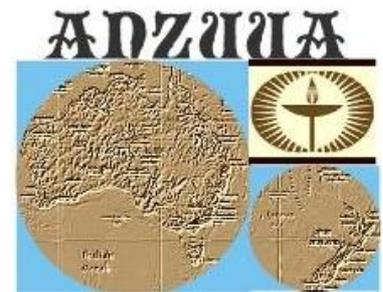


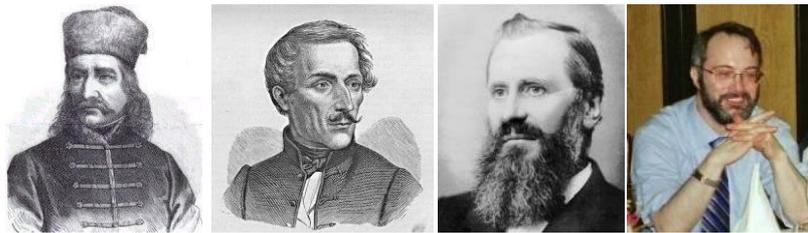


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MODERN UNITARIANISM IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE (Part 1)

In three previous instalments, we traced the history of Unitarianism in the United Kingdom and Ireland from about 1600 to the present day. Now, we will survey the advances made by our confreres in Europe in that period and you will probably be surprised to learn how many countries our denomination is now represented in. Given the diversity of European countries and peoples, we can only expect a similar variety in the origins and histories of these national Unitarian bodies.

First, we must go back to our ancestral homeland of Transylvania, where the followers of Francis Dávid had managed to keep their church system operating despite increasing pressure from the Catholic monarchy. The second Bishop was György Enyedi (1555–97), elected in 1592 and later known as the ‘Unitarian Plato’ for his writings. His most famous work was the anti-Trinitarian *Explicationes* (1598), which was reprinted in Holland and circulated widely in Europe. While the term, ‘Unitarian’, was first mentioned in official documents in 1600, the name was not formally adopted by the church until 1638. That same year saw the most savage oppression the church had ever experienced, with most of its properties confiscated and its publications banned.

Bishop Mihály Lombard de Szentábrahám (1683–1758, pictured far left), elected in 1737, is regarded as the second founder of the Transylvanian church, as he rallied its forces and laid down its statement of faith in his *Summa Universae Theologiae Christianae secundum Unitarios* (A Digest of Christian Theology according to the Unitarians), published posthumously in 1787. The Unitarians were fortunate to have the liberal King Joseph II in power at the time, who issued an Edict of Tolerance in 1781 that gave legal status to all Christian denominations in his realm, even though the Catholic Church remained dominant.

This began a period of ambitious renewal in Transylvania, during which many new churches were erected and older ones were restored. New schools were built and a major upgrade of the training system for ministers was implemented. The most important work was done in the capital of Kolozsvár, where a new church was completed in 1796. Designed in the Baroque style by the architect, Antal Török, it has a semi-circular apse, a two-storey spire with Doric and Ionic pilasters, and a Neo-Classical stucco decor.

In the mid-1800s, the British and American Unitarians became aware of their long-lost Transylvanian brethren and quickly made contact with them. The writer, Sándor Farkas (1795–1842, pictured second left) toured the northeastern states of the US in 1831 and wrote a book called *Journey in North America*, which was banned by the Catholic Church in 1834 – probably because he praised American democracy. After 1860, a number of Transylvanian theology students finished their education at the Unitarian colleges in Oxford and Manchester. In 1900, the Transylvanian Church joined those of the UK and US in becoming founding members of the International Association for Religious Freedom at its inaugural conference in Boston.

At the end of World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismantled and Transylvania became a part of Romania. The Transylvanian Church attempted to found branches in the rest of the country, including one in Bucharest in 1933, but these were not successful. Today, the Transylvanian Church has 60,000 members in 125 congregations and about 30 small fellowships. Its members are almost entirely ethnic Hungarians and many of them live in Unitarian farming villages, where the minister also acts as the mayor.

There are many picturesque churches in the region, the oldest of which is the fortified church in Székelyderzs, which dates from 1400 and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. It was originally a Catholic church, as its frescoes depict a battle fought by King Ladislaus I of Hungary against invaders from the east in the 11th Century. Much more recent is the church in Mészkö, known as the Alabaster Village because that marble-like mineral was mined there for centuries. Its minister, Ferenc Balázs (1901–37), a noted poet, author and social reformer, rebuilt the church and painted it himself, even the beautifully decorated ceiling.

The situation in Hungary was much different, in that the 100-or-so Unitarian congregations that existed in the 16th Century disappeared completely. Only migration from Transylvania enabled the denomination to be revived in the early 1870s, with a small congregation being formed in Budapest in 1876. In 1882, they were able to acquire a property in the city and build the First Unitarian Church of Budapest. That building has four storeys, only one of which is used for worship services while the others contain administrative offices.

In the following years, more churches were built around the country, including two more in Budapest. The second of those was named after the Unitarian composer, Béla Bartók. Today, the national Church has some 25,000 members in 12 church congregations and 21 fellowships. The other churches are in Debrecen, Duna-Tiszaközi, Dunántúli, Eger, Füzesgyarmat, Győr, Hódmezővásárhely and Kocsord; and the fellowships are in Dévaványa, Dunapataj, Miskolc, Orosháza, Pécs, Szentlőrinc and Szeged. These include five of the seven largest cities in the country (not including the capital).

In the last two years, the Unitarian Church of Hungary has merged with the Transylvanian body to form the Hungarian Unitarian Church, the name now referring to their common ethnicity. Prior to that, the First Church of Budapest was also the headquarters of the Hungarian Bishop (an elected position, as it still is in the united HUC in Kolozsvár).

The original Norwegian Unitarian Church was founded in Oslo (then called Kristiania) by Kristofer Janson (1841–1917, pictured second from right). He had studied theology there, graduating in 1865, but was not ordained by the state Church of Norway. He became noted as a teacher and author, not least for his play, *American Fantasies*, which was performed in Chicago to great acclaim. In 1879, he went on a lecture tour of the US, where he was recruited by the American Unitarian Association as a pastor for Scandinavian immigrant communities. He was ordained at the Unitarian Church of Chicago in 1881 and went on to found two churches in Minnesota, both of which were originally called Free Christian churches.

In 1893, Janson returned to Norway and founded his Brotherhood Church, which he led for three years. He also founded a church in Aarhus, Denmark, which evidently did not last long. His successor in Oslo was Herman Haugerud, who had also spent time in the US. The church was renamed 'Unitarian' but it closed shortly after his death in 1937.

From about 1983, some theology students at the University of Oslo formed discussion groups which eventually merged to become the Unitarian Association. They restored Janson's church building over 1995–2005 and succeeded in having it re-registered under the original by-laws.

Today, the Norwegian Unitarian Church is led by Rev. Knut Heidelberg (pictured far right), who managed to be ordained in the Béla Bartók Church in Budapest. He follows that tradition, for which reason the church's other name is the Bét Dávid Unitarian Association, which means House of (Francis) Dávid. There is also the Norwegian UU Fellowship, formed in 2007 by American UUs and some locals, most notably Galen Gisler, an oceanographer who has served two terms as treasurer of the ICUU. As of 2009, the two groups are represented internationally by the Unitarian Umbrella Organisation of Norway.

The German Unitarian Religious Community began life as the Religious Community of Free Protestants in 1876. In 1910, its pastor Rudolf Walbaum met some American Unitarians at a conference of liberal theologians in Berlin and added the designation, 'German Unitarians', to the name of his group. In 1926, he formed the German Unitarian Group in collaboration with Rev. Clemens Täsler, co-founder of a free church in Frankfurt.

To circumvent a Nazi ban, the organisation merged with other groups to form the Free Religious Community of Germany. After World War II, the German Unitarian congregations resurfaced with British and American help, though some of the more traditionally oriented churches left when the organisation took the Unitarian name in 1950.

The Community has 23 branches, though their website only names those in Detmold, Hamburg, Kassel, Leipzig, Lübeck, Munich and Osthofen; also the regions of Baden-Württemberg, Donautal (Danube Valley) and Vest Recklinghausen (in North Rhine-Westphalia). Its headquarters are in Kassel and they own a modern conference centre at Klingberg (near Hamburg), as well as a publishing house in Ravensburg.

The German Unitarians describe themselves as deliberately lay-led and tending toward humanism, though they recognise diversity and other faith traditions. They also have an independent fellowship for young people, known as the Union of German Unitarian Youth.

There is also the unaffiliated Unitarian Church of Berlin, which was founded in 1948 by Hans Georg Remus, a descendent of a Polish Brethren family that moved to Prussia after those early Unitarians (known then as Socinians) were expelled from Poland in 1658.

Similarly to the German experience, the present-day Unitarian Church of Denmark Society was founded in 1900 as a liberal Christian group called The Free Congregation and only took the Unitarian name in 1992. However, even in its first year of existence, the Free Congregation took part in the conference in Boston that founded the International Association for Religious Freedom, in conjunction with many national Unitarian bodies. Although two other Unitarian congregations existed long ago, the only group left is in Copenhagen.

Their chapel, the House of Unitarians, opened in 1927, partially funded by Nina Grieg, the widow of the Norwegian composer, Edvard Grieg. The architect, Carl Brummer, was asked to design a building which reflected the Unitarian ideals of tolerance towards other religions. He sought to achieve this by combining a Christian basilica shape with two balconies typical of Jewish synagogues and a fret that Greek Orthodox temples have.

Services are held on alternate Sundays, followed by a 'Debate Café'. Occasionally some evening activities and services are also conducted. The expressed aim is to bring religious, philosophical and scientific views into agreement.

[Part 2 will appear in the next issue. One day, a pictorial version of this series will go on the ANZUUA website and then you will be able to see what many of the churches in Transylvania, Hungary and Denmark look like, along with maps and pictures of some of the minor personages mentioned in this article.

Well, all right – since there's some empty space here, I'll show you the church in Mészkő, Transylvania, that was mentioned on p. 2. The stones you see in front of the church are actually pieces of alabaster – that's how common the stuff is around there, even though the mines closed quite some time ago.



MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY: A VERY UNUSUAL VIRGINIAN

By Nigel Sinnott

(Text of an Address given at the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church on 04 October 2015.)

Moncure Daniel Conway came from Virginia, where his early years were privileged and orthodox. He was born on 17 March 1832, on a plantation near Falmouth in rural Stafford County, where his father, Walker Peyton Conway, was a local planter and judge. His mother, Margaret Daniel Conway, was the granddaughter of a signatory of the Declaration of Independence. The family were devout Methodists.

According to Conway's biographer, John d'Entremont, the atmosphere that would have surrounded the young Moncure would have been "patriarchal values, unquestioned devotion to slavery and white supremacy, and a world view that set politics and power above artistic and intellectual pursuits". As Moncure Conway wrote years later, "Destiny had lavished on my lot everything but freedom."

The patriarchal values did not, however, apply to his female relatives. Two paternal aunts, his sister and a cousin were opposed to slavery, and so was his mother, who was also critical of Southern patriarchy generally. She encouraged him to read widely, despite his father's disapproval of fiction. She was also a practitioner of homoeopathy and took Moncure with her on her rounds. John d'Entremont says that "Moncure spent more time with his mother; the central lessons he drew from her and other female relatives were the legitimacy of the self, the importance of reconciliation, the value of intellectual endeavor, and the immorality of arbitrary power."

The young Conway went to Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, then a strict Methodist institution, and after graduating in 1849 followed his father's advice to study law. In 1850, however, Moncure discovered the writings of "the Sage of Concord", the Unitarian writer, poet and transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson. The young Conway decided that law was not for him, and he decided to enter the Methodist ministry.

For 23 months in 1851 and '52, Conway was a travelling minister, riding a Methodist circuit in Maryland, another slave state. Here he met literate, anti-slavery Quakers who added to the heterodox notions he was imbibing from Emerson. In 1852 his older brother died. Moncure Conway felt he could no longer be a Methodist in accordance with his father's wishes. He crossed the Mason-Dixon Line and began training for the Unitarian ministry at Harvard University in Massachusetts. To quote John d'Entremont again, "His mother wished him well; his father, in effect, disowned him."

In Massachusetts Conway met and befriended his "spiritual father" Emerson. He also got to know members of the anti-slavery movement and Theodore Parker, abolitionist, radical Unitarian and the real coiner of the words "A democracy, that is, a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people". In July 1854, at an anti-slavery rally, Conway publicly committed himself to the abolitionist cause. Also in 1854, Conway graduated from Harvard and became a Unitarian minister. At his first church, in the city of Washington (D.C.), his sermons against slavery made him adoring friends and bitter enemies.

In 1856 he moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. Here the congregation did not mind his fulminations against slavery, but they were upset about something else. Conway had come under the influence of German biblical criticism and, if you will pardon a bad Lewis Carroll pun, Methodists believed in Siamese triplets of Cheshire cats, Unitarians believed in only one Cheshire cat, but Conway was reducing the cat to a grin, without teeth, and with the halitosis of infidelity. Or as d'Entremont put it: "He repudiated the divinity of Christ, debunked New Testament miracles, and began to speak of Eastern religions as being as valid and valuable as Christianity". "Your minister," said Conway in 1859, "is not a believer in what the churches call Christianity."*

Cincinnati gave Moncure Conway something else: Ellen Dana, whom he married in 1858. She was intelligent, supportive and radical. The marriage was very happy and produced four children, Eustace, Emerson, Dana and Mildred. Conway left Cincinnati in 1862, and thereafter, according to d'Entremont, no longer called himself a Unitarian. He was sympathetic towards, but did not join, the Free Religious Association set up by radical Unitarians.

* Referring to himself. (Ed.)

In November 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States with a pledge to stop slavery being introduced into the western territories. The slave states of the deep south had threatened to leave the Union if Lincoln became President: they seceded, starting with South Carolina, followed by Alabama, Mississippi and others, and set up the Confederate States of America. Virginia, a border slave state, debated secession and voted against it.

But in April 1861 a Louisianan Creole brigadier-general named Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard demanded that the Union army give up Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. An ultimatum was not met, and at 4:30 a.m. on 12 April Confederate batteries opened fire on the fort, which surrendered next day after a 34-hour bombardment. It was the almost bloodless start of the bloodiest war in North American history.

Lincoln called for all states still in the Union to provide militia for the war. Virginia took another vote on secession and left the Union. Eventually Richmond, Virginia, became the Confederate capital. Meanwhile, Union sympathisers in western Virginia seceded from Virginia and established what became the Union state of West Virginia.

Conway's two brothers joined the Confederate army. His mother and sister, on the other hand, went to live in staunchly Unionist Pennsylvania. The family home became a Union field hospital, as it was barely two kilometres from the appalling Battle of Fredericksburg. Conway initially supported the Union and wrote two books in 1861. The following year he became joint editor of a new anti-slavery magazine, *The Commonwealth*, published in Boston.

In 1862, in the chaos of war, many of Conway's father's slaves left the plantation and reached Washington. Moncure Conway tracked them down and planned to transport them to the free state of Ohio. To do so, they had to change trains and stations in Baltimore, in the slave state of Maryland. This was very risky. In April 1861 a Massachusetts regiment, when marching between the stations, had been attacked by a mob of Confederate sympathisers; nine civilians and four soldiers had been killed. Conway's party was beset first by a black mob, who thought he was a fugitive slave catcher, and then by a surly white mob. But in the end they reached Ohio and safety.

In 1863 Moncure Conway decided to visit Britain, as an overseas reporter for *The Commonwealth*. He met lots of interesting people in London, and also wrote letters to pro-Union newspapers about the American Civil War. However, he got into very hot water when he started corresponding with the Confederate envoy in London, James Mason. Conway rashly stated that, if the South were to free its slaves, the abolitionist movement would try to persuade Lincoln to end the war. Conway had no authority to make this bargain, and the suspicious Mason submitted the correspondence to *The Times*, which sympathised with the Confederacy. A very embarrassed Conway took a holiday in Venice.

Back in England, in May 1863, Conway was invited to speak at South Place Chapel, in Finsbury (London), which, by coincidence, had been founded by an American Universalist in 1793. Many of its religiously radical members were fed up with their minister, whose sermons were far too orthodox for their taste, but they liked what they heard from Conway. Soon afterwards, they forced the minister's resignation and in February 1864 Conway was given a trial as his replacement. He had found his congregation, and they liked him.

Conway still had to contend with the anguish of the war across the Atlantic. It ended in mid-1865 after killing 750,000 people, plus or minus 100,000. Also, after his family joined him in London, Moncure and Ellen's son, Emerson, died in August 1864. But otherwise Moncure thrived. In January 1866 his appointment became permanent. South Place Chapel, which had been in the doldrums in the 1850s, flourished again. By 1873, d'Entremont informs us, minimum Sunday attendance was 400, "growing to an average of seven hundred a few years later". In addition to the chapel services, a South Place Institute was established with guest speakers such as Robert Browning, Thomas Henry Huxley, John Tyndall and Max Mueller. There were concerts, theatricals, a fortnightly discussion group and what d'Entremont termed "glittering monthly soirees".

As he grew in confidence and experience, Conway's own views subtly changed. In 1869 he dropped the use of prayers. In 1872 pews were removed and replaced by ordinary seats. And, from 1874, readings were often taken from Conway's *The Sacred Anthology: a book of ethnical scriptures*, of which I have the fifth edition of 1876. He also wrote a semi-autobiographical book, *The Earthward Pilgrimage*, published in 1870. Its first chapter sets the scene as it is entitled, in a parody of John Bunyan's subtitle to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, "How I left the world to come for that which is".

Conway went back to the United States several times, and his friends there included, of course, Robert Green Ingersoll, whose militant agnosticism was as forthright as any atheist's invective against theology. In 1882 Conway was invited to lecture in Australia by Robert J. Jeffray and Henry Gyles Turner. And, if any of you do not know who Henry Gyles Turner was, please have a wander around our central courtyard at lunchtime.*

In 1883, after visiting the United States, Conway crossed the Pacific, stopping in Hawaii, but having only a day in New Zealand, which he regretted. After what he termed "the sublimities of Sydney Harbour at dawn", he arrived in Victoria in time for the Melbourne Cup. He described it in his book, *My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East*, published in 1906.

It is odd that Melbourne, rigidly Presbyterian, should have for its Pan-Australian synod a horse-race. Melbourne has, however, made its racing week a social congress of the colonies. The betting is universal. Sweepstakes were arranged in the schools (by the teachers), and Cup Day is a holiday. ... Early in the morning I walked over the course, so to say. Byron Moore, secretary of the Racing Club, guided me, and I saw the artistic arrangements for this great event. The apartments for the governor and his company, the committee rooms, the medical rooms, the ladies' rooms, — all were elaborately elegant. There was fine floral decoration everywhere; cosmetics in the ladies' room, and needles threaded with every colour, ready for use.

In the element of grotesquerie the English Derby has large advantages over the Cup, where respectability was carried to an extreme; there was hardly a side-show, nothing characteristic of the country, no aborigines, no boomerangs. It all impressed me as too much a Presbyterian Vanity Fair; no one could fail to be struck by the multitude of beautiful ladies and fine looking men, but they appeared so serious! It was pleasant to see so many people without any tipsiness, but there might have been some fun.

Conway also made notes on the variety of religions and philosophies available:

The census of 1881 gave Victoria a population of 862,246 and registered 144 denominational names.... The number of those who rejected every form of Christianity was 20,000.

The Unitarians numbered about one thousand. In 1851, when registration of opinions was compulsory, seventeen hundred confessed the Unitarian faith. In that year the Victorian government voted to divide fifty thousand pounds among all the churches in proportion to their members (giving the five talents to him who had five and the two to him who had two), and the subsidy was continued many years. Under that arrangement the Unitarians received a good piece of property. It now had for its minister Mrs. Webster, who began preaching there as Miss Turner. She is a sister of Henry G. Turner of the Commercial Bank of Australia, himself a literary man and editor of the "Melbourne Review." Mrs. Webster is a rationalistic Unitarian, and her discourses are very impressive. I had the pleasure of preaching to her society, which consists of educated and influential families.

After Victoria, Conway went to Tasmania at the invitation of Andrew Inglis Clark, later one of the founding fathers of Federation. He visited what he termed "the smallest conventicle in Hobart" because its denomination was given as "Campbellite". "Alexander Campbell", explained Conway, "was the only Virginian who ever founded a sect, a little brick chapel in our town, Fredericksburg, being by tradition the first built by Campbellism."

Conway also tells us that "I lectured in various parts of Tasmania, and had the honour of being attacked in the papers by orthodox writers. My lectures were not theological, but my account of London, my sketches of scientific men, and the fact that I was there by invitation of distinguished rationalists gave sufficient ground for this clerical imprudence, which filled my halls wherever I went."

From Tasmania, Conway went back to Sydney, where he was the guest of Justice William (later Sir William) Windeyer and gave a lecture in the presence of the premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes. He also visited Adelaide (South Australia) and Albany (Western Australia) on his way to Ceylon and India. But for reasons of time I will not go into detail.

* This refers to the foundation stone of the earlier Melbourne Unitarian Church that was laid by Henry Gyles Turner in 1887. That stone was later removed to the courtyard of the present church when it was completed in 1965.

In mid-1884 Conway left South Place and toured Europe with his family. From mid-1885 he lived mainly in New York City where he devoted himself to writing, producing his best-known book, his “crowning achievement” in John d’Entremont’s opinion, the two-volume *Life of Thomas Paine*, first published in 1892 and later made available as a cheap reprint by the infant Rationalist Press Association. A French edition appeared in 1900.

In late 1892 Conway reluctantly acceded to requests to return to South Place, now named South Place Ethical Society; but in 1897 Ellen became terminally ill and Moncure resigned again. John d’Entremont describes Conway’s final discourse, on 27 June, far better than I could: “His topic was John Cabot’s exploration of America... But near the end of his talk he broke down and could not continue. ‘At the close there was general weeping,’ wrote one observer.... ‘Strong sober men left hurriedly in great and manifest grief.’ There was good reason; a great institution had lost, under the saddest of circumstances, its greatest leader.” The Conways sailed for New York on 1 July. Ellen died on Christmas Day.

In 1898 the United States went to war with Spain. Conway was disgusted and spoke out against the war, which was not the popular thing to do. Theodore Roosevelt sarcastically suggested that Conway join the Spanish. He was also appalled by lynchings and Jim Crow laws in the southern states.

Although he kept a flat in Greenwich Village, he spent most of his time in France, particularly Paris. At the age of 75, while working on a biography of Jean Calvin, he died in Paris on 15 November 1907. He was cremated at Père Lachaise cemetery and on 1 December there was a memorial meeting at South Place.

In 1910, the South Place Ethical Society held the first Conway Memorial Lecture, and the 82nd such lecture was given in June 2014. After the First World War, the Society decided to leave Finsbury and move to Red Lion Square in Holborn. The architect Frederick Mansford was commissioned to design the Society’s new building, which was completed in 1929. It was named Conway Hall and serves as a meeting place for many organisations, as well as being the headquarters of the National Secular Society. More recently, in November 2012, South Place Ethical Society changed its name to Conway Hall Ethical Society.

John d’Entremont says of Conway: “He was that rare teacher and thinker who could combine genuine tolerance with fierce commitment to principle. And whether in the role of teacher, scholar or activist, his own life gave vivid expression to a line from his autobiography which may fairly be taken as his credo: ‘Those who think at all think freely’.”

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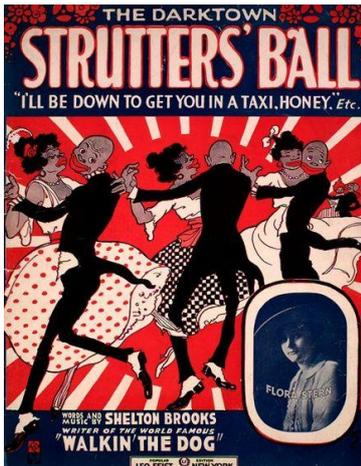
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[Nigel Sinnott is a Life Member of the Conway Hall Ethical Society and was the editor of *The Freethinker* in London in 1972–73. He arrived in Melbourne in 1976 and has been associated with the church there since 2004. He considers himself an amateur student of the history of freethought in the UK and Australia.

With the reference to the foundation stone, there have actually been three Melbourne Unitarian Churches, the first of which was built in 1853 as “a thoroughly Hellenic pagan presentation, complete with ionic columns”. It was a victim of its own success and a larger church had to be built in 1887. As for its founders, little is known about Robert J. Jeffray but it appears that he was a gold miner. Henry Gyles Turner (1831–1920) was a banker who arrived from London in 1854 and became very active in the literary and cultural community. He wrote three books on Australian literature and history in his retirement.]

THE DARKTOWN STRUTTERS' BALL



I've got some good news, honey,
An invitation to the Darktown Ball,
It's a very swell affair,
All the "high-browns" will be there,¹
I'll wear my high silk hat and frock tail coat,
You wear your Paris gown and your new silk shawl,
There ain't no doubt about it, babe,
We'll be the best dressed in the hall.

(Chorus)

I'll be down to get you in a taxi, honey,
You better be ready about half past eight,
Now, dearie, don't be late,
I want to be there when the band starts playing,
Remember when we get there, honey,
The two-steps I'm goin' to have 'em all,
Goin' to dance out both my shoes,
When they play the "Jelly Roll Blues",
Tomorrow night, at the Darktown Strutters' Ball.

We'll meet our hightoned neighbors,¹
An exhibition of the "Baby Dolls",
And each one will do their best,
Just to outclass the rest,
And there'll be dancers from ev'ry foreign land,
The classic, buck and wing, and the wooden clog,
We'll win that fifty dollar prize,
When we step out and "Walk The Dog".

(Chorus)

Shelton Brooks (1917)

This famous song was recorded a century ago by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in the Columbia Record studio. (The first-ever jazz recording, 'Livery Stable Blues', was made by the same group for the Victor Talking Machine Company (later RCA Victor) on 26 February 1917 but that was only an instrumental.) The ODJB consisted of Alcide Nunez (clarinet), Johnny Stein (drums), Eddie Edwards ((trombone), Henry Ragas (piano) and Nick LaRocca (cornet). While they played an authentic New Orleans style of music, all of the 'Dixieland Band' were white Northerners.

The song was written by Shelton Brooks (1886–1975), a Canadian-born black whose family moved to Detroit in 1901. He sang, played piano and performed on the vaudeville circuit, as well as having a successful song-writing career and starring in several 1920s musical comedies. He played in nightclubs after 1927, had a radio show on CBS in the 1930s and then became a regular on 'Blackouts', a stage variety show based on burlesque that played in New York City and Los Angeles.

The Darktown Strutters' Ball was an invitation-only annual event in the predominantly black section of Chicago known by that name (and not meant unkindly). It was a huge function for the black community and attracted such famous performers as Duke Ellington. (The 'Baby Dolls' were probably a dancing group.) The lyrics are also interesting in the 'high-browns' and 'hightoned neighbors' were lighter-skinned people of mixed race who had become an elite group, better-educated and wealthier than most of the community.

People would, indeed, try to win a 'fifty dollar prize' for their dancing at the event. The 'two-steps' and the 'classic, buck and wing, and the wooden clog' were popular dance steps of the time (often of African-American origin), as was 'Walking the Dog', based on another famous song by Shelton Brooks.

You can (and should) hear both songs on YouTube (www.youtube.com). It would fill another page to name all the singers and groups that have performed either or both of them.

LA VIE EN ROSE

*Des yeux qui font baisser les miens
Un rire qui se perd sur sa bouche
Voilà le portrait sans retouche
De l'homme auquel j'appartiens*

Eyes that gaze into mine,
A smile that is lost on his lips
That is the unretouched portrait
Of the man to whom I belong.

*Quand il me prend dans ses bras
Il me parle tout bas
Je vois la vie en rose*

When he takes me in his arms
And speaks softly to me,
I see life in rosy hues.

*Il me dit des mots d'amour
Des mots de tous les jours
Et ça me fait quelque chose*

He tells me words of love,
Words of every day,
And in them I become something.

*Il est entré dans mon cœur
Une part de bonheur
Dont je connais la cause*

He has entered my heart,
A part of happiness
Whereof I understand the reason.

*C'est toi pour moi, moi pour toi dans la vie
Il me l'a dit, l'a juré pour la vie*

It's you for me and I for you, throughout life,
He has told me, he has sworn to me for life.

*Et dès que je l'aperçois
Alors je sens en moi
Mon cœur qui bat*

And from the things that I sense,
Now I can feel within me
My heart that beats.

*Des nuits d'amour à plus finir
Un grand bonheur qui prend sa place
Les ennuis, les chagrins s'effacent
Heureux, heureux à en mourir*

In endless nights of love,
A great delight that comes about,
The pains and bothers are banished,
Happy, happy to die of love.

*Quand il me prend dans ses bras
Il me parle tout bas
Je vois la vie en rose*

When he takes me in his arms
And speaks softly to me,
I see life in rosy hues.

*Il me dit des mots d'amour
Des mots de tous les jours
Et ça me fait quelque chose*

He tells me words of love,
Words of every day,
And in them I become something.

*Il est entré dans mon cœur
Une part de bonheur
Dont je connais la cause*

He has entered my heart,
A part of happiness
Whereof I understand the reason.

*C'est toi pour moi, moi pour toi dans la vie
Il me l'a dit, l'a juré pour la vie*

It's you for me and I for you, throughout life,
He has told me, he has sworn to me for life.

*Et dès que je l'aperçois
Alors je sens en moi
Mon cœur qui bat*

And from the things that I sense,
Now I can feel within me
My heart that beats.



Édith Piaf (1945)

(translator unknown)

This will have to suffice as a travel-oriented St. Valentine's Day item to go with the international nature of many of this issue's articles. The lyrics and melody were written by Piaf herself, though the latter had to be registered by the composer, Louis Guglielmi, for copyright purposes. The song was first performed in 1946 and recorded as a single by Columbia Records in 1947. Ironically, it was not expected to do well at the time but it became Piaf's most famous song, appearing on most of her many albums.

Born Édith Giovanna Gassion in Paris in 1915, she became a street singer in 1929 until she was discovered in 1935 by the nightclub owner, Louis Leplée. He taught her the basics of stage performance and suggested her stage-name, *La Môme Piaf* ('The Waif Sparrow'). She appeared in 10 films between 1936 and 1959, and wrote over 80 songs before her death in 1963. You can view her performance of the song (best translated as 'A Rosy View of Life') on YouTube (www.youtube.com) by searching the French title.

U/U GLOBAL CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE, JANUARY 2017

By Renee Hills

I am sitting in a modern classroom in Chicago, lit by a wall of glass that looks out over Grant Park and Lake Michigan. On the large screen at the front of the room, a graduate of Meadville Lombard Seminary, Casper ter Kuile is talking to the class by Zoom about a recent event he co-hosted with partner Angie Thurston. This was a conference of leaders of some of the plethora of religion-like communities that are emerging in the US from such unlikely places as gyms, arts centres, creative spaces and living rooms, as Millennials (18-35 year olds) yearn to find meaning and belonging in this digital age.

Places like The Sanctuaries, run by a UU minister with the mission: *'Empowering people of diverse backgrounds to claim their voice, build their spirit, and collaborate on artistic projects that promote social change'*. Or SoulCycle, 'a spin class where fitness is associated with empowerment, joyful living, and both inner and outer strength. Branded with phrases like *'find your soul'*, SoulCycle is in the business of changing lives. Or the Dinner Party, *'a community of 20- and 30-somethings who all have experienced a significant loss, and who get together over homemade food to talk about it and how it impacts their lives'*.

I am intrigued and fascinated by the conversation. I think that maybe in Australia, where many fellowships have no physical premises, we could extend our worship into the community using some of these innovative models. See <https://casperk.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/how-we-gather.pdf> for Casper and Angie's report on ten of these organisations.

For the past two days, Meadville Lombard president Lee Barker (our lecturer) has been urging us to think about our roles in ministry (most of the other 19 students are studying for one of the Masters courses in Divinity, Religion, Leadership Studies or Lay Community Ministry). He has also given a comprehensive overview of the loss of attendance in traditional and UU churches, and challenged us to think of community-based alternatives.

Along with three other international students, I am participating in *Ministry in a Post-Denominational Age* as part of the U/U Global Conference, a partnership between the school and the UUA International Office. Riana Nongbri from Khasi Hills, India; Josphat Mainye from Nairobi, Kenya; Julia Jobbágy from Transylvania and I have all travelled halfway around the world to be here. All of us were chosen for our commitment to U/U growth and seen as leaders in our local contexts. Very generously, the Global Conference has paid for half our airfares, tuition, share accommodation in a student apartment and provided spending money for food.

I must admit, when I first applied to the program I had no idea it meant spending so much time in class. But this is the winter intensive session for regular students. After 3-4 weeks of 9.00 a.m.–5.00 p.m. classes, most go back to their internships in various UU churches and fellowships or to their positions with community organisations. Meadville Lombard aims to immerse students in rigorous coursework, as well as experiential learning, in order to prepare them as religious leaders in their local communities.

Our two-day course was preceded by a one-day Convocation on the topic: *The Tilt to Global Authoritarianism: Religions Leadership and Shifting Power* (chosen before the presidential election). The most inspiring and moving part of the day was a presentation by Rev. Meg Barnhouse and her support minister, Rev. Chris Jimmerson, who described their decision to support Sulma Franco, an LGBT activist from Guatemala who needed sanctuary. Sulma had been organizing LBGT groups at university in Guatemala and had been attacked and threatened. She fled to the US, riding on top of a train called 'The Beast'. She tied her belt to the roof rail so she wouldn't fall off. It was not safe for her to return to Guatemala but her appeal for asylum was mishandled. Facing deportation, she asked the First Unitarian Church of Austin, Texas, for asylum.

Rev. Barnhouse described, in very honest and raw terms, the processes she and the church board went through as they considered the repercussions of offering asylum. In the end, one member said *'This fits perfectly with our mission that we say together every Sunday. If we don't do this, what do we do?'* A shower was installed in the church; within 24 hours, members freely donated everything Sulma needed; the nearby Presbyterian church partnered with them and Rev. Jimmerson liaised with support organisations in the community, facilitating rather than orchestrating Sulma's cause. After several months, Sulma was granted a stay of removal. The media interest in the case resulted in widespread publicity for the church.

Rev. Barnhouse said: ‘We hope that 1,000 churches of all denominations will become sanctuary churches, that 1,000 lawyers will work on the cases, and that the immigration system will feel the pressure of 1,000 sturdy sanctuaries surrounded by busy people of good will who resist the system in order to bring transformation and greater justice.’ (<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/deciding-offering-sanctuary>)

Our initial course was followed immediately by another five days in *Religious Education for a Changing World*. Some student faces were now becoming familiar and everyone was welcoming and friendly. I found the RE course challenging as it was very orientated to the US context, with its structures and paid positions.

Having never been in a RE class in my life; I was continually trying to translate to the Australia-NZ context. Life-span faith development was a key concept that I think we can apply here. There was a rich sharing of resources and ideas, facilitated by lecturer Tandi Rogers. Her ‘tandigents’ – incidental stories of how she lives her faith, how she parents and communicates her values to those around her – provided an inspirational model.

On a three-day break we played tourist on an architectural and a Mobsters and Gangsters tour; attended the Martin Luther King service at the beautiful Gothic First Unitarian Church of Chicago and experienced ‘The Bean’ sculpture. We then resumed classes for another five days. *Multispecies Theology, Justice and Ministry* was a comprehensive exploration of the ethics and theory of what it means to be human in relationship with other species on the planet. Dedicated and inspirational lecturers, LoraKim Joyner and her life partner Meredith Gamon, kept us challenged and focussed in this first-time offering. Sharing personal experiences of our relationships with the land and other species was a highlight. This course is useful background for discussions which will probably occur at the General Assembly this year, where it will be suggested that the First Principle be changed to ‘Respect for the worth and dignity of every being.’

Attending the Women’s March and feeling as if I was participating in history was an awesome experience. Julia and I joined the First Unitarian Church members and were promptly given hand-knitted pink pussy-hats! Chicago organisers expected 50,000 people but were overwhelmed by the 250,000 who turned up – a generous, cheerful crowd of all sorts of people, all skin colours, all ages, carrying witty and bold banners. Although the march was cancelled because of the crowd size, for hours afterwards the streets were full of people and their signs.

The Global Conference was a rich experience on so many levels: sharing accommodation with fellow students from different cultures; participating in a Water Communion at Convocation; chatting with Jill McAllister, now minister of the UU Fellowship of Corvallis, Oregon; meeting Sara Ascher, new Executive Director of the ICUU; talking candidly with Eric Cherry about the Global Conference program; meeting Roger Bertschausen, new Executive Director of the UU Partner Church Council; attending a lunchtime presentation by Rev. Tet Gallardo from Manila on *Rituals for Revolution*; meeting other ministry students, including Arman Pedro from Dumaguete City in the Philippines; joining a theology discussion with the erudite lecturer, Michael Hogue; enjoying meals out with Claudia Espinel, Director of International Formation and Recruitment. It was especially interesting to meet Claudia, having met her brother, Jose Espinel, in Bolivia. Both Jose and Claudia studied at Meadville Lombard.

Meadville Lombard is, I think, an outstanding school for U/U ministry preparation. The subjects are relevant, timely and appear responsive to societal changes. The subjects we attended were chosen for us but other students talked of the impact of *Arts and Aesthetics*; *Spiritual Practices for Ministry*; *Preaching as if you Mean it*; *UU History and Polity*; *Healthy Boundaries, Healthy Ministries, Cosmos and Ethos: Climate Justice and Theology* – just a few of the offerings.

In addition to attending classes, each of us is expected to develop a project in our own communities. Our projects vary widely: Julia is launching a fitness program, aimed at running 450 kilometres over a year to commemorate the 450th year since the Edict of Torda – the birthplace of modern Unitarianism. (There will be major celebrations in Transylvania around 13 January 2018 – to which all U/Us are invited). Riana wants to start a counselling program; Josphat wants to translate UU materials into Swahili for his congregations.

Originally I thought that bringing OWL facilitator training to Australia would be my project but I’d realised by January that was unworkable. Ideally, we would have more active RE programs running to support it. Eric Cherry of UUA International Office is keen on the idea and supportive of future action. In the end, I settled on a group pastoral care project, where strategies are put in place for the group to take care of itself rather than one person taking responsibility for group wellbeing. I am yet to receive guidelines, promised resources and an assigned mentor to help with this project. Of course, I will share any workable outcomes with interested fellowships and churches.

Other main take-aways from the experience included:

- Connections with an outstanding UU ministry education school;
- Opportunity to explore Australian fellowships having partner church relationships with fellowships in USA or elsewhere;
- Many new U/U friends;
- Possibility of connecting with new friends at the Torda celebrations in Transylvania; and
- Unitarians in the Khasi Hills are hosting the next ICUU Conference in February 2018 and my roommate, Riana, is looking after the special needs food!

[At the time of writing, Renee has returned to the US for the International Women's Convocation in California, which she will report on in the next issue. Anyone who doesn't know about the Women's Marches all over the US on 21 January or the significance of 'pussyhats' should do their own research.]

REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS

Adelaide UC had a Multi-Faith Service on 11 December, with representatives from several other religions making presentations, followed by a shared lunch. There was no service on Christmas Day but, on 18 December, their Sunday Club children presented a delightful story, 'Joey's First Christmas, about what Christmas meant to a variety of Australian bush animal characters. There was also a Vespers service at the Shady Grove Chapel on Christmas Eve.

There were services all through January and, on the 29th, they had their annual Water Communion Service and Blessing of Book Bags, to mark all coming together again at the end of summer holidays and the start of a new school year. Their minister, Rev. Rob MacPherson spoke on 'Forsaking Anger (05 February) and 'Everyday Idolatry' (19 February), while John Eaton gave an address on 'The Agony and Ecstasy of Kahlil Gibran – A Life Conflicted' (12 February).

In February and March, their talented musicians will present a Festival Fringe show, 'The mUUnitarians', with three evening performances on 23 February and 02 and 09 March.

Auckland UC have been getting bigger and busier this year – please see p. 16 for the full story.

Brisbane UU Fellowship had a large end-of-year service at the Coorparoo Village where their member, Lynne Hurst lives. Several other Village residents joined them for the service and festive lunch. On 23 December, long-term member Helen Jeays led a funeral service for Ruth Buch, wife of the Fellowship's founder, Neville Buch. Renee and James Hills also attended to support Helen.

After a long summer break, services resumed on 12 February with the annual Water Communion, led by Renee Hills. At the service on 26 February, Elaine Weaver will speak on 'A Year Without Buying Anything New', and how it liberated and transformed her life and that of her wife, Lisa Constantino. On 13 March, they will celebrate International Women's Day.

Their Annual Retreat will be held on 07–09 July and they have invited Rev. Rob MacPherson to join them.

Christchurch Unitarians will devote the next seven monthly services to each of the UUA's Seven Principles. Thus, on 12 February, their president, Natalia Artemiev spoke on the 4th Principle, "A free and responsible search for meaning". On 12 March, Marion Hale will address the 7th Principle, "Respect for the inter-dependent web of all existence of which we are a part".

First UU Melbourne Fellowship had a service in December with a 'Christmas-y' theme, complete with a little tree and an Oxfam Christmas gift of a goat! Each member brought a Christmas decoration from home that had a special meaning for them and shared the reasons they had selected it before placing it on the tree. Fiona Lange spoke on 'Christmas in Australia – yearning for the past; building in the present', which conceptualised Christmas, not so much as a religious event, but as a living, loving, humanistic process that is continually evolving. She traced the history of Christmas in Australia, noting adversities that have coincided with Christmas (Cyclone Tracy, Xmas Bushfires in NSW in 2001 and recent Christmases in Syria).

The January service was led by Alyce McCarroll, who asked: “Can an Atheist Say ‘Thank God?’” Her talk touched on Ricky Gervais, the idea of a ‘calling’ and the nuances of various synonyms for ‘atheist’ – some of which she was comfortable with, others she rejected. The February meeting included a presentation by Dean Rizzetti on ‘Energizing Africa’, having worked for the past four years with the Clinton Foundation Climate Change Initiative in Kenya.

In late January, several members met to march, along with thousands of others, at the Women’s Day March. They didn’t carry their congregation’s banner, this time, but attended as individual women, enjoying each others’ company and the shared outrage.

Melbourne UC has a short break in January, after which Peter Abrehart spoke on ‘Decoding Political Spin and Economic Nonsense’, based on the book, *Econobabble*, by Richard Denniss of the Australia Institute. On 29 January, Nigel Sinnott (see pp. 4/7) gave an address on ‘One Yorkshireman’s Experience of the First World War’.

The services in February featured Paul Dahan on ‘Land Price as a Cause of Poverty and a Source of Unearned Income’; Denisse Sandoval, Campaign Organiser of the Uniting Church’s Justice & International Mission Unit, on ‘Community Organising’; Josh Bernstein, head of the National Employment and Industrial Law practice at Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, on ‘Bullying of the ABC’; and Robert Ely from Defence of Government Schools (DOGS) on ‘Gonski’. Coming up next month are Helen Morgan, speaking on International Women’s Day (05 March) about the HER Place Women’s Museum and Mark Zirnsak, CEO for Victoria/Tasmania of the aforementioned Justice & International Mission Unit, speaking on ‘Paying for a Civilized Society – Tax Justice’.

MUC’s facilities are very much in demand and used by variety of Interfaith, secular and community groups. They anticipate that the recent audiovisual upgrades will increase that demand.

Perth Unitarians have held a series of meetings on the theme, ‘Who Was Jesus’, starting last November led by Robert Halsey, followed by Gordon McDonald in December and March. Other speakers were their minister, Rev. Peter Ferguson, speaking in December on ‘We Are Not Alone: The Evidence, Including Biblical, for the Existence of Aliens’ and in January on ‘Hitler Was not an Atheist’.

In February, retired Uniting Church minister Marion Millin spoke on ‘Women Leaders in the Early Christian Church’ citing evidence from the Gospels that female disciples, as well as the apostles, attended the Last Supper. The second meeting of that month featured a TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) video, ‘What is Human Consciousness’, by the English biochemist and parapsychologist, Rupert Sheldrake.

Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship had two meetings in January, with their minister, Rev. Geoff Usher, speaking on ‘Nostalgia’ and the danger of wishing for “good old days” that weren’t as good as we remember them. Then Colin Whatmough spoke on ‘Globalisation and Morality’ and the correct order that ‘Profit, People and Planet’ should be prioritised.

In February, Sandy Biar spoke on ‘Harnessing Nationalism for Good: The Upside of Global Nationalistic Sentiment’ and Helen Whatmough spoke on ‘Post-Truth/Post-Fact’. To close off the month, their new member, Rev. Daniel Jantos, presented ‘Patterns of Liberation and Constraint’ in various religions and philosophies. He is the Chaplaincy Coordinator at Western Sydney University and served as the minister of the North Chapel Unitarian Universalist Society in Woodstock Vermont during 2000–2015. The first service in March will be ‘Remembering Leonard Cohen’, led by Carolyn Donnelly and Barbara O’Brien and featuring his music.

Sydney UC had a longer-than-usual break after their early Xmas party, resuming services on 05 February. The services in that month included reports by two members about their respective travels in Japan and Vietnam; also an address by the environmentalist, Nigel Howard, on ‘The Science of Global Warming’.

In March, there will be a service on the music of Franz Schubert, led by the Music Director, Kaine Hayward, after he gets back from performing in China. Sadly, he will soon be leaving to pursue graduate study in the US.

The Committee has allocated \$5000 per year to donate to charities, ten in total. In addition, SUC will continue to make regular donations to the Nagbinlod congregation in the Philippines for the education expenses of their children and young adults.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR DEVELOPMENT

By Mike McPhee



On 22 December 2015, the UN General Assembly voted to declare 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. Fittingly, this will be fifty years after the celebration of the International Year of Tourism – Passport to Peace (1967) and fifteen years since the International Year of Ecotourism (2002). The UN’s World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) was asked to “facilitate the organization and implementation of the Year, in collaboration with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations System, other international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders”.

The economic benefits of tourism to developing countries, provided that it is not conducted in an exploitative or disruptive manner, are obvious to anyone. However, in keeping with the two previous International Years, the Resolution of 2015 recognised *“the importance of international tourism in fostering better understanding among peoples everywhere, in leading to a greater awareness of the rich heritage of various civilizations and in bringing about a better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures, thereby contributing to the strengthening of peace in the world”*.

From the WTO website: “This decision follows the recognition by global leaders at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) that ‘well-designed and well-managed tourism’ can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development [economic, social and environmental], to job creation and to trade. ... 2017 presents a unique opportunity to explore and highlight tourism’s potential to help transform our world into a place of prosperity and wellbeing for all. As one of the largest and fastest-growing socio-economic sectors of our times, tourism can stimulate economic growth, create decent jobs and business opportunities, helping millions of people escape poverty and improve their livelihoods.

“With the right policies in place, tourism can contribute to gender equality, the preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity, the protection of natural and cultural heritage, and offers solutions to many other pressing challenges our world is facing today. An inclusive and participatory tourism can spur dialogue, foster mutual understanding and support efforts toward building a culture of peace. In the context of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the International Year aims to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector than can contribute to the SDGs.”

Major events of the International Year will include the following:

- the official Opening Ceremony at the WTO’s headquarters in Madrid, which will coincide with Spain’s annual International Tourism Trade Fair (18–22 January 2017);
- the launching of the official (www.tourism4development2017.org) website to showcase communication campaigns, events around the world and stories of those working in the tourism sector;
- the 6th International WTO Conference on Tourism Statistics in the Philippines in June, with the theme: ‘Measuring Sustainable Tourism’;
- the celebration of World Tourism Day on the theme: ‘Sustainable Tourism – A Tool for Development’ on 27 September in Qatar;
- the UNWTO General Assembly, to be held in Chengdu, China, in October 2017 under the theme of the International Year;

- the 5th WTO Conference on Tourism and the Media in Luxor, Egypt, in November with the theme: ‘Cities: Local Culture for Global Travellers’;
- the Closing Ceremony in Geneva in December.

The new website identifies five key areas that the International Year will address: inclusive and sustainable growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; cultural values, diversity and heritage; and mutual understanding, peace and security. It also contains some striking factoids; such as:

- International tourism accounts for 10% of global GDP and \$US 1.5 trillion in exports in 2015.
- This amounts to 7% of total world exports and 30% of services exports.
- One in every eleven jobs globally is in the tourist industry.
- The industry has twice as many female employers per capita as other sectors.
- By 2030, 1.8 billion international tourists will travel in a given year, 57% of whom will visit Third World countries.

The World Tourism Organisation has an interesting history, as it was a fairly recent addition to the UN’s many agencies. It began life as the International Congress of Official Tourist Traffic Associations, which was formed at a conference in The Hague in 1920. That body became the International Union of Official Tourist Publicity Organisations in 1934 and then the International Union of Official Travel Organisations after World War II. That last metamorphosis comprised a number of national tourist organisations, as well as some industry and consumer groups, and its objectives were to advance tourism in general and to promote the industry as an element of international trade and also an economic strategy for underdeveloped countries.

By the time of World Tourism Year in 1967, the IUOTO recognised the need for it to function in cooperation with other international agencies, especially with the UN. On 27 September 1970, now celebrated as World Tourism Day, its General Assembly voted to reform itself as the World Tourism Organization, which came into being on 01 November 1974. Despite long-standing close ties with the UN, the WTO saw fit at that time to retain its administrative and financial autonomy; thus, it did not become a specialised agency of the UN until 2003. Today, the UNWTO’s membership includes 157 countries, 6 territories and over 500 affiliate members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

ANZUUA NEWS

The last meeting of the ANZUUA Council was held on Monday, 20 February. After the usual reports from the Executive members, Treasurer Henri van Roon mentioned that he still needs some numbers of members from certain groups before he can send them invoices for their dues to ANZUUA.

Rev. Clay Nelson of Auckland reported on his church’s ‘sanctuary’ project (see next article), adding that he had done more than 25 interviews over two weeks and many people had come to the church for the first time to make their presence known. The Auckland church was commended for ‘walking the talk’ in a unanimous vote of affirmation.

Plans for the next ANZUUA Conference in Adelaide on 20–22 October 2017 are progressing well. The theme will be: ‘Growing Vital, Relevant, and Attractive UU Churches/Fellowships in our Region in the 21st Century’. In addition to the keynote speaker, social researcher and author Hugh Mackay, it is hoped that Rev. Derek McAuley, Chief Officer of the UK General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, and Rev. Eric Cherry, Director of the UUA’s International Office, will attend as guest speakers. (Rev. Cherry addressed the 2013 ANZUUA Conference in Auckland.)

It has been recognised that more frequent meetings will be needed in the lead-up to the Conference. These will now be held every two months, so the next Council meeting is scheduled for 10 April.

SPECIAL REPORT FROM AUCKLAND

Auckland Unitarians ended 2016 on an upward trajectory. Sunday attendance prior to Christmas was 45 to 50+ and our Christmas Eve attendance was up 30% over the prior year at 120. In fact, we have reached maximum capacity at the service. If things continue as they have, we will need to consider adding a second service next Christmas Eve.

During the holiday season in January, services were lead by worship associates. This is traditionally a period of low attendance, but not this year, with 30 to 45 in attendance. We began the new year with a traditional intergenerational Water Communion service. The following week we focused on ‘radical hospitality’ after the Management Committee unanimously voted the week before to support ten Indian students who were under deportation orders, by giving them access to the building while they presented their case to the court of public opinion.

At this time we are ten days into offering them ‘sanctuary’. It has gone smoothly. The church has garnered extensive publicity from the media, which has been unusually supportive. A number of our members plus people in the community have thrown themselves into this initiative, offering hospitality at night, spending time with the students, bringing food and expressing their feelings about the injustice to the government.

Sadly, once all legal and political avenues were exhausted, the students decided to end the sanctuary, return voluntarily and reapply for new visas. AUC and our allies will continue to seek reform of a predatory system that exploits international students by design.

On the first day of providing sanctuary, a number of our members also volunteered for a day to assist a local Maori *marae* celebrate Waitangi Day by making sure waste was recycled. The purpose of this initiative was to begin building a stronger relationship between Unitarians and the people of the land (*Tangata Whenua*). In line with that, we will be holding three workshops on the Waitangi Treaty (a founding document of New Zealand) as part of our Adult Religious Education programme in March.

February is also Pride Month in Auckland. Like most UU churches we have a long history of supporting the LGBTQ community. We will once again be in the Pride Parade and are offering our facility for pre-parade training for the marshals. The last two Sundays in February are dedicated to LGBTQ issues. This year we have outside speakers who will share their struggles of coming out in religions that are less supportive of this community – one is a Muslim and the other grew up in an Exclusive Brethren family.

It has been an extraordinary beginning to what we hope will be another strong year for spreading UU values in word and deed in New Zealand.

[This information was provided by Rev. Clay Nelson. Please see the Auckland Unitarian Church’s website for further information: <http://aucklandunitarian.org.nz/indian-students-facing-deportation/>]

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I hope this doesn’t look like a ‘rush job’ but I wanted to get it out before the beginning of March. My personal thanks to Nigel Sinnott, Renee Hills and Rev. Clay Nelson for their valuable input.

With Nigel’s article, because I knew someone would ask, Henry Gyles Turner’s books were *The Development of Australian Literature* (1898, written in conjunction with Alexander Sutherland), his two-volume *History of the Colony of Victoria* (1904), *The First Decade of the Australian Commonwealth* (1911) and *Our Own Little Rebellion, the Story of the Eureka Stockade* (1913).

Just with the seventh verse of the song on p. 9, I am convinced that translating ‘*Les ennuis, les chagrins*’ as ‘The pains and bothers’ was for the sake of brevity. The word, ‘*ennui*’, has a much more profound meaning of boredom, emptiness and lost opportunity in life, while ‘*chagrin*’ has the same meaning as it does in English.

Now my cupboard is bare, once again, and I like to keep ahead, so please send more articles as soon as possible to me at: michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au.