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## A TRIBUTE TO JEAN CALVIN

While it may seem perverse to mark the death of this Protestant reformer 450 years ago (27 May 1564), it can be argued that many, if not most, national Unitarian churches emerged from his movement. For some of them, it was an evolutionary process via liberal Christianity; for others, it was more of a reaction to what had become a dour and hidebound theology. That Calvin would not appreciate being honoured by us goes without saying, given that he brought about the execution of Miguel Servetus in 1553, but there is much more to his story than most of us realise.

Jean Calvin was born on 10 July 1509 in Noyon, Picardy, in the north of France. His father was the cathedral notary and registrar of the ecclesiastical court, so the precocious Calvin became a clerk of the bishop at the age of 12 and even received the tonsure. His father sent him to Paris to study Latin and philosophy in preparation for the priesthood, but he then decided that law would be more remunerative and transferred his son to the University of Orléans. After completing his degree, he proceeded to Bourges, where he learned Ancient Greek and, in 1533, underwent a religious conversion.

Later that year, he was in Paris when his reformist friend and rector of the Collège Royale, Nicholas Cop, was expelled for heresy and fled to Basel in Switzerland. Calvin was implicated and, after a year in hiding, he joined his friend there. In the March of 1536, he published the first edition of his *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (Institutes of the Christian Religion), which was both a statement of reformist doctrine and an instruction book for non-Christians. He revised and expanded it five times over the course of his life, such that the final version of 1559 was five times longer than the original. It is considered one of the greatest works in theology and his French translations of it had the same standardising effect on that language as the *King James Version* of the Bible had on English.

Calvin took up residence in Geneva later in 1536, working with a fellow French reformer, Guillaume Farel. He was appointed as a 'reader' and, the next year, as a 'pastor', though he was never formally ordained. The pair wrote a constitution for their new church and submitted it to the city council for approval. The city-state was officially Protestant by that time (but most of the Swiss cantons were not), so the church was quickly recognised. Unfortunately, a bitter dispute with the church in Bern broke out over (of all things!) the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, which meetings in Bern and Zürich failed to resolve. Fearing yet more disruption, the council in Geneva refused to have them back.

Farel went to lead a church in Neuchâtel and Calvin moved to Strasbourg (which was not part of France at the time) in 1538. While there, he produced the second edition of his *Institutes* book in 1539, much longer than the first, and the first of his *Commentaries* on various books of the Bible in 1540. These typically contained his own Latin translation of the Greek text, followed by an exegesis and an exposition.

Meanwhile, the political climate in Geneva had changed quite drastically and the city council asked Calvin to return in 1541. This time, his aspiration to govern the entire religious life of the city was realised – his church had pastors, religious instructors, elders to provide discipline and deacons to care for the needy. It even had an ecclesiastical court, whose most severe penalty was excommunication. Calvin quickly wrote or adapted a book of services and a catechism, as well as the famed Geneva Psalter, which contains some hymns of his own composition.

Calvin preached over 2000 sermons during this period, sometimes on a daily basis. His pre-eminence was not unchallenged, however, particularly by wealthy local families and others who resented his rigid standards that forbade such things as dancing. In 1547, one of his critics was beheaded after the civil court convicted him of plotting against the church. Opposition continued, however, to the point that he offered his resignation to the council in 1553, which was refused.

It was in that fateful year that Miguel Servetus sought refuge in Geneva after the Spanish Inquisition ordered his arrest. Servetus' anti-Trinitarian views had upset Catholics and Reformers equally, resulting in his expulsion from Basel and Strasbourg. He had also been arrested in Lyon and sentenced to death after he escaped from prison. Servetus and Calvin had been exchanging letters debating doctrine since they met in 1546, but the latter became convinced that the Spaniard was a heretic and ended their correspondence. Servetus was arrested, tried for heresy and burned at the stake on a pyre of his books on 27 October 1553.

Calvin's final years were a time of unchallenged authority and an international reputation that enabled him to engage in a doctrinal dispute with Martin Luther. Geneva received English refugees from Mary Tudor's rule and formed their own reformed church under John Knox and William Whittingham. Anxious to reform his homeland, Calvin sent missionaries and literature to France. He founded a school in 1559, whose numbers grew to 1500 students in five years – its senior academy is now the University of Geneva.

Calvin had become ill in 1558 and he worked desperately to write a final edition of *Institutes of the Christian Religion* before he died. He lived for another six years, though his health continued to decline, and his church buried him in an unmarked grave for fear of fostering a new saint's cult. Its exact location is still unknown, though a stone marks the plot which tradition holds to be his.

Calvinist theology stresses Original Sin and the inability of humans to attain knowledge of God other than from Scripture. Salvation is only possible through faith but no-one can be sure they are saved. Most controversial for other Christians is the doctrine of predestination, whereunder God already knows who will be saved and who will not, which is especially frightening when combined with the belief that Heaven only has room for 144,000 souls. From its anti-Catholic origins, any form of religious imagery is idolatrous – to some, even a cross on the altar constitutes a 'graven image'.

Calvinist denominations today include the Presbyterian, Congregationalist and some Methodist churches, as well as Reformed Churches in many European countries (and some former colonies). Historically, the Huguenots and the Puritans were Calvinists. Clearly, even Christocentric Unitarians would reject most of their principles, but we do have historical connections with Calvin's movement. Most notably, Ferenc (Francis) Dávid of Transylvania moved from Lutheranism to Calvinism on his journey to Unitarianism – in fact, he was a Calvinist bishop when he became Prince John II Sigismund's court preacher (also in 1564!).

The first Unitarian churches in England were led by Presbyterians who had been purged from the Church of England in the 'Great Ejection' of 1662 (see the June/July 2012 issue for that). From its beginning, the UK General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches included Free Methodist and Non-Subscribing Presbyterian groups which had broken away from their Calvinist parent churches. Finally, in the US, our denomination split from the Congregationalist Church after decades of being its liberal 'left wing'. Their counterparts, the Universalists, abhorred the doctrines of predestination and election (of the 144,000 saved souls) and would have been particularly effective at rescuing despondent Calvinist from their fears.



International  
Council of  
Unitarians and  
Universalists

## ICUU NEWS

### European Leadership School

### DUR Workshop

### Heiwa Peace Pilgrimage



The ICUU will conduct a European Leadership School over 03–08 September at the headquarters of the Hungarian Unitarian Church in Kolozsvár, Romania. Intended for lay ministers and leaders, the program will include Unitarian theology, history and practice, conducting worship and sustaining a local faith community. The tutors will be: Rev. Scott Prinster, UU minister and historian of science; Rev. Botond Koppándi, theologian and professor at the Hungarian Unitarian Seminary; and Rev. Petr Samojský, minister of the Czech Unitarian Society in Prague.

The School will include a mixture of lectures and small group work. As personal spiritual development is a vital part of leadership, participants will also meet in ‘credo groups’ similar to the Chalice Circles at ICUU conferences. A tour of Kolozsvár and a gathering with local Unitarians will also be provided.

The *Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft* (German Unitarian Religious Community) will hold a Workshop entitled ‘Human Rights Instead of Extremism II’ at their conference centre in Klingberg, Schleswig-Holstein, on 03–05 October. The presenters will be Peter Kriesel, theologian and educationist; Horst Prem, aerospace engineer; Dr. Volker Mueller, philosopher; Eike Möller, Chair of the ‘Unitates’ foundation; and Olaf Christensen, lawyer.

They write: “Time and again conflicts appear in Europe arising from ethnic and/or religious differences. In order to overcome these separatist tendencies and to promote integration instead, the question needs to be answered: What are the goals of education with respect to integration in the existing pluralised society? Education towards tolerance and human rights may contribute to more understanding and cooperation in the political society when class communities are not split along denominations. Strategies of conflict prevention and peaceful development have to be trained from infant to adult ages to ensure a peaceful development of the global society. We are part of this global society, which has to develop a common understanding of problems in order to survive. What are the common problems of humankind? What has to be changed? What do we learn from other countries which have successfully managed integration?”

More information from: [www.bildung-klingberg.de](http://www.bildung-klingberg.de). Klingberg has an attractive location on a lake, just inland of the Baltic Sea. Everyone is welcome but please note that the proceedings will be in German.

Some appropriate news for this time of year (see p. 8) is that the All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C., has sent a delegation to Japan over 01–11 August as part of its ongoing peace exchange program in conjunction with the Buddhist organisation, Rissho Kosei-kai. Some 37 members of all ages and ethnicities visited Tokyo, Kyoto, Nara and Hiroshima, where the main ceremonies took place on 06 August.

All Souls’ ties with Japan go back to 1947, when its church school formed a partnership with the Honkawa Elementary School, all of whose pupils perished in the bombing, to exchange children’s drawings. A committee was formed in 2005 to restore and preserve the original portfolio, which was brought to the school for an exhibition in 2010. The project has been supported by the UUA’s Funding Panel and its Office of International Activities.

The delegation spent three days in Hiroshima, having met with peace, interfaith and educational groups in the other cities. At 8:15 a.m. on 06 August, they were at the Honkawa school for a ceremony in which flowers and 1000 origami cranes were laid on an altar for the 600 children who died. They then went to the Peace Park for the annual commemoration and floating lanterns were placed on the river at Ground Zero that night.

Rissho Kosei-kai (Buddhism for Today) is a worldwide organisation founded in Japan in 1938. Its emphasis on both spirituality and practice rendered it an ideal partner for the UUA, as there is only one Unitarian and one Universalist church in Japan. Its Hiroshima Dharma Centre will send a reciprocal delegation to the US next year. RKK’s website is: [www.rk-world.org](http://www.rk-world.org).

## A BUDGET IS A MORAL DOCUMENT

By Rev. Rob MacPherson

One of the key features of our post-modern world is that economics has become our most trusted science of decision making. From government policy to personal decisions like buying a house, educating future generations, caring for the sick and elderly, and even hooking up with a spouse or partner, economic principles seem to govern our range of choices *and* how we choose between those choices. On the larger scale, *a nation's* economic decisions – how money is generated, how it's collected, and how it's distributed – has become the *chief function* of government. Indeed, it's become hard to imagine what else government would be *for*, if not to regulate or deregulate the economy, to apply the brake or the accelerator or to unscrew the head and work on the wiring – the better to run the cherished perpetual-motion machine, 'economic growth', which must run and run at all costs, apparently.

But economics is not a science like chemistry or physics. It is not an exact or perfect science. It is highly speculative. It is far from impartial. It is political. It does use numbers, but is more *scientism* than science: as *Encyclopedia Britannica* says, economics has 'physics envy'. And that's okay – it fits right in with the other social sciences which also use numbers: sociology and psychology (even marketing is now a 'science'!). Yet the values this most trusted science lifts up – ownership, efficiency, cost/benefit, and self-interest – threaten to usurp *all other non-numerically measurable* values like compassion, community, sharing, charity. Indeed, economic decision-making has become so allied with *thinking itself* that the very idea of our being is predicated on getting and spending. Descartes' "I think; therefore I am, I exist" is becoming "I spend; therefore I am, I exist" (the cheeky title of a recent exhaustive study by the economist, Dr. Philip Roscoe).

Imagine how invisible you'd become to the economy if, suddenly, you had nothing to spend. If you're curious, you can ask anyone at the Vincentian Centre, the economy's 'disappeared'. This is the 'cost' of thinking only in terms of economic data: that we can know the *price* of everything, but not necessarily the value. Indeed, we struggle to apply any other scale of value other than cost, any alternative paradigm of values that doesn't sound foolishly, childishly, dreamily utopian. *Any other way* of valuing anything is becoming harder and harder even to imagine.

As an inexact 'soft' speculative science, there is much of *faith* wrapped up with economics – think of 'full faith and credit' of currency, wealth held 'in trust', having 'confidence in' your financial advisor, or the market, or the dollar. But like all articles of faith, we should apply UUism's cherished lens of reason to it, as a matter of *our* faith. To ask, say, *are* there no, have there never been, alternatives to the way we get and spend now? Can we not do better than the system we've got? If there *are* alternatives, why have we stopped trying to realize them? In 1989, we are told neoliberal capitalism triumphed over socialism, and so has no real competition. This man-made system thus has a monopoly on our economic thinking, and monopolies are always good...right?

But it is becoming increasingly clear that something is going terribly wrong in the application of this inexact, imperfect, science-y system whose implicit values we too take on faith. You'd have to have been living under a rock not to have heard that wealth inequality has been ballooning markedly post-GFC and now invites comparisons with the feudal system. The very few very wealthiest have gotten a lot wealthier; the majority poor have gotten a lot poorer; and the thin wedge of the middle classes across the developed world are working harder, yet being squeezed ever downward for their efforts, chasing the carrot that they *too* might one day be super-rich, and fleeing from the stick of debt and shrinking labor markets.

The middle classes don't usually see themselves as actually trapped in this fix, just temporarily frustrated billionaires (but one day...). For the very rich are indeed different from you and me, as they have different rules. Financial sector shysters get rich from impoverishing whole nations or swathes of society, quite illegally, and not only walk off scot-free but get rewarded for it, while a poor man can do hard time for stealing a micro-fraction of such sums. So even the scales of blind justice itself are tip-able by the heft of wealth. 'Money talks, bulls\*\*\* walks', as we say. Inequality is never good for a social fabric.

To be clear, I'm no expert in the field. But you don't need a meteorologist to tell you it's raining, do you? As a contextual theologian, I'm all about sniffing out the spiritual essence of our lived experience – to ask "where is God, the spirit, or what enduring sacredness we may affirm in life's messy, compromised systems". So I'll venture some thoughts for open UU minds about the values that *drive* our economic life, values to which we *aspire* – values that charts and graphs and formulas often obscure, what these values reveal about the state of our souls, and what steps we might take to live the values we *say* we promote.

Because, friends, it seems clear that something about the values of our economic system frankly stinks. For instance, many of our countrymen and women are deeply morally offended and repulsed by the proposed Coalition budget, causing massive demonstrations and unprecedented sudden swings in opinion polls. But why so much deep and broad rage? Is this just self-interest in the see-saw game of politics as usual? Or does this ‘emergency budget’ embody underlying values we might find *morally* abhorrent if we ourselves applied them in *our own lives?....or our own church?*

A national budget or a personal, household budget is a moral document in that it reveals priorities. Income and expenses – who contributes how much and where most of the money goes – says a lot about what we raise to worth. Priorities indicate scales of importance, so they reveal what things we value over other things, and when we are talking about relative value, we are making moral judgments. *Judgments, not statements of truth*: judgments about who wins, who loses. What we disregard, and what we cherish. If your bank statement shows you spend most of your disposable income on, say, gambling rather than your kids’ education, that shows what you truly value, regardless of any verbal claims you might mouth to the contrary. If you looked at your bank statement and did the sums, comparing relative expenses, what would it show *you* value?

I don’t propose to do a Sunday morning political commentary, to get into a detailed list of who wins and loses in this budget emergency – who and what it prioritizes. You can easily Google the facts. But it would be hard to deny that, in this budget, the winners are the relatively powerful and the losers are the relatively powerless. As but one example of many, there have been proposed cuts to services and user-pays increases to contributions in the areas of healthcare, education, pension entitlements and welfare. That means that the sick, the young, the elderly, and the jobless are less valued.

Compared to what? What gets prioritized or raised to worth? The F-35 strike fighter, \$12 billion worth of obsolete junk military experts have dubbed ‘the flying lemon’. That \$12 billion we have apparently no trouble finding in an ‘emergency’ would have made the cuts and increases I mentioned a whole lot less necessary. So: Priorities, values, morals. There are other examples I could list, but again, a little research and it’s not hard to get the budget’s moral drift.

Even if we were in a ‘fiscal emergency’ (and we are *not* – third lowest debt to GDP ratio in the OECD, AAA credit rating, we spend 0.5% on welfare, dodged the worst of the GFC, have a still-strong primary production sector) people’s problem with the budget is not so much that it *is* being sold by an out-and-out lie. The rage is due to such priorities as I mention, who it values over whom; in short, it’s rage is about inequity. And inequity is a species of injustice. Without justice, there will be no peace, and outrage will abide.

Neoliberal apologists like to bewilder people by comparing government fiscal policy to a household budget – so okay, let’s play that game. The government is carrying debt, just as all governments do, no question. The average household likewise carries debt called a ‘mortgage’ (‘death-grip’). Honourable people pay their debts, no question. Honourable governments or households can honour those debts by ‘paying now or paying later’, no question. But – householders – did your mortgage *never* exceed your income? Maybe you were lucky enough to be born into other’s money and, if so, half your luck.

But, for most householders, mortgage exceeds income by a lot, a condition that does not preclude getting loans. Yet what householder feels the need to cut back drastically on medicine or education or food to pay the mortgage off in five years rather than twenty-five? Apparently, that’s what households should do, because that speedy repay is what the government’s ‘emergency budget’ insists cannot be avoided, and can’t be done by anything other than tightening the belts of those members of the social fabric with the least power.

So the question is not ‘pay now or pay later’, all debt is ‘pay later’, that’s why it’s debt – it’s *who* pays and *how much*. To cancel your mortgage debt (since it’s so crucial you pay it off *right away*), do you go to the people in the household *least* able to pay, say your part-time working high school or Uni kids, those who did not generate the debt and don’t own the capital value of the house, and demand they pay more and eat and get sick less? Of course not. Yet such is the choice the government has made – those with the least means carry the most pain and have the least to gain by that pain. Our current national budget debate is but one example of systemic injustice at the heart of the serious and growing inequality of our world. And, as the Jesuit’s taught us, there will be no peace unless there is justice. So it’s no surprise that people are so angry. Anger, even the righteous kind, is not altogether fun to be around and hard to sustain. Better perhaps to find more effective and appropriate channels for that righteous moral impulse against injustice than rage.

The theologian Marcus Borg writes that if you would practice compassion – the heart of all religion – the social or systemic form of compassion is *justice*. This form of compassion requires us not only to help those who are suffering (as with the Vinnie’s Sleepout) but *to change the structures of society that cause or contribute to this suffering*. And *we* are a part of that interconnected system. So our work of social justice must in some way go beyond practicing such polite philanthropy as mindful consumerism, alms-giving and charity events, but to work to bend the system towards justice for all.

*Social* justice recognizes, at its heart, one of our cherished UU principles – that we all live in an interdependent world, and so every choice we make, every dollar we spend, every dollar we earn, every life we touch to whatever degree affects the entire web of being. Every dollar you get and spend is a vote for the kind of world you want. So it makes sense, before we would write angry emails or shout in the street or ‘throw the bums out’, to have a good look at how *we* engage in the economy, what we spend our money on, how we earn it, what we prioritize. We would do best, I think, to clean up *our own side of the street* first, before getting exercised about bending the larger system towards justice.

Two reasons for this: living our UU values with integrity – of social equity, the inherent worth of every person, care for the delicate web of existence of which we are part. I mean, you either affirm these values in action or you don’t. We should first undertake to *be* any change we would like to see in the world. Second, self-interest – knowing we are connected to all others, so we *all* benefit (in immeasurable ways) from working for justice for all. Now, I would not *dream* of telling you how to make decisions about your own personal *household* budget, it’s not my role, none of my business. But it is my duty to point direction for the church as a body. What do we distribute our money on, and how do we collect it?

Fortunately, I don’t need to do much, since we have a flat and, therefore, transparent governance structure, which means that any inquiring member can easily find out the answers to those questions and judge for themselves the values that our church budget may reveal to them. For instance, and taking my livelihood in my hands, it would be easy to discover that a lot of our outgoings pay a modest stipend to a professional minister. And you as a member of the church are free to reflect on and debate the value of that. It’s not written in stone; it’s a choice, a value judgment, a moral statement.

As a church we also *collect* money in two ways: from voluntary contributions (and we will need to have a talk about that at some point) and from returns on invested capital. And just as a budget is a moral document, an investment portfolio is *even more so*, for it shows what we are prepared to invest in to raise our money. Is our bottom line fattened by systems which exploit human beings, exploit the environment, increase social inequity and thus undermine peaceful relations? You could find out if you cared to.

I was recently heartened, and a little shamed, by the decision of our sister church in Melbourne (a church known for their vocal rabble-rousing socialist politics) to move their banking and investments to a 100% ethical, sustainable footing. They have moved their current accounts away from the big four banks to the Members Equity co-op and re-focussed their considerable investments to include:

- avoiding investment in industries which have a negative impact on society and the environment;
- proactive search for investments that contribute positively to society and the environment; and
- dialogue with companies invested in for the purpose of raising issues of concern and advocating positive change to company practices.

Happily this decision was for them an easy one, as there is increasing demand for portfolios with such ethical aims, and thus there is ample supply to meet that demand – and ethical investments offer *as good or better* returns. It will take time and deliberation, but they are about it now. *And so should we.*

To be clear, I do not urge this because of some pie-in-the-sky ideological quest for moral purity. We are all co-opted and implicated in the system of global corporate capitalism to one degree or another, a system whose logic of growth is the unsustainable logic of the cancer cell – infinite growth in a finite host. (Result: death of both the host and the cancer.) Nor do I urge it because I’m into peddling middle-class guilt, a reflex among people of conscience not unlike Original Sin, which we reject. I do urge this because the only reason for a church like ours *not* to pursue widely available and attractive ethical investments is not because we’ll lose money (we won’t) or because such choices don’t exist (they do) but because it’s *such* a no-brainer the only reason I can think we *haven’t done so* comes down to something resembling one of the Seven Deadly Sins – not Greed, greed I sort of understand, but Sloth (or if you prefer, inertia).

And sloth I confess I fail to understand, when all that is required to remedy sloth is to take a step or two. I also urge it because a church like ours – democratic, egalitarian, flat and transparent in governance, and devoted to and guided by *values other than economic gain* – can witness to our members, to their networks and thus to the wider community that there *are* alternative, non-exploitative, sustainable ways to live in the system we've got. If you will that, it is not a starry-eyed dream.

I'm not especially crazy about the UU quote posters we put up outside but the one out there now, you should look at. It says: "The true measure of your value is what you'd be worth if you lost all your money." What would our church be worth if it lost all its money? Would it have no value? What, finally, is 'of value' to us as a church? I wonder if anyone of you out there, today, will take *our church's true value* seriously enough to petition, agitate for, a change in our church's finance to an ethical footing that translate those values from word to deed?

Look – we can't expect to change the whole system all at once and on the large scale. It will take more than the Unitarian Church of South Australia to take a spanner to the overheating engine of economic growth. But we can put our own house in order; home is where you start any journey. The path to justice for all, like all paths, is made by walking. Let us take that first step, by summoning the grace, the courage, the commitment to our values, and the energy simply *to put our money where our mouth is*.

[This is the text of Rev. MacPherson's address to the Adelaide Unitarian Church on 15 June 2014. A native of the US, he trained for the ministry at Unitarian College Manchester and became Adelaide's minister in 2011. He has previously been an actor on the stage, TV, radio and film, as well as a Senior Lecturer in Communication and Media Studies at the University of South Australia.]

## PRESIDENTIAL MUTTERINGS

**By Peter Abrehart**

As most would be aware, next year marks the centenary of the landing at ANZAC Cove. The Australian government is spending more than the UK government on the commemoration, including some \$100,000 for each Member of Parliament to spend in their local electorate.

Due to the concern that the centenary will be very narrowly focused and be used for militaristic purposes, a coalition comprising church and community groups, including the Melbourne Church, Quakers and mainstream religions (Catholic, Anglican, Uniting, etc.) are conducting a number of public forums over the coming twelve months, the first of which will be held in the Melbourne Unitarian Church in mid-October. The broad theme of each forum will be 'Retelling the Australian Narrative' – in the first instance, the denial of the indigenous people's story and their right to exist – a stark contrast to the experience in New Zealand.

I would welcome input and be happy to provide more details regarding the theme(s) of each forum and any other details that you may require. Just drop me an email at: [pabrehart@ftml.net](mailto:pabrehart@ftml.net).

On a more international note, 21 September marks International Climate Justice Day, timed to coincide with the United Nations Climate Summit. In the words of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee: "Climate change poses a threat to human rights in the United States and around the world. From women's empowerment to disaster recovery, from access to clean water to food sustainability, efforts to improve human rights are already being strained by climate change."

The UUSC is part of a collaboration of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth and other religious and secular groups who are organising a 'People's Climate March' that hopes to rally one million people in New York City on the 21<sup>st</sup>. I do know that a rally is organised in Melbourne, so please check what is happening in your part of Australia and New Zealand.

I'm a rather big fan of the UUSC, not just on issues such as climate change, but also on a range of social justice issues. They seem to live by what has been described (by Erasmus Darwin?) as the only passage in the Bible that Unitarians accept as divinely inspired, namely James 1:22: "Be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

[In case anyone doesn't know, our esteemed president is with the Melbourne Unitarian Church.]

## THE CONQUERORS



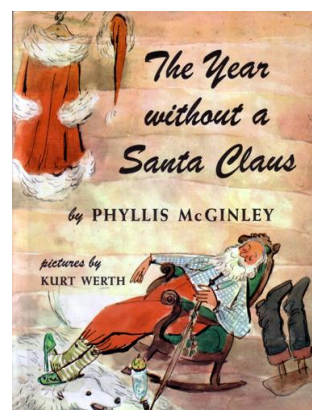
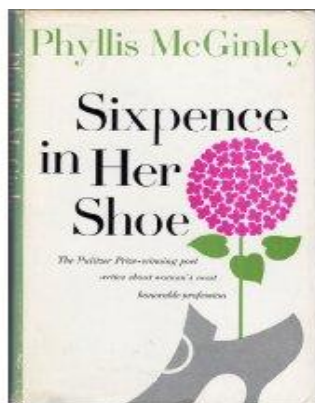
It seems vainglorious and proud  
Of Atom-man to boast aloud  
His prowess homicidal  
When one remembers how for years,  
With their rude stones and humble spears,  
Our sires, at wiping out their peers,  
Were almost never idle.

Despite his under-fissioned art  
The Hittite made a splendid start  
Toward smiting lesser nations;  
While Tamerlane, it's widely known,  
Without a bomb to call his own  
Destroyed whole populations.

Nor did the ancient Persian need  
Uranium to kill his Mede,  
The Viking earl, his foeman.  
The Greeks got excellent results  
With swords and engined catapults.  
A chariot served the Roman.

Mere cannon garnered quite a yield  
On Waterloo's tempestuous field.  
At Hastings and at Flodden\*  
Stout countrymen, with just a bow  
And arrow, laid their thousands low,  
And Gettysburg was sodden.

Though doubtless now our shrewd machines  
Can blow the world to smithereens  
More tidily and so on,  
Let's give our ancestors their due.  
Their ways were coarse, their weapons few.  
But ah! how wondrously they slew  
With what they had to go on.



Phyllis McGinley

\* The Battle of Flodden Field was a particularly bloody conflict between Scotland and England, fought near Branxton, Northumberland, in 1513. The total casualties, including some French knights and infantry who fought on the Scottish side, may have been as high as 18,000 (30% of the combatants).

This is to commemorate Hiroshima Day (06 August) and the International Day of Peace (21 September). Phyllis McGinley (1905–1978) was a popular writer of poems, essays and children's books, who even produced the lyrics for the 1948 musical revue, *Small Wonder*. Born in Oregon, she grew up in Colorado and Utah, then studied at the University of Southern California and the University of Utah. After her graduation in 1927, she taught in high schools for only two years before her writing career took off.

McGinley moved to New York City and worked in various jobs, finally becoming the poetry editor for *Town and Country*. Her witty poems were often published in the New York *Herald Tribune* and *The New Yorker* magazine. She was elected to the National Academy of Arts and Letters in 1955 and won a Pulitzer Prize for her collection: *Times Three: Selected Verse from Three Decades* (1960), the first writer to win that award.

*Times Three* was McGinley's sixth book of poetry to be published since 1937. The poem above appeared in that collection, though it was actually written shortly after World War II. It was an unusual theme for her, as most of her writing dealt with the positive aspects of suburban family life.



## SOLDIERS OF CHRIST, ARISE

Soldiers of Christ, arise  
And put your armor on,  
Strong in the strength which God supplies  
Thru his eternal Son;  
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,  
And in his mighty power,  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts  
Is more than conqueror.

Stand then in his great might,  
With all his strength endued,  
But take to arm you for the fight  
The panoply of God;  
That having all things done,  
And all your conflicts passed,  
Ye may o'ercome thru Christ alone  
And stand entire at last.

Pray without ceasing, pray,  
(Your Captain gives the word)  
His summons cheerfully obey  
And call upon the Lord;  
To God your every want  
In instant prayer display,  
Pray always, pray and never faint,  
Pray, without ceasing pray.

From strength to strength go on,  
Wrestle and fight and pray,  
Tread all the powers of darkness down  
And win the well-fought day.  
Still let the Spirit cry  
In all his soldiers, "Come!"  
Till Christ the Lord, descends from high  
And takes the conquerors home.



Charles Wesley (1749)

Apparently, Jean Calvin wrote some poetry but none of that was available on the Internet. He was a strong supporter of church music but left that work to his capable group of hymnodists, who produced the lengthy Geneva Psalter – which, as the name suggests, consisted for musical arrangements of the Book of Psalms.

Consequently, this hymn by the brother of John Wesley and co-founder of Methodism will have to suffice. The verses above are based on the Epistle to the Ephesians, 6:13–18, though there is also a much longer version. Charles Wesley (1707–88) wrote an incredible 6000 hymns in his lifetime and my only regret is that there was insufficient space for his ‘O Horrible Decree’, which is an elegant refutation of the doctrine of pre-destination. He also wrote ‘Hark! The Herald Angels Sing’, though the music and some of the words were changed to make it the Christmas carol we are familiar with.

The story of the Wesley brothers will have to wait for another issue but, briefly, their father was an Anglican minister and both were ordained in the Church of England after attending Christ Church College at Oxford. There, Charles started a Bible study group, which John later joined and became the leader of. Their methodical study of Scripture caused the other students to sardonically call them ‘Methodists’.

After they graduated, the Wesleys started an evangelical movement known as ‘The Great Awakening’. Although their open-air preaching and other maverick tendencies were not welcomed by the Church of England hierarchy, the actual Methodist Church was formed after both men were dead.

## THE FUTURE OF RELIGION

By Jim Craig

[Text of an address to the Perth Unitarians on 04 March 2012.]

We have all lived long enough to know that unexpected things happen. Who of us could have guessed, 50 or 60 years ago, that we would be here today? Talking about the future is either an exercise in arrogance or perhaps foolishness, so I hope that you will forgive me for doing it anyway.

One of the first things to say is that there has been a movement in recent years by many people, especially certain intellectual types, to say that religion has no future; that religion is at an end. It's somewhat copying, I suspect, the idea of 'the end of history'.

About 20 years ago, an American commentator named Francis Fukuyama published a book called *The End of History*. This was shortly after the downfall of the Soviet Union and he was proclaiming that all of the other methods of history had been wiped out and democratic capitalism had emerged victorious over everything else, so history had finally come to a glorious culmination. We could expect it forevermore. Well, 20 years later, we can see that was a bit premature at best and things are moving apace, even without certain other things.

But there is certainly some kind of evidence about the end of religion. Churches in many traditional parts of the world are empty on Sunday mornings and partly, of course, this is because over the last 300 or 400 years science and the Enlightenment have increasingly expanded to explain many things which religion typically and traditionally argued.

It's easy to make the case, at least intellectually, that religion as we have known it for the past couple of thousand years has ended. However, practically speaking, we see also the fact that, over the last 20 years or so, there has been a resurgence of the power of religion in certain parts of the world, especially the Middle East. As you are well aware, in certain practical ways, religion seems to be having a renaissance, especially among some of our more evangelical or fundamentalist friends whose movements seem to be increasing.

So I think it's premature to say that religion is at an end. Perhaps that's wishful thinking on the part of some. Historically, as we see, religion has been ubiquitous if not universal. That is to say, we have found religion in every society that has ever been discovered or investigated. Not to say that every individual or every person has been religious but, certainly in every society or culture, religion has played an important role. The question then becomes not just the end of religion but what kind of religion is there going to be? And it seems to me that the traditional religion that we have perhaps known over many centuries is, in fact, weakening in the face of increasing forces of – let us call it – modernity.

There have been certain periods in history which have been especially important. One of the most important was the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE, 2500 years ago, a period which is so important that it has been called by historians 'the axial age'. It was an axis that we can see looking back at it. And if we look back at roughly the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE, we see in various parts of the world enormous changes taking place. In ancient Greece, it was the beginnings of what would later become the Classical philosophy of such great names as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Greek tragedians and comedians were writing their epoch-making plays at that time.

In ancient Israel roughly the 6<sup>th</sup> century there was the flowering of the ancient Israeli prophets, the prophets of the Old Testament whose message continues to resonate about the need for social justice in our world. In ancient India there were the Upanishads, the important writings of the Hindu tradition. The Buddha lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century and his almost exact contemporary in China was Confucius, whose teachings have resonated in Chinese culture ever since. So it was a period that was extraordinarily important even in axial times.

It is, of course, a little bit premature to say yet but I have the suspicion that we are in a similar period today. The problem is that none of us will ever know it because we are talking about time spans now in the future. We're talking not in terms of days or months or years but in terms of centuries, and it won't be for another 300 or 400 years, presuming that the human race survives that long, that we will know for sure just what this period we are now in was all about.

But it seems to me we are in this period, especially religiously, of tremendously epochal change. One of the traditional images of the Christian church over the past two thousand years has been that the church was a great ship sailing out over the waters, saving people from the destruction of the floods. Well, it seems to me that ship is now sinking. Now, what do you do when you are in a sinking ship? Well, of course, one way to deal with that is to say, very courageously, I suppose, "I will go down with the ship." And that, I think, is what some of our fundamentalist friends may be about. But it seems to me the more prudent course is to say, "OK, the ship is sinking. Let's see what we can do to build a raft of some sort to float on the tumultuous waters." Be constructive, in other words. It is easy enough to decry the sinking of the ship but let us try to be a bit constructive.

And that brings me to this book, *Religion for Atheists*, written by a British man named Alain de Botton. I had never heard anything about him before I saw this book. The book was reviewed two weeks ago, as some of you may have seen in *The Weekend Australian Review* magazine. The reviewer there was not very impressed by the book, as she thought it missed the point. I think her review missed the point of the book but you can check it for yourself.

What de Botton is suggesting here is that the traditional theology of the Christian church has run its course, basically. The whole idea is that there is some omnipotent omniscient being who has created the world and who will have some care for us here on the earth, who will respond to us if we pray to him, who will make sure that we go to good and not evil, who will keep us from certain terrible things happening. That whole idea is simply incredible for many of us. Not the majority, it appears, but for many of us. So, what are we going to do if we don't have a God to rely on so enormously?

Well, says de Botton, let us not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Maybe we should look at some of the things which inspired people to think about such a being or such a God. So let me just read a few paragraphs from the book:

*One can be left cold by the doctrines of the Christian Trinity and the Buddhist faithful path and yet at the same time be interested in the ways in which religions deliver sermons for the morality engender a spirit of community make use of art and architecture, inspire travels, train minds, and encourage gratitude at the beauty of spring. In a world beset by fundamentalists of both believing and secular varieties, it must be possible to balance a rejection of religious faith with the selective reverence for religious rituals and concepts.*

*It is when we stop believing that religions have been handed down from above or else that they are entirely daft that matters become more interesting. We can then recognise that we invented religions and that is what we are saying, all religions are human creations, after all. We can recognise that we invented religions to serve two central needs which continue to this day and which secular society has not been able to solve with any particular skill. First the need to live together in communities in harmony despite our deeply routed violent and selfish impulses. And second the need to cope with terrifying degrees of pain which arise from our vulnerability to professional failure to troubled relationships to the death of loved ones and to our own decay in the minds. God may be dead but the urgent issues which impelled us to make him up still stir and demand resolutions which do not go away when we have been nudged to perceive some scientific inaccuracies in the tale of the seven loaves and fishes. The error of modern atheism has been to overlook how many aspects of the faiths remain relevant even after their central tenants have been dismissed. Once we cease to feel that we must either prostrate ourselves before them or denigrate them we are free to discover religions as repositories of a myriad of ingenious concept with which we can try to assuage the few of the most persistent and unattended ills of secular life. So, even though the traditional ideas may be bankrupt, perhaps there is something there that we can still find useful.*

*The signalled danger of life in a godless society is that it lacks reminders of the transcendent and therefore leaves us unprepared for disappointment and eventual annihilation. When God is dead, human beings, much to their detriment are at risk of taking psychological centre stage. They imagine themselves to be commanders of their own destinies. They trample upon nature, forget the rhythms of the earth, deny death and shy away from valuing and honouring all that slips through their grasp until at last they must collide catastrophically with the sharp edges of reality.*

But, to take a specific example, he refers to the practice and condition, especially in Roman Catholic churches, of devotion to the Virgin Mary:

*From a robustly rational perspective Marian devotion seems to exemplify religion at its most infantile and insulting. How could any reasonable adult trust in the existence of a woman who lived several thousand years ago if she ever lived at all much less draw comfort from a projected belief in her unblemished heart, her selfless sympathy and her limitless patience.*

*The drift of the question is hard to refute. It is simply the wrong question to raise. The apposite point is not whether the Virgin exists but what it tells us about human nature that so many Christians over two millenniums have felt the need to invent her. Our focus should be on what the Virgin Mary reveals about our emotional requirements and in particular on what becomes of those demands when we lose our faith.*

So, I commend *Religion for Atheists* to you. I commend also the work which I only learned of a couple of years ago from an old friend, the work of a New Zealand theologian named Lloyd Geering. I think the main point that he tries to make seems to be imminently sensible is that the classic Christian doctrines, especially the doctrine of God, should be seen reasonably as symbols – not as focuses in themselves but as symbols which point to some deeper realities that we may better focus on. So, that's another plank in the raft that we might build in an otherwise sinking ship.

Another one that I will commend to you – and it's printed on the back of your Order of Service – are the Principles of the Unitarian movement. We can argue with them and find things that might not be there that we wish were there. These were formulated a little over fifty years ago in America, when the Unitarian and Universalist traditions came together and thought they had to say something about what they really wanted to emphasise in this new Unitarian Universalist movement.

Religion, as I have said, has been ubiquitous, always found in humanity, and so the religion of the future or the future of religion is really talking about the future of humanity. That, of course, raises a whole much bigger and more significant problem and question. There seems to be at least two possible options. One of them, of which a great deal of evidence can be adduced, is that humanity has no future. That we, especially in the modern world with the opportunities for nuclear holocaust not to mention environmental degradation, have produced the instruments for our own demise as a human race. Will the human race survive this century? Well, most of us will not be here to discover the answer to that but it's at least a good possibility and lots of evidence has been given to make that point.

Another possibility is that we will instead, as we have always seemed to manage to do in the past, kind of muddle through even some of these terrifying problems that confront the human race. It may even be that we are in the process of continuing to evolve. After all we should not presume that the evolutionary process, which has come to this point of us humans, has ended. It's still going on. What it will go on to, we may not even know.

I am often encouraged by the ideas of paleontologist and Jesuit priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Back in the 1950s, he wrote a book called *The Phenomena of Man*, in which he pointed out that, if you look at the whole process of life over the many hundreds of millions of years, you can see that a couple of processes happen. At first, various molecules came together in increasingly complex ways and a life form emerged, and then over billions of years various of these life forms, of these one-cell organisms, came together with other cells, and more and more of these cells came together in increasing and complex ways, so that life forms began to develop and emerge over the millennia.

Well, now maybe we are at a new level where, increasingly and for the first time in history, humans are now interacting with other humans all over the globe. That has never happened before in the significant ways it does now, especially with our electronic ways now of interacting with our fellows all over the world instantaneously. We can now know instantaneously what is happening 12,000 miles away. So, maybe we are in the process and we will be finding increasingly complex ways to do this. Maybe we are, in fact, evolving into some new and greater form of humanity of life forms, who knows?

Well, those at least are the two very opposite reactions. Will we destroy ourselves or will we perhaps evolve into some greater reality? As for me, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, I tend to think that we are likely to destroy ourselves. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, I harbour the hope that we will perhaps evolve and, on Sunday, I go to church or whatever. So, with that I'll hand over to all of you to inject your own comments or questions.

[Jim Craig is a member of the UU Fellowship in Napa, California. He studied for the ministry at Princeton Seminary and was a Presbyterian minister for some time. While still ordained, he served for six months (in 1983) as interim minister for a Uniting Church parish in the Perth suburb of Applecross. Since then, he demitted the ministry and has identified as a Unitarian Universalist for more than 20 years. For most of his career, he was a teacher of Religious Studies in a private boarding school.]

## **NEWS FROM MEMBER GROUPS**

Adelaide UC's pastor, Rob MacPherson attended the CEO Sleep Out to raise funds for the homeless. His recent addresses have had a social justice theme and he has challenged the church to investigate how ethical investments can be made. (See pp. 4/7.) There is also a small committee looking at the suitability of our current building for the 2020 vision of the church.

Auckland UC's AGM resulted in a new Chair and their Committee is working on a budget that will cover the cost of insurance. A Winter Solstice dinner was held in June and they also organised a welcome dinner for their new minister, who arrived in August.

Brisbane UUF held their Annual Retreat on Springbrook Mountain in July. They now have a UU chaplain in the US Navy, currently living in Toowoomba (about 90 minutes' drive from Brisbane) leading occasional services. Also, an academic couple from a UU church in Houston who are at the University of Queensland for a few months have been attending, as well as some other visitors. They have also just finished raising funds for another 12 months education fees for a Unitarian boy in the Philippines from Negros Island – he is doing agricultural engineering and received a number of University prizes for his excellent results last year.

Christchurch UUs are continuing with their monthly meetings. They celebrated Matariki (a Maori spring festival) and Midwinter with a sunrise gathering on 29 June at the beach with other faith groups and interested parties. They also had a visit from Rev. Myrna Michell of Levin in the UK (now living in Wellington), who led a service with the theme: 'Peace and War: Is it Black and White?', in which she shared music, reflections and information on peacemaking organisations. In July, they had a combined meeting with a group called 'The Virtues Project'.

Melbourne UC's 'Peoples Audit' has generated a great deal of interest and publicity. That document has now been circulated to other groups. A concert in June raised close to \$900 for the Save the Children Fund. They are working with the Pax Christi peace group to create an alternative celebration of the centenary of Gallipoli next year – four seminars over the twelve months, the first of which will be held at MUC.

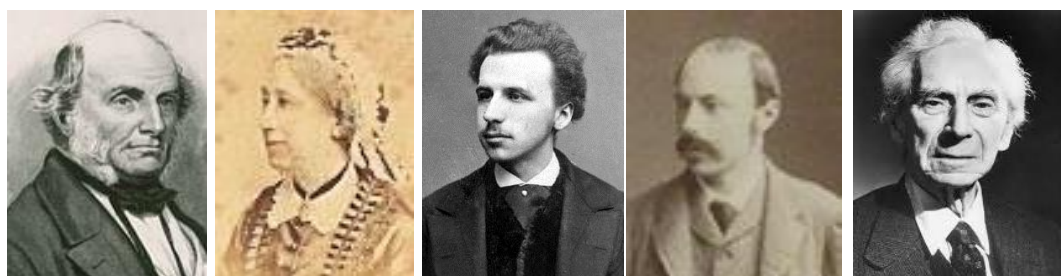
Perth Unitarians had a Winter Solstice dinner and a movie-and-lunch in July to raise funds for Oxfam. A recent talk by Dr. Richard Smith on 'Eco-Theology' (see next issue) generated great interest. (He is from the Uniting Church and currently working with indigenous people in the northwestern Kimberly region.) They had their AGM on 03 August and their Annual Retreat was held later in that month at the Benedictine Monastery in New Norica.

Spirit of Life UF continue to have talks by congregation members, including a PhD student, Morandir Armson, who usually speaks on aspects of other religions. Another young member, Martin Horlacher, has introduced them to 'Singularitarianism' and 'Trans-Humanism'. They also had a visit from their founding president, Candace Parks, who had returned to the US last year.

Sydney UC recently had another Music Service, this time featuring the works of Baroque composers. They are sending a further \$500 to the Nagbinlod congregation in the Philippines to support a female student who is now in her second year of training to be a primary school teacher. The previous grant assisted both her and a final-year student (also female) who is now teaching at the local school.

## ROLLO AND THE REDOUBTABLE RUSSELLS

By Mike McPhee



Everyone has heard of the great philosopher and mathematician, Bertrand Russell, but how many of us know that he was a member of a Unitarian family that spanned three generations? The Russells were prominent in reform politics throughout that time and Bertrand's uncle, Francis Albert Rollo Russell, died a century ago on 30 March 1914. While he was not the most famous member of that dynasty, this is a suitable occasion to tell their story.

It begins with Lord John Russell (1792–1878), who was a younger son of the Duke of Bedford. He attended the University of Edinburgh and joined the House of Commons in 1813. After his Whig (later to be called Liberal) Party came to power in 1830, he became Home Minister and was instrumental in passing the 1832 Reform Act, which abolished 'rotten boroughs' and replaced them with urban electorates, thereby extending the franchise to an additional 300,000 men.

Lord Russell became Prime Minister in 1846–52, during which time the Factory Act of 1847 reduced the daily working hours of women and children; also, the Public Health Act of 1848 initiated a great improvement in urban sanitation. This was a period of unstable minority governments and he was appointed Foreign Secretary twice even while he was Leader of the Opposition. He became Prime Minister again in 1865–66 but again could not get most of his progressive measures through the Parliament. By that time, he had been made Earl Russell and moved to the House of Lords.

While he was always a 'broad Anglican', Lord Russell had promoted religious tolerance bills from early in his political career. He spearheaded the repeal of the Test Acts in 1828 and again in 1863, which removed restrictions on Unitarians and other Protestant Dissenters; also the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829 and the Jewish Relief Act of 1858, which took him ten years of proposals to get through. Of particular importance was the Dissenter's Chapel Bill of 1844, which enabled Unitarians to establish their title to chapels and trust funds, long in their possession, against the claims of more orthodox Dissenters.

Lord Russell's first wife died three years after they were married, leaving him with two young daughters. His second wife was Lady Frances Elliot Russell (1814–98), whose children were John, George Gilbert William, the aforementioned Francis Albert Rollo and Mary Augusta. She was more radical than her husband, in that she opposed Britain's imperialist wars, supported Irish Home Rule, advocated the abolition of the House of Lords and believed that religion should not be taught in tax-supported schools. She read the works of James Martineau and his American successor, William Ellery Channing, and was a friend of the Unitarian writers, Charles Dickens, James Russell Lowell and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and became a Unitarian in 1884. Although her husband was never a Unitarian, he regularly attended Martineau's services in London between 1859 and 1873. In 1878, a delegation of Dissenters, including two Unitarians, presented him with an address commemorating "his life long advocacy of religious freedom".

Their eldest son, John (1842–76), became Viscount Amberley when Lord Russell was made an Earl. He attended the University of Edinburgh and Trinity College, Cambridge, and declared himself a Deist in 1863. The next year, he began work on a book entitled *An Analysis of Religious Belief*, and married Katharine Louisa Stanley, the daughter of Lord Stanley of Alderley. Their three children were John Francis, Rachel Lucretia and Bertrand Arthur William. A protégé of John Stuart Mill, he was elected to Parliament in 1866 but only lasted two years due to his radical views on women's suffrage and birth control. He returned to researching and writing his book, which came out in instalments over ten years. After his early death, his mother edited and published the finished product. His wife died in 1874, so the older Russells took custody of their children.

Now we come to Rollo Russell (1849–1914), who had the distinction of being the last child born to a ruling prime minister in office until 2000. He graduated from Oxford in 1873 and worked in the Foreign Office for a number of years. He then wrote a meteorological paper on the global effects of the 1883 explosion of Krakatoa, in which work he involved his young nephew, Bertrand, also introducing him to many eminent scientists and philosophers. Rollo and his mother sat on the committee that founded the Unitarian Christian Church in Richmond, Surrey, in 1888. He later wrote hymns and modern psalms with a scientific flavour that were used in both British and American hymnals, and a tract entitled *Religion and Life*.

Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) was brought up as a Unitarian and his grandmother hoped he would become a minister. However, he abandoned even liberal Christianity at the age of fifteen and ceased attending church three years later. He studied mathematics and philosophy at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1890–93 and, after a brief period of teaching and writing on economics, returned to Trinity for post-graduate study. He wrote *The Principles of Mathematics* in 1903, became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1908, and then produced the three-volume *Principia Mathematica* with Alfred North Whitehead in 1910–13. During that time, he had been lecturing at Cambridge, where he had as his PhD student the Austrian logician, Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose famous *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was published in 1922.

During World War I, Russell's active pacifism resulted in a charge under the Defence of the Realm Act, for which he was dismissed from Cambridge. In 1918, he was actually sentenced to six months' imprisonment for speaking publicly against the war, during which time he wrote *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*. In the 1920s, he toured Russia and China, founded an experimental school with his second wife, Dora Black, and supported his family by writing popular books on physics, ethics and education. In 1931, he became the third Earl Russell when his older brother died.

In the late 1930s, Russell taught at the University of Chicago and UCLA before being appointed to the City College of New York in 1940. That posting was annulled by a court judgement that he was 'morally unfit', based on his 1929 book, *Marriage and Morals*. This was protested by the Unitarian professor, John Dewey, Albert Einstein and other intellectuals, but to no avail. He then joined the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, at which he gave a series of public lectures on philosophy. He returned to Cambridge in 1944 and collated his lectures in his most famous book, *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945). He was awarded a royal Order of Merit in 1949 and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950.

Russell was active in anti-war movements for the rest of his life, serving another term in Brixton Prison for 'breach of the peace' at the age of 89, after an anti-nuclear demonstration in London in 1961. (Just for a week, that time, and only because he wouldn't promise not to re-offend.) He published his autobiography in three parts during 1967–69 (see next page) and, when he died a year later, his body was cremated on at Colwyn Bay, near his home in Wales, with no religious ceremony.

While Russell never called himself a Unitarian as an adult, his involvement with the British Humanist Association made him an exemplar for modern Unitarians in the UK and elsewhere. Further, his conceptions of mathematics and philosophy kept changing during the course of his life, for which reason his name is not associated with any single school of thought.

Russell was married four times and had three children, John Conrad (1921–87), Katharine Jane (1923 – ) and Conrad Sebastian Robert (1937–2004). The older son had a distinguished career with the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation and, when he became the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Russell, sat in the House of Lords. The daughter co-founded the Bertrand Russell Society and published a book about her father in 1975.

Conrad Russell studied history at Oxford and spent his whole life lecturing at universities in London, as well as at Yale University. He wrote four books on 17<sup>th</sup> Century England, particularly the Civil Wars, between 1971 and 1991. After an unsuccessful attempt to enter the House of Commons in 1966, he eventually took his brother's seat in the House of Lords. In 1999, a reform bill limited the number of hereditary peers in the House to 92 and he was at the top of the list of those elected. Yet, like his great-grandmother, he wanted the House of Lords to be abolished and replaced with an elected Senate.

[Just with the conversion of Lady Russell, there was a feature article on James Martineau in the Spring 2013 issue, which is archived on the ANZUUA website. If anyone is curious about William Ellery Channing and her other associates, a good source of information on famous Unitarians and Universalists is the Dictionary of UU Biography ([www.uudb.org](http://www.uudb.org)).]

## WHAT I HAVE LIVED FOR

Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a great ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair.

I have sought love, first, because it brings ecstasy – ecstasy so great that I would often have sacrificed all the rest of life for a few hours of this joy. I have sought it, next, because it relieves loneliness--that terrible loneliness in which one shivering consciousness looks over the rim of the world into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss. I have sought it finally, because in the union of love I have seen, in a mystic miniature, the prefiguring vision of the heaven that saints and poets have imagined. This is what I sought, and though it might seem too good for human life, this is what – at last – I have found.

With equal passion I have sought knowledge. I have wished to understand the hearts of men. I have wished to know why the stars shine. And I have tried to apprehend the Pythagorean power by which number holds sway above the flux. A little of this, but not much, I have achieved.

Love and knowledge, so far as they were possible, led upward toward the heavens. But always pity brought me back to earth. Echoes of cries of pain reverberate in my heart. Children in famine, victims tortured by oppressors, helpless old people a burden to their sons, and the whole world of loneliness, poverty, and pain make a mockery of what human life should be. I long to alleviate this evil, but I cannot, and I too suffer.

This has been my life. I have found it worth living, and would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me.

[Preface to The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell.]

## WE HAVE IGNITION!



The new ANZUUA website is up-and-running and everyone should see it immediately on: [www.anzuua.org](http://www.anzuua.org) (note the ‘uu’, as a single ‘u’ will take you to the old site). Largely the work of James Hills in Brisbane, it is absolutely *beautiful* and it has many new features, as you will see.

However, this is just a beginning and James asks for more input from all member groups. Ultimately, he hopes that other of our webmasters will have access to the site and be able to add their inputs directly. This website is the world’s window on us, so please send your input and/or ideas to: [james@brisbaneuu.org.au](mailto:james@brisbaneuu.org.au).

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

My thanks, as always, to the various contributors and I already have some material for the December issue. What I really need are shorter articles (i.e., 1–2 pages), as that is why I had to include an additional piece of my own. These can be reports on what member groups are doing or personal opinion pieces – anything, really. So, please release your hidden talents and send your creations to: [michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au](mailto:michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au).