on visual equipment, so their hall can be used as a movie theatre of sorts. This is in addition to the audio/broadcasting investments that are ongoing.

They continue to be actively involved in Peace Connections Victoria (which arose from the ANZAC Centenary Peace Coalition of last year), finding it very encouraging to see a large number of faith-based and secular groups working together on such issues as racism, war and peace, globalisation, etc. A great deal of work goes into these activities but they are seen as in keeping with Unitarian traditions.

Perth Unitarians' two services in May were led by their minister, Rev. Peter Ferguson, his sermon topics being 'Examining the Evidence for Life after Death' and 'Problems of Animal Suffering'. After the latter service, the congregation attended a barbecue at the Fergusons' new home to bid them 'bon voyage' as they set off on a caravan journey to Port Augusta, Alice Springs, Kakadu, Katherine, Darwin, Kununurra and back along the west coast to arrive in Perth in late September.

June was taken up by talks by members and TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) videos. On 17 July, they enjoyed a presentation by Reverend Emeritus Professor Bill Loader of the Uniting Church on 'Bad Angels, Giants and the Origin of Evil'. Rev. Loader lectures worldwide but he always seems to make time to visit the Perth UUs, this being the third time he addressed them. They are all looking forward to their Annual Retreat at the New Norcia Monastery at the end of August.

Peter Ferguson and Kathy Nielssen have stepped back from their 'front line' positions so that younger members can take up the reins. The Committee has been radically restructured as a result of a new office management technology (see p. 16). They are currently reviewing their Constitutional Rules, as the Western Australian Associations Inc. has brought out new Rules as of 01 July 2016.

Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship had a quiet June, as their first meeting of the month was cancelled due to wild weather. They have also decided not to compete for parking with the Kirribilli Markets in the second week of each month.

In July, they had some outstanding talks by their members – a highly intellectual one on Spinoza by Martin Horlacher, a passionate one on the Iraq War by Colin Whatmough, an informative one on 'Leadership and Unitarian Values' by Sandy Biar a fascinating presentation on 'Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj' by Rev. Geoff Usher. (Roy's Brahmoism is described as "a monotheistic reformist and renaissance movement of Hindu religion".)

SoLUF's four Kiva loans are replaced as they are repaid, a recent one being in Senegal.

Sydney UC's highlights of this quarter were an address on John Christian Watson, an early prime minister of Australia who was a member of the church (Peter Crawford, 05 June), a PowerPoint presentation on 'Winter Festivals Worldwide' (Mike McPhee, 17 July) and a special guest speaker, Yarran Cavalier, on 21 August, who spoke on Aboriginal spirituality. There were also Music Services on the *Lieder* (poems by others put to music) of Robert Schumann in June and on the music of Johannes Brahms in August.

The monthly 'Silents in the City' presentations of historic silent movies have featured *Street Without End* (Japan, 1934) in June, Cecil B. DeMille's *Carmen* and Charlie Chapman's *Burlesque on Carmen* (both from 1915) in July and Raoul Walsh's *Regeneration* (US, 1915). The last was one of the first full-length gangster dramas and was filmed on New York City's Lower East Side, with real-life gangsters, prostitutes and homeless people in the cast. SUC are pleased to be helping the struggling arts community preserve the memory of these early works of cinema, many of which were thought to have been lost forever.

INTRODUCING KIM BANZ

I come from Minnesota in the United States, which means Muddy Water in the Lakota language of the traditional custodians. It is full of lakes and former prairie, and very cold. I was an organic farmer before entering ministry. I had chickens and sheep and bees and veggies and some stone fruit trees. Part of my spiritual journey has been having to give up that farm but also learning how to hold on to my identity as a farmer-in-exile.



I did sustainable agriculture as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala and privately in Nicaragua. I also taught English in Japan. At the end of teaching in Japan, I shaved my head and walked the 88 Temple pilgrimage. It was grueling, physically and spiritually, and transformative.

I got my Master of Divinity from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. It is an ecumenical seminary, whose population was 70% LGBT+. Our recently retired president was an African American and we had a lot of influence from the Black Church. I took classes with colleagues from the United Church of Christ, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians (Anglicans), Lutherans, Roman Catholic women, Jewish students, Buddhists and lots of UUs.

I also completed a one year Chaplain Residency at a hospital in Minnesota. It was emotional, thrilling, moving, gut-wrenching, tender and even boring sometimes! I have a bio-centric theology and a prayer life oriented around nature. I feel at peace hiking and farming.

I am living now with my sister in Brisbane, slowly establishing an urban farm. I have preached in Brisbane and Adelaide, and will preach at First UU Fellowship in Melbourne on 18 September. I am available for the next six months to visit congregations in Australia and New Zealand. I can lead workshops on UU History, theology or spiritual practice. I preach on topics like mysticism, foolishness, radical hospitality, chaplaincy, evil and hope, and I have an energetic, enthusiastic style of worship. I can also perform ceremonies like weddings, baby dedications and memorials.

Email me at: kim.banz@gmail.com, or call me after 01 September at 0426 535 128. Peace, Kim.



Kim adds that: The Brisbane UU Fellowship watched the headline lecture on the night of Saturday, 26 June (Sunday our time), at the UUA's General Assembly, given by Krista Tippet. We live streamed it, with coffee and tea to warm up, and had a discussion afterward. I think it was a successful experiment, as we had almost 20 people including a couple of newcomers. I live tweeted it on both Twitter and the General Assembly app using hashtag #DownUnderUUs – we got re-tweeted by the Church of the Larger Fellowship and lots of connections from assembly-goers in Ohio. The Fellowship is considering using this format to view the CLF's weekly services as a supplement to their program.

[Please see p. 16 for some further explanation of these matters.]

SPECIAL REPORT FROM PERTH

Our Perth group has now replaced most of the Secretary's tasks with a 'freemium' online service called Trello, which one power user describes as "a collaboration tool that organizes your projects into boards. In one glance Trello tells you what's being worked on, who's working on what, and where something is in a process." Today, 07 August, we used this program to help organize our committee meeting after our congregational meeting. For once everyone stayed behind for the committee meeting to watch Trello being used.

John Winterflood, our current Treasurer is acting as System Administrator (S.A.), so instead of the usual office bearers – i.e., Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer – we are currently dividing up all secretarial duties between six committee members including the Treasurer as S.A. The SA loaded Trello with agenda, planning statement, and previous minutes and typed in details as they arose using laptop, projector and screen. We hope to eventually replace our committee meetings and distribute our secretarial load with this online tool as proposing/seconding a motion, recording all comments of the discussion, voting on it, and listing and checking off action items can all be done on line, and distributed in location and time.

[Provided by Kathy Nielssen – for information about Trello, see: <https://trello.com>.]

FOOTNOTES

Firstly, with Eric Cherry's report (on p. 3), *Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War* is a film about the Unitarian minister, Waitstill Sharp and his wife, Martha, who left the US for Czechoslovakia in 1939 and, over two dangerous years, helped to save hundreds of political dissidents and Jewish refugees to flee the Nazi occupation. Released in 2012, it was directed and produced by the Sharps' grandson, Artemis Joukowsky III.

With Kim Banz' article, the Ware Lecture given by broadcaster and best-selling author Krista Tippett was titled 'The Mystery and Art of Living'. That lecture is named after Harriet E. Ware, who made a bequest for the purpose in 1922 and it has been a keynote feature of General Assemblies ever since. (Anyone interested in Twitter and 'tweeting' should Google those things for themselves.)

The Church of the Larger Fellowship is the UUA's outreach ministry to UUs who cannot attend a congregation for any number of reasons. It has 3500 members all over the world and its branches include the Church of the Younger Fellowship (for young adults), the Military Ministry and the Prison Ministry.

CLF members have access to a lending library of books, CDs, videotapes and sermons, religious education curricula and self-study guides, and the monthly publication, *Quest*. The CLF also podcasts sermons and readings from *Quest*, and offers online courses on its website: www.questformeaning.org/clfu/.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue has worked out very well (at least, in my opinion) and I am more than usually indebted to those who contributed such impressive articles at my behest. I think ANZUUA should be proud of the excellent work being done by their congregations (and, of course, by others who have reported in previous issues).

The new regime of quarterly ANZUUA Council meetings appears to be working at the business level but I am less sure about the reports from the member groups. Most groups have also taken to quarterly (rather than monthly) reports, which is all right for my purposes as long as they don't forget anything over that time.

What I would like in future is that, in addition to other events, groups report their most significant service of each month – including whatever is upcoming in the month of the Council meeting. Thus, for the November, please mention anything that happened in August that wasn't reported earlier but then bring us up to date on the following three months.

Of course, there can be no hard-and-fast formula for these reports and I'm happy to receive material about events and projects that is more detailed than what will be sent to ANZUUA. These and any other articles can be sent to me (preferably sooner than November) at: michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au.