



Quest



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Unitarian Universalist Association**

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THE UNDERGROUND UNITARIANS

Most Unitarians know that our denomination first became known of in Britain in the early 17th Century and that it was proscribed until 1803. But how many of us know how Unitarianism first got there, who its first adherents were, and how it survived despite almost two centuries of illegal status?

The story begins with the expulsion of the Polish Brethren from their homeland in 1658, after a disastrous war with Sweden had rendered all non-Catholics politically suspect. Better known as ‘Socinians’ due to their Italian leader, Faustus Socinus (1509–1604, pictured left), they dispersed to Transylvania, Lithuania, the German states and the Netherlands. A group in Amsterdam set up a printing shop that produced works of Socinian literature in Latin, which were widely read in European academic circles.

Socinianism became known in England when a Latin version of its Catechism was printed in 1609 and dedicated to King James I. While he had put a stop to the execution of heretics, preferring life imprisonment, James did not appreciate the honour and ordered all copies of the Catechism to be burned in 1614. Socinian and other heretical books were also burned routinely during the rest of his reign and that of Charles I.

After the English Civil Wars, the Parliament took on the former powers of the royal court to try people accused of crimes against the state, which included heresy. The Gatehouse Prison, just outside the Palace of Westminster, had long been used for holding such people and one of its first inmates under the Parliamentary regime was Paul Best, arguably the first English Socinian. Educated at Cambridge and independently wealthy, he travelled extensively in Europe in the 1630s, where he is thought to have encountered Socinianism.

Despite having fought on the Parliamentary side in the Civil Wars, he was charged with anti-Trinitarianism in 1645. While in prison, he wrote a book called *Mysteries Discovered* in 1647 and somehow managed to have the manuscript smuggled out and printed. The books were seized and burned, and Best was sentenced to death, only to be reprieved and released at Oliver Cromwell’s request (or so it is believed).

While he was in the Gatehouse, he may have met and influenced the man regarded as ‘the father of English Unitarianism’. John Biddle was born in 1615 (25 years after Best) and, despite humble origins, received a scholarship to Oxford and graduated with a Master of Arts degree in 1641. Having specialised in Ancient Greek, Biddle translated the ancient Scriptures and came to similar conclusions as Servetus had about the Trinity. He then wrote a manuscript in 1644 called *Twelve Arguments Drawn Out of the Scripture*, for which he was jailed in his native Gloucester.

Out on bail, he published his book in 1647, all copies of which were burned and he was sent to the Gatehouse Prison, only to be released again and publish three more books. The last of those was an English translation of the Socinian Catechism in 1652, which was also burned and he was imprisoned again. He was soon released, along with many other religious prisoners, under Cromwell's Act of Oblivion which, together with his 1653 'Instrument of Government', allowed a surprising degree of latitude to Nonconformists. (It's a great pity that no pictures of Best or Biddle are known to exist.)

Biddle was even able to establish a Socinian conventicle in London, which was not at all popular with the local ministers. His next book in 1654 was also burned and he was sentenced to six months in prison. On his release, he was charged again by the Parliament and Cromwell exiled him to the Scilly Isles for three years to get him out of harm's way. Ironically, the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 made things worse for Non-conformists and Biddle was charged in 1662 for holding services in his home. Unable to pay the huge fine of £100, he was sent to prison and died from illness a short time later.

The Parliament elected in 1661 was solidly Royalist and pro-Anglican, so there was a fierce backlash against all other denominations. The Corporations Act of that year restricted public office to Anglicans and the Act of Uniformity of 1662 required all Church of England ministers to base their services on the Book of Common Prayer. This led to a purge known as the Great Ejection, in which some 2000 ministers were forced to resign their offices because they couldn't accept such strict requirements.

While some of these men were noted theologians and writers, the only Socinian at the time was John Cooper of Gloucestershire, a disciple of John Biddle. Nevertheless, there are Unitarian churches today whose first minister was an ejectee and so mark 1662 as their foundation date. Others date themselves from 1672, when Charles II granted temporary licences to Nonconformist ministers in an endeavour to shore up his flagging popularity.

Still others were founded after the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, when King James II was overthrown and replaced by William III and Mary II (pictured top centre). They lost no time in assenting to the Toleration Act in 1689, which granted religious freedom to all Protestants who took oaths of allegiance to the monarchy and acknowledged the supremacy of the Church of England. However, Unitarians and Catholics were not covered by that Act and would have to wait until the 1800s for their rights to be recognised.

Thus, while no Unitarian churches were permitted at this time and most adherents hid themselves amongst the Independent churches, it was legal to publish books about Socinian and related doctrines. Stephen Nye published *A Brief History of the Unitarians, also called Socinians* in 1687, funded by Thomas Firmin, a philanthropist who had known John Biddle and raised funds for the Polish exiles in 1662.

This set off a debate, known as the 'First Socinian Controversy', between the Latitudinarian ('broad church') and orthodox factions of the Church of England. Ironically, certain staunch Trinitarians did their cause more harm than good, to the point that one of them was accused of heresy by the Council of Oxford University. That debate lasted from 1690 to 1695, with many books and papers being published by both sides, until it was closed down by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Tenison (pictured top right).

Just to be clear, the argument was only about whether the Unitarians were heretical enough to merit exclusion under the Toleration Act. Thus, the Unitarians lost that round but they did gain a much higher profile in religious and academic circles. Two legendary scholars, Isaac Newton and John Locke, were favourably disposed toward Unitarianism and drew inspiration from it in their work, though it would have cost them their university positions if they had said so openly. Instead, they corresponded (and sometimes met) with Unitarian leaders in Lithuania, Prussia and the Netherlands.

[This is an extract from a larger project, based on three PowerPoint presentations, that traces the history of our denomination in the UK and Continental Europe from the 15th Century to the present. Part 1 is about the first Unitarians in Transylvania and Poland, and how their ideas arrived in England to face a hostile reception from the authorities. Part 2 deals with the history of Unitarianism in the UK and Ireland from 1700 onward, most notably its legalisation in 1803 and the process that led to the foundation of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. Part 3 covers the same period in Continental Europe, where proto-Unitarian groups were formed in a number of countries and international connections came to the fore.

The integrated version will constitute an illustrated history that will hopefully be of use in our region as an educational resource. More from that work will appear in future issues.]



ICUU NEWS

New Executive Director

Essex 2.0

Conferences



[From the President, Dávid Gyerő:]

“On April 19, 2016 the Executive Committee of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) has confirmed the appointment of the Rev. Sara Ascher as the new Interim Executive Director of the organization. She will start her new service in August, taking over the position from the current Executive Director, Rev. Steve Dick, retiring at the end of the year.

Sara has been a Unitarian Universalist her entire life. After graduating from Andover Newton Theological School in 2000 with her Masters of Divinity, she spent the next 16 years serving Unitarian Universalist congregations in the United States. She has been an active volunteer for the ICUU for the past five years. During that time, she has come to understand that Unitarian Universalism doesn't look the same around the world and that diversity only makes our varied, multifaceted faith richer, more powerful and more exciting.

ICUU is in the midst of a transition period and we are grateful for the promising new opportunities that this change will bring. As we just celebrated the 20th anniversary of its service, we are engaged in reshaping the vision, reforming our governance, strengthening our financial base with new tools and collaborative exchanges.

The Executive Committee recognizes that adaptive change is needed in order for ICUU to provide the level of service required for the next 20 years. A key factor for this future development will be the leadership of the new Executive Director. We are committed to work together for developing ICUU into a new agency, fulfilling its noble mission.”

[Also from the ICUU:]

“From the 8th–11th of March a focus group Essex 2.0 met in Auburndale, Massachusetts, to review where the ICUU has come in the past 20 years from its inception in 1996. A group of international Unitarians discussed the achievements, activities and future plans for the organisation. A summary of the findings will be circulated to all member groups and, following that, a webinar is planned prior to the Council Meeting so that all member groups can discuss and question the strategic direction for the ICUU and its members. The strategic plans for the next five years will be a topic brought up in the 2016 Council meeting and all members will have the opportunity to vote on this.”

Unfortunately for anyone wishing to attend them, the annual conferences in the UK and Canada have already transpired. The Annual Meetings of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches took place in Birmingham from 30 March to 02 April, with the Very Reverend Peter Francis, Anglican author and BBC commentator, delivering the John Relly Lecture and Tehmina Kazi, Director of British Muslims for Secular Democracy as the Keynote Speaker.

The National Conference of the Canadian Unitarian Council was held on 20–22 May at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, with the theme ‘Bolder Ways of Being’. It had an intergenerational program with events for children, youth and adults. In future, Annual General Meetings for business purposes will continue but conferences will take place every two years.

However, there is just enough time to register for the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio, on 22–26 June. This year's theme is ‘Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect’ and there will be literally hundreds of workshops, lectures, performances, and worship services taking place. For more details, please see: <http://www.uua.org/ga>.

Closer to home, the International Association of Liberal Religious Women (a member of the International Association for Religious Freedom) is conducting a tour of Malaysian religious cultures in Kuala Lumpur from 31 July to 08 August. In addition to visiting a range of religious centres, participants will tour famous landmarks in the capital and historic sites in Malacca. See: <http://www.ialrw.org/en/activities-and-projects/>.

HUMAN IMPACTS ON EARTH

By Dr. Richard Smith

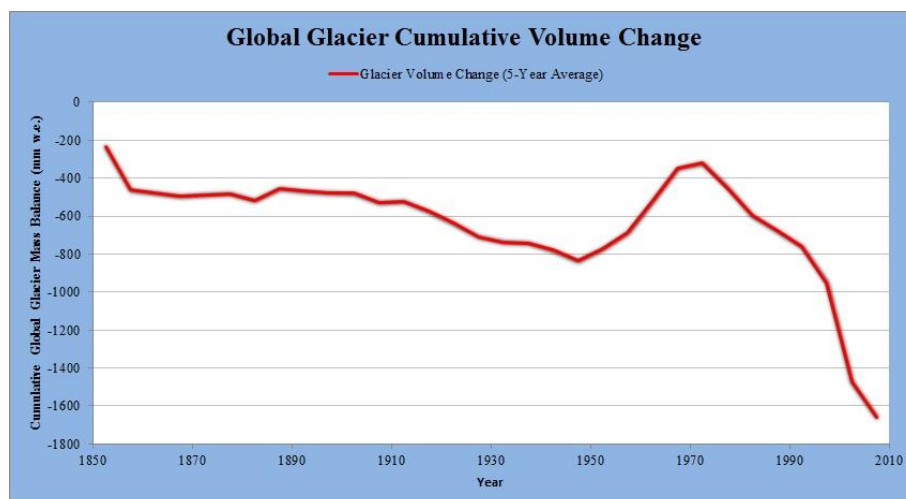
[Abstracted from a presentation to the Perth Unitarians on 06 September 2015.]

The launch of Earth-observing satellites in the 1970s enabled scientists to view our planet in a way never before possible. Multi-spectral sensors now image the whole Earth every day in the ultraviolet, visible, near-infrared, thermal and microwave areas of the electromagnetic spectrum, revealing many human impacts. The cumulative effect is the global warming of the atmosphere, land and oceans, bringing about other far-ranging impacts.

An “image is worth a thousand words”, therefore satellite images can communicate a complex subject. For people in Perth, an obvious human impact visible from satellite is the extensive deforestation in our lifetime due to urbanisation, mining and agriculture in southwestern Australia. The consequences of this extensive loss of trees are salinization, erosion, reduced water quality, loss of wetlands, extinction of many native species and reduced cloud formation.

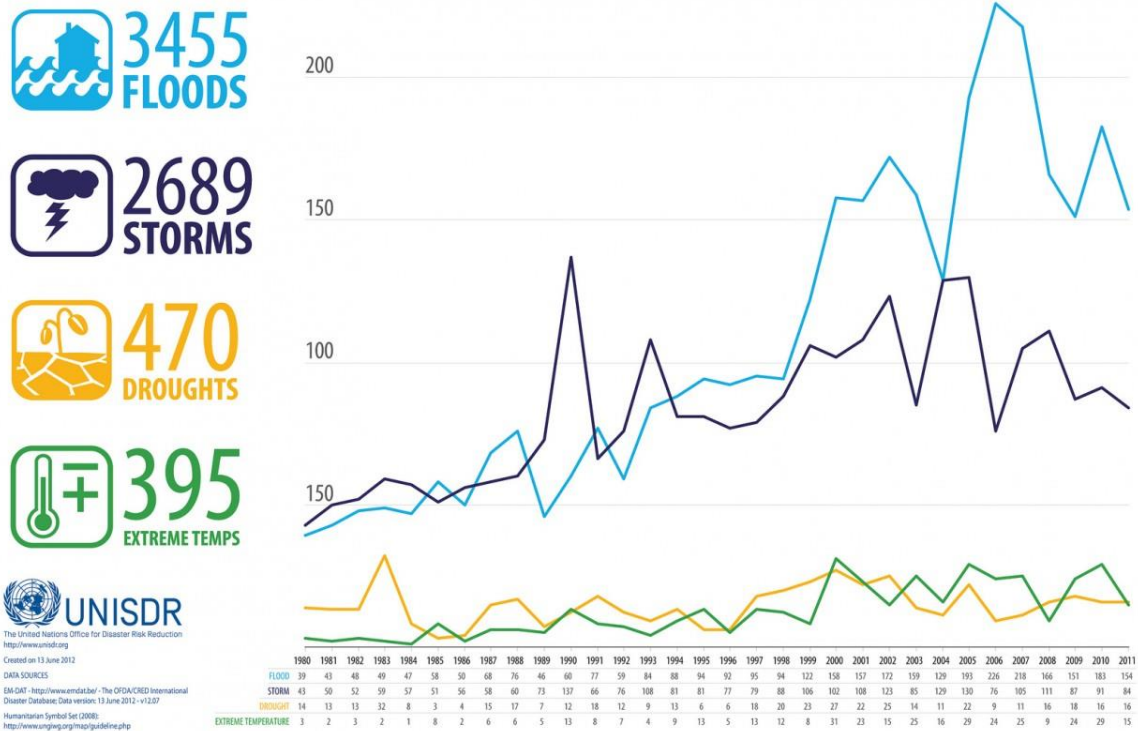


Reduced cloud formation correlates with the reduction in rainfall over the last 30 years, causing empty dams and movement of the cropping belt westwards. Deforestation is a major contributor to the rise in atmospheric CO₂, a major greenhouse gas which persists in the atmosphere for hundreds of years, locking in global warming for generations to come. For the whole globe, it is estimated that 46% of all trees have been cleared and that, at current rates of 15 billion trees a year, all trees will be effectively gone in 200 years.



Imagery from polar orbiting satellites reveals the declining coverage of Arctic, Antarctic and glacier ice. When all ice has been melted in probably 1000 years, estimated sea levels will have risen 67 meters, nearly the height of the Rottneest Lighthouse. The thawing of the permafrost in Siberia is resulting in huge craters appearing from the explosive release of methane gas, which is also a potent greenhouse gas. The rising CO₂ is also making the oceans increasingly acidic which with global warming is progressively killing the coral reefs of the world.

Number of Climate-related Disasters Around the World (1980-2011)



Imagery from thermal sensors reveals sea surface temperatures that determine sea currents and the intensifying El Niño-La Niña effect which brings droughts and then flooding rains to eastern Australia. These sensors also detect bush fires and their increase in extent and intensity with the changing climate.

In the 20th Century, the human population of the world quadrupled and the urban component increased by a factor of 13. Industrial production rose by a factor of 40; energy use by 16; coal production by 7; and CO₂ emissions by 17. Water use increased by a factor of 8; irrigated area by 5; and the marine fish catch by 35. Meanwhile, forests declined by 20% and 1% of all species were lost. (From: J.R. McNeill (2000), *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World*)

Driving these human impacts is a civilisation built on:

- An abundant supply of cheap fossil fuel energy,
- Rapid growth in population for the supply of and demand for consumer products,
- A grossly unequal distribution of wealth to maintain the growth in supply and demand,
- Economic health dependant on continuous growth of population and consumption,
- Faith that the supply of natural resources is unlimited,
- Trust that nature can absorb any and all of our pollutants,
- A Stable Climate.

(From: George A. Seielstad (2012), *Dawn of the Anthropocene – Humanity's Defining Moment.*)

Time is fast running out before it becomes too late to stop runaway climate change. We have the scientific knowledge but, with the ease that our human impacts can be passed onto the poor and future generations, we have yet to discover the moral will to change affluent lifestyles and energy sources from fossil to the renewables of wind, solar and geothermal – a classic failure of the free market system of capitalism, where our human impacts are not priced into the system.

If everybody in the world lived like us, we would need four Planet Earths – so how is it that we live the way we do? By stealing from the poor (unequal distribution of wealth) and by stealing from future generations (capacity of the atmosphere to absorb excess CO₂).

[Dr. Richard Smith has worked in farm economics, agronomy, irrigation science and studying the Earth from space. Now retired, he works on Aboriginal community development in the West Kimberley and chairs the All Saints Floreat Uniting Church Mission and Outreach Task Group and the WA Progressive Network.]

ANZUUA NEWS

It has been decided to hold meetings of the ANZUUA Council quarterly, as provided for in the Constitution. These meetings will be in February, May, August and November, though member groups are encouraged to send monthly or bi-monthly reports, which will be circulated. Skype has proved to be an unsatisfactory medium for the Council meetings, so Zoom will be used from now on.

After further investigation, it has been found that the Australian Council of Churches and its state branches do not accept Jewish or Muslim organisations as members. Therefore, it is not recommended that ANZUUA or its member groups seek affiliation.

Pauline Rooney of Adelaide and our Treasurer, Henri Van Roon of Auckland will be attending the ICUU Council Meeting and Conference in The Netherlands in July. This will be Pauline's last conference, as she has spent eight years on the ICUU's Executive Council.

Videos of the proceedings of the 2015 ANZUUA Conference will be uploaded to the Melbourne UC's website (www.melbourneunitarian.org) very soon.

Renee Hills in Brisbane continues to work on plans to bring the OWL (Our Whole Lives) Sexuality Education program to Australia and New Zealand. She recently had a Zoom meeting with OWL Program Associate, Melanie Davis, in the US.

An email has been received from Claudia Espinal of the UUA's Meadville Lombard Theological College in Chicago, inviting lay leaders and ministers to participate in the next U/U Global Conference in January 2017. This leadership training program is run in conjunction with the UUA International Office and grants are available to cover tuition, books, food, accommodation and 50% of the airfare. The program starts with preparatory online work commencing this September and follow-up mentoring until May next year. It is hoped that ANZUUA will be able to nominate someone to this unique opportunity.

Closer to home, we now have Kim Banz from the US living in Brisbane for the next six months with her sister, who is a resident here. Kim is a graduate of the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in her native Minnesota and is now a candidate for the UUA ministry. She has completed a Chaplain Residency of one year in a hospital and also done a part-time internship with a local UU church. She can become a fully ordained minister once she has completed a full-time internship. Kim has also been an organic farmer in her time, which is what she and her sister are currently working on.

Kim has already led services in Brisbane and Adelaide (see below) and she is expected to address the First UU Fellowship of Melbourne in September. She will be pleased to address any other group that invites her and will cover her expenses; also to conduct workshops for them.

REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS

Adelaide UC had a series of three addresses by Rev. Rob MacPherson in February, titled 'How Do You UU?' Part 1 was 'Knitting the Beloved Community' (about the work of their rug makers); Part 2 was 'Unitarian Fundamentalisms' (about the difference between a creed and a covenant); and Part 3 was 'Living the Questions'.

On 10 April, Kim Banz from the USA gave a very personal and heartfelt address on 'Return from Exile' and introduced them to some gospel-style African-American songs. Rev. MacPherson commenced another three-part series on 'InclUUusivity', which deals with what it means to be a member, or simply an attendee, at their services. On 17 April, everyone had been encouraged to invite friends or relatives to attend Part 2, 'What You Love, You Share', so there was a large attendance and many new faces that they hope to see again.

During May, Rev. MacPherson's theme was the interaction between religion and politics. On 01 May, he spoke about how blue-chip investment funds are involved with making a profit from pokies (unethical investment). That service was followed by a screening of the documentary, *Ka-Ching!*.

On 15 May, the Shady Grove congregation held a '50s Party in the hostel as part of the SA History Month, complete with rock and roll, jive, frilly aprons, morning and afternoon tea.

Auckland UC are very happy with their new 'top-of-the art' sound system, which did not come cheap. All the indicators – attendance, member involvement and finances are growing notably, and they are now seeking further expansion of the Social Justice Committee. They recently had a gala fundraising party with 70 people in attendance, which was a good social community event for developing commitments and relationships. Their Adult Religious Education group's current topic is 'Saving Jesus from Christianity'.

Brisbane UUF are delighted to welcome Kim Banz to their congregation and have engaged her for at least four services, as well as to lead their Annual Retreat in July. Two of those services have already taken place and they have enjoyed the stimulation and professionalism of her presentations.

An evening function was organised in April by a UU member from Arizona, titled: *What is UU? Dinner, Discussion and Discovery*. This was run as Chalice Circle and the well-researched and varied information on UUs was appreciated by all who attended. They hope to offer similar discussions on a monthly basis. Their Mother's Day service, conducted by UU minister Bob Hill, brought two new visitors from the Gold Coast.

They continue to have several new faces at most services recently and receive regular requests for information through the website. It seems that there is increased interest in UU in Brisbane at present, as BUUF have now been invited to do a presentation for the Brisbane CBD branch of Sea of Faith in Australia.

UUs of Christchurch have decided to change their morning meeting time to 11 a.m. and to reduce their meetings to once a month, to be followed by a shared lunch. This will make it possible for a facilitator to change the format and incorporate the meal into the meeting, which could be appropriate for special occasions such as the Winter Solstice. The theme of their meeting in May will be 'Gratitude Practices'.

The First Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Melbourne now have a front room at the Multicultural Hub for their meetings and the afternoon service time enables them to have lunch together beforehand. Their Facebook page continues to receive hits every week and one or two new visitors join their services. At the February service, their president Mimi Farrar-Dixon spoke on religion in Africa, following her recent trip there.

At their March service, Rev. Gretchen Thomas spoke about her experience of sharing Easter celebrations with a Transylvanian congregation and how it helped her view Easter differently. This led to later discussion of the members' difficulties, ambivalences or comfort with Easter as a 'religious' celebration. Unfortunately, they were not able to join the Palm Sunday Refugee March going on at the same time, so the collection of \$140 was offered as a donation to a refugee action group.

Their April meeting was conducted by congregation member Fiona Lange, speaking on 'Spirituality', in which she drew on material from sermons she found on the Internet, interwoven with her own observations. They had an excellent discussion after the service, sharing their own conceptions of spirituality.

Melbourne UC continue to have their wide variety of speakers – in May, Sr. Brigid Arthur of the Brigidine Sisters told them about her Order's asylum seekers project. In June, Rev. Dr. Ian Smith, CEO of the Victorian Council of Churches, will speak on poverty. Then they will have a visit from the retired academic- turned-minister, Rev. Dr. Ralph Catts, Pastor of the Hull (England) Unitarians. who is here to promote the Findhorn Foundation eco-friendly learning centre in Forres, Scotland.

Their new research paper, entitled *The Blind Men and the Elephant*, has been delayed but it must be released before the federal election. Referring to the Buddhist parable, the document is a 12-page critique of the privatisation of public assets in Australia. The official launch will take place in the church with a well-known identity from their Interfaith friends doing the honours.

Perth Unitarians heard an inspiring presentation in February by Alice Lancaster from the Australian Wildlife Conservancy. The AWC (www.australianwildlife.org) is the largest private owner of land for conservation in Australia, with 23 sanctuaries protecting endangered wildlife across more than 3.15 million acres in iconic regions such as the Kimberley, Cape York, Lake Eyre and the Top End. Some of their members later went on an excursion to the AWC's Karakamia Wildlife Sanctuary, 52 km east of Perth, for a guided tour at sunset, where they saw bandicoots, quolls, malas, wallabies, rock rats and frogs among the trees and bushes. The AWC is also conducting the largest feral cat eradication program in the world, hoping to cull two million of them within the next five years.

(Continued on p. 16.)

POLLUTION



If you visit American city,
You will find it very pretty.
Just two things of which you must beware:
Don't drink the water and don't breathe the air!

Pollution, pollution!
They got smog and sewage and mud.
Turn on your tap
And get hot and cold running crud!

See the halibuts and the sturgeons
Being wiped out by detergeons.¹
Fish gotta swim and birds gotta fly,
But they don't last long if they try.

Pollution, pollution!
You can use the latest toothpaste,
And then rinse your mouth
With industrial waste.

Just go out for a breath of air
And you'll be ready for Medicare.
The city streets are really quite a thrill –
If the hoods don't get you, the monoxide will.

Pollution, pollution!
Wear a gas mask and a veil.
Then you can breathe,
Long as you don't inhale!

Lots of things there that you can drink,
But stay away from the kitchen sink!
The breakfast garbage that you throw into the Bay
They drink at lunch in San Jose.²

So go to the city,
See the crazy people there.
Like lambs to the slaughter,
They're drinking the water
And breathing [cough] the air!

Tom Lehrer (1965?)

¹ This is a characteristic non-rhyme that Lehrer frequently employed.

² References to the San Francisco area – the city is named after St. Francis of Assisi (see next page).

Tom Lehrer (1928 –) is definitely one of the funniest songwriters of our times, though that was never his true calling and most of his songs were written and recorded in the 1950s and '60s. Born to a Jewish family in New York City, he studied piano in his youth and took to writing comic songs while pursuing a degree in mathematics at Harvard, which he somehow completed at the age of 19. He produced three albums between 1953 and 1964, while still working at universities and research institutes until retirement in 2001. (You can hear the song on YouTube (www.youtube.com) just by searching the title.)

It is not known when this song was written but it first appeared in the album, *That Was the Year That Was*, produced by Reprise Records in 1965. It may surprise you to learn that Lehrer actually recorded an album during a tour here in 1960, titled *Tom Lehrer Discovers Australia (And Vice Versa)*.

CANTICLE OF THE SUN

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord,
all praise is Yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing.
To You, alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and You give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendour!
Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars;
in the heavens You have made them bright, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
and clouds and storms, and all the weather,
through which You give Your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water;
she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom You brighten the night.
He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth,
who feeds us and rules us,
and produces various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of You;
through those who endure sickness and trial.
Happy those who endure in peace,
for by You, Most High, they will be crowned.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Death,
from whose embrace no living person can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Happy those she finds doing Your most holy will.
The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks,
and serve Him with great humility.



St. Francis of Assisi

The reason for this selection will be seen on pp. 14/15. Also known as the *Canticle of the Creatures* or *Laudes Creaturarum* (Praise of the Creatures), this hymn was originally written in the Umbrian dialect. Saint Francis is said to have composed most of it in late 1224 while recovering from an illness. According to tradition, the it was first sung in its entirety by Francis and two of his original companions on his deathbed, the final verse praising 'Sister Death' having been added only a few minutes before.

The song is better known as 'All Creatures of Our God and King', which a Church of England rector, William H. Draper, paraphrased and set to the tune of a 17th Century German hymn some time between 1899 and 1919. Prior to that, the Hungarian composer, Franz Liszt, had written pieces based on the original for solo piano and orchestra. A later translation by the British poet, Matthew Arnold, was set to music for chorus and orchestra in 1945 by the American composer, Leo Sowerby, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music the next year. These versions and many others can be found on YouTube (www.youtube.com).

MORE TRAVELS WITH RENEE

By Renee Hills

[Back by popular request, here are some more extracts from the weblog covering James and Renee's tour of Chile, Peru and Bolivia in conjunction with the Gathering of International Women's Convocation last year. The full story of the latter was covered in the last issue, along with their visits to Machu Pichu and the salt flats of Salar de Uyuni; however, the weblog is: <http://www.travelpod.com/travel-blog/rhills/2/tpod.html>.]

The Floating Islands (04 November 2015)

We went out with a group we booked at the bus terminal the day before. The launch left Puno at the northern end of Lake Titicaca and approached the reeds about 5 km off shore. There seems to be one main canal through the reeds and soon we could see the roofs of the buildings on the floating islands – 160 islands, according to our guide. We went first to a small one where a family group is housed and they have things set up for tourists, though not too much.

There is an element of voyeurism about being a tourist and seeing people with such a unique lifestyle. However they earn tourist sols (the currency) from these visits, so I guess that makes up for it a bit. These people speak Quechua and the children learn Spanish at school. Their original language was lost 500 years ago when the Spanish forbade the use of it. There is a kindergarten and primary school on the second island we visited.

At the first island, our guide with the assistance of the chief of the group showed us how the islands are built. During the rainy season from December to February, the lake level rises significantly and with some wave action the reeds and their root bed comes away from the bottom of the lake. The root bed is light and dense. It has to be collected, tied together until it is a meter thick and is used as the base for long green reeds placed in two layers. Extra layers are added where the houses are going to go. Fresh reeds have to be added to the top once a month in the dry season and once a week in the rainy season. The house walls and roofs are also made of thatched reeds, although there are a few iron roofs now, also solar panels to power electric lights in the houses.



After the demonstration we were each taken into a house by one of the women. The one we saw was tiny, enough room for a double bed and a single bed for their daughter, who was at school. During the dry season, they cook outside in clay pots placed on a large stone, as they have to be careful not to set the reeds on fire! In the rainy season, they cook inside. They fish (there are trout and kingfish in the lake); they also eat the reeds – at the base is a white fleshy part which is quite nutritious – and every week now they go over to Puno to buy produce at the market. In the old days, they traded for other food.

We were then rowed across a stretch of water in a reed twin-hulled boat after three ladies serenaded us farewell. On the second island, we did not have access to much. There was a 'restaurant' and another stall selling scarves, etc., and some other structures for sitting in. We climbed aboard our launch and motored slowly back to Puno dock. There were only five of us on the tour, so James felt we got excellent value and we certainly had a glimpse of a totally different way of life!

Back in the main square, there were massed brass bands on the cathedral steps playing loudly and not always in tune. We watched from the square, where the midday sun grew hotter and hotter, and finally took refuge on the verandah of a restaurant overlooking the square. The food was great and the view fantastic.

After the bands stopped playing, they marched off away from the square so, after lunch, we tried to follow them. We ended up in a poorer area where ordinary folk obviously buy their food and other goods. We were looking for the dance performances we'd heard would happen later in the day. Finally we walked back to the square and learned from a tourist information office that the performance was to start at 3 p.m. down near the lake where we'd caught the boat in the morning. We took a taxi down, found a spot on a wide thoroughfare that was becoming lined with locals on both sides and then we waited and waited for things to start. It seems one always has to wait here!

It was worth it – although there were often long gaps between the groups, they were absolutely spectacular and so many of them! Many different cultural groups with slightly different dress were all moving down the street with the same step and twirl, each accompanied by a brass band, it seemed. They must have dozens of brass bands.



It was Puno Week, a festival that coincides with the Day of the Dead celebrations and also commemorates the legendary Manco Capac, the Inca who surfaced from Lake Titicaca to found the Incan Empire. It was a feat of endurance for some, as the way was long and they were meant to go to the town square – too far for us to walk back! Many of the traditional dancers were quite old and mostly women. The most spectacular was the last, when the colourful, fearsome masked dancers leaped and pranced past.

Puno to Cuzco (05 November 2015)

Up early to catch a BusTuristico tour to Cusco. Who needs sleep anyway? Our hotel manager told James this morning that, at high altitude, one does not sleep well. Cusco is a bit lower altitude (3,400 metres), so hoping for better sleep on our two nights there.

This day tour is fantastic. It's so interesting to see the Peruvian countryside, many more open spaces than what we saw in Bolivia, so the farming looks more prosperous. Still, there's not much evidence of large-scale farming. We still see small herds of livestock, sheep mainly with a shepherd, often a woman with her coloured shawl backpack, in a relatively empty landscape.

Our tour guide is fantastic – Marita comes from a family in the area we are driving through. We just stopped at Pucara where an ancient Incan temple had been destroyed by the Spanish. She took us to a small museum with some retrieved artefacts and she explained the meaning of the stone carvings and ceramic vessels.

I've learnt a few surprising details. We were not allowed to photograph inside the museum but we saw a large representation of a catfish and heard about the four elements worshiped by the Incas: water, fire, earth and sun. There is such respect and honour clearly evident in the way she was speaking about it. I don't think she has much time for Christianity as it is practiced in these parts. Her religion goes back the ancient times and she said it had no name.

Also on the carving were presentations of the puma, considered a very powerful energy. The Incas had a system not unlike that from India where fire energy is brought into the body through the sacrum (sacred) - kundalini energy. On this large stone carving with the catfish and water represented, the Incan cross was worked into the symmetry of the piece – it is based on the Southern Cross! The Incans were masters of astronomy. In fact there is a line running at exactly 45 degrees to the Equator across South America where sacred temples were built. Machu Pichu, Pucara, Cusco and Lake Titicaca are all on that line, according to our guide.

In Inca cosmology, Sol (the Sun) is the Father; Earth is the Mother, (Pacha Mama); and we are all their children. We are made up of both. When offerings were made to the Sun on their New Year (June 21 – Winter Solstice), the priest used a specially decorated chalice filled with a liquid made from corn. Marita said the chalice shape was symbolic – the bowl represented the woman and the short stem, the man. The priest made the offering on behalf of brothers and sisters of the Earth. We had noticed that women seem fairly prominent in employment and very visible at market stalls, etc., and yesterday in Puno most of the dancers were women. I wondered if this ancient gender equality holds true today.

Research revealed that women were very important in Incan society, mainly due to religious beliefs and observances where duality and balance was greatly emphasized. Women had distinctly separate, yet complementary, roles in religion, politics, family and economics. Priestesses were honoured and revered. For one month in every year, the Queen and all women held a religious celebration to the Moon goddess. All women's concerns were highlighted and men's were subordinated during this period, usually October, just before the rains. Unfortunately, women today appear to experience significant discrimination and disadvantage. (See: <http://www.yachana.org/teaching/students/webpages/andean2k/conquest/women.html>.)

Marita also spoke about a clay llama vessel in the museum. Llamas were sacred to the Incas, as they were the only beasts of burden available. When the Spanish came, llama symbols were banned, so the leaders cleverly substituted a bull. The Spanish could not argue with that! This was the origin of the *torito*, the cheerful bull figures adorning churches and roofs of houses all around Pucara and in Cusco. Different colours and decorations represent happiness, peace, health, etc. When placed on the roof, it is believed toritos (always in pairs) keep the house safe with a blessing to the Apus, the local mountain god. Often, the bulls are combined with a ladder and a Christian cross to allow easy passage to heaven!

On the first part of the trip, we saw lots of abandoned, adobe homes. Marita said that her grandparents lived in a dwelling like this and that, once they died, no one would live in it again. It would be left to go back to the earth. The next stop was La Raya, for a quick photo of the mountains with remnants of a glacier and, of course, a colourful market of local goods and my first close-up of an alpaca...or was it a llama?



Then on to Siacuani for a lovely buffet lunch in what looked like purpose built facilities, where an Andean flute and guitar musicians provided live entertainment. Out the back there were more alpacas and a lovely view of a waterfall, on a river (we haven't seen many rivers). Some settlements are based around access to underground water. Siacuani is in a green rich valley where many people were out in the fields planting by hand, ready for the rainy season. I saw one tractor and several pairs of bullocks pulling ploughs. Quinoa is grown on higher land; corn, celery, beans and small crops on the lower land. This area looked much more prosperous (houses mostly had iron roofs) and I saw quite a few outhouses.

Raqch'i is a small community in an old volcanic area – lots of stones to build walls and houses. The simple town square was dominated by a plain church and vendors with their colourful wares. James succumbed to the appeal of leather and bought me a beautiful shoulder bag decorated all over with Inca symbols including the Andean cross. We also bought a hand-made natural turquoise necklace.

Marita called us to follow her out of the square. Big surprise! – a massive, mostly adobe, structure on an adobe base, once the centre wall of an Incan temple and part of a major archaeological Inca site (possibly a trading and administrative centre). Named the Temple of Viracocha, supreme creative deity of pre-Incan and Incan times, the enormous, rectangular, two-storey building measured 92 metres by 25.5 metres with the central wall 18 to 20 metres high. There is a row of 11 columns on each side of the central wall. The temple was thought to have had the largest single roof in the Incan Empire before it was destroyed by the Spanish. However, Marita argued that the temple was used for astronomy and sun observations and would not have been roofed. Whatever the use, it is an impressive ruin that has survived earthquakes and weather to pose these puzzling questions centuries later.

Adjoining the temple is a complex of rectangular buildings, possibly used to house priests and administration staff. However, their significance is dwarfed by the collection of 152 perfectly symmetrical round stone *quilqas*, arranged in parallel lines, to the east of the temple. It is thought they were used for storing grains and other goods (corn, quinoa, woven cloth, pottery) and for ceremonial purposes. They are the only storehouses in the empire that were not square-cornered, for reasons unknown.



Our last stop before Cusco was an unassuming village square lined with locals selling cheap colourful wares and the obligatory small church. There were beggars on the church steps and the whole area had a desultory air of poverty. Inside though, was the reason this Church of San Pedro Apostol of Andahuaylillas is sometimes called the Sistine Chapel of South America.

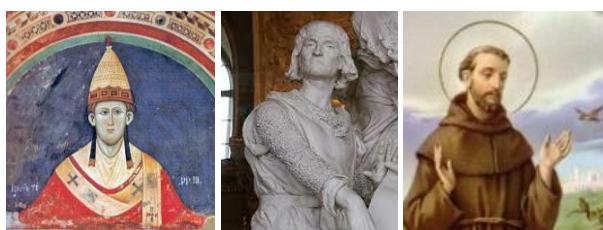
Densely painted murals created by Andean painters in the 17th and 18th centuries were used by the Spanish to teach Christianity and to evangelize the local population. We were not allowed to photograph, but the murals are full of Christian allegories with many indigenous symbols inserted. According to Gauvin Bailey in *The Andean Hybrid Baroque: Convergent Cultures in the Churches of Colonial Peru*, images of native plants, fruit and animals (e.g., llamas instead of camels) are arranged to illustrate the Inca concept of the cosmos. Above the choir, the Annunciation scene shows the Holy Spirit, not as a dove, but as a hole in the wall. The sun's light shining through the hole brings the Inca sun god, Inti, into the scene while symbolizing the Holy Spirit of the Trinity. (<http://www.thehistoryblog.com/archives/21157>)

The murals (recently restored by the World Monument Fund) were intriguing, but what really stunned me was the Baroque main altar, carved from cedar and completely overlaid with gold leaf, silver leaf and Venetian mirrors (and, incidentally, topped by the Sun). Gold leaf is also liberally scattered over hundreds of medallions on the coffered ceiling, made with the pre-Columbian technique known as *kur-kur* that combines cane, straw and mud to create an undulating effect. It is painted in a style heavily influenced by the Islamic art popular in Spain at the time of its construction between 1570 and 1606.

There is so much gold and silver in such a small chapel and so much obvious poverty outside; some solace then to find that entrance fees help to fund a community soup kitchen, library and legal services. (Please see: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/the-sistine-chapel-of-the-andes-18514649/?no-ist=&page=1>.)

POPE INNOCENT III AND THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE

By Mike McPhee



This year marks 800 years since the death of Pope Innocent III on 16 July 1216, which ended one of the most influential papacies in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. In his reign of 18 years, he oversaw a major restoration of papal authority, the Fourth Crusade, the epoch-making Fourth Lateran Council and, of course, the horrific Albigensian Crusade in France.

He was born in 1160/1 as Lotario dei Conti di Segni into a powerful northern Italian family which produced nine Popes; on his mother side, he was also the nephew of Pope Clement III. He received his early education in Rome, then studied theology in Paris and possibly jurisprudence in Bologna. (As we shall see, he certainly had a great interest in canon law.) He returned to Rome in 1181 and ascended through various ecclesiastical offices until he reached the rank of Cardinal-Deacon in 1190. In that capacity, he wrote *De Miseria Humanae Conditionis* (On the Misery of the Human Condition), which was very popular for centuries afterward.

He became Pope Innocent III in 1198, possibly inspired by Innocent II's assertion to Papal authority 50 years earlier. Since the title of Holy Roman Emperor was first bestowed on Otto the Great by Pope John XII in 962, that position had belonged to the King of the Germans – who, in turn, was elected by the rulers of the various German states. While the Emperor was supposed to protect the Papacy and be subordinate to the Pope, the balance of power had shifted back-and-forth over the centuries.

Innocent III was committed to the principle that the Pope, as Christ's Vicar on Earth, was the supreme ruler of Christendom and that the divine right of kings to rule descended from the Papacy. When the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VI died leaving an infant son and two adult contenders for the position of King of the Germans, Innocent intervened on behalf of Otto of Brunswick, while making the young Frederick II his ward for a later succession. He would later influence the politics of Norway, France, Sweden, Bulgaria, Spain and England, even annulling the Magna Carta in return for King John's submission to his authority.

Saladin's conquest of the Holy Land in 1187 had always been a sore point and Innocent had called for a crusade since he first took office. Despite a huge fundraising campaign, including an unprecedented tax on clergy, the forces of the Fourth Crusade arrived in Venice with insufficient money for their transport to Egypt. The Venetian Doge recruited them to sack the Byzantine port-city of Zara (now Zadar in Croatia), ignoring the Pope's order that no Christians be attacked. He excommunicated all of the participants but he had to forgive them in order for the Crusade to continue. The Crusaders then conquered Constantinople, which Innocent didn't even learn about until it was over. This time, he accepted the situation in the hope that it would lead to the reunification of the Western and Eastern Churches. (No such thing happened.)

Religious dissent was another matter that Innocent III took very seriously and he had long been aware of the Albigensian sect (also known as Cathars) in the south of France. In their dualistic theology, 'God' ruled the spiritual realm and 'Satan' had created and commanded the corrupt physical realm. They also believed that the soul was subject to reincarnation until it was purified near death by a ritual known as the *consolamentum*. For all that, the Cathars lived in peace with their Catholic neighbours and were protected by the lords of the region – most notably, Count Raymond VI of Toulouse (pictured top centre), who did not acknowledge the suzerainty of the king of France.

In 1199, Innocent sent two Cistercian friars to convince the Cathars of their errors but that came to nothing. He then sent Legates to dissuade Raymond from protecting the Cathars and to conduct an Inquisition in the southern region. That, too, was not well received and the senior Legate, Pierre de Castelnau was assassinated in 1208, quite possibly by Raymond's order. Innocent excommunicated him on those grounds and asked King Philip II of France to lead a Crusade against Raymond and the Cathars. Thus began a war that lasted for twenty years, the religious purpose of which quickly became secondary to the crusaders' political goals.

Philip left the actual campaign to an Anglo-Norman, Simon de Montfort, who assembled an army of 10,000 men at Lyons in 1209 and marched south. They besieged the town of Béziers, demanding that the Catholics come out and the Cathars surrender. Neither group complied and the entire population was slaughtered – the papal legate in command, Arnaud Amaury, infamously said: *Caedite eos. Novit enim Dominus qui sunt eius.* (Kill them [all]. For the Lord knows those who are His own.)

After that, many towns surrendered and the fortified city of Carcassonne, overflowing with refugees, was taken after a brief siege. The population was forced to leave with just the shirts on their backs (if that much, according to some reports). Yet more towns were taken without a fight until winter brought a temporary halt to the hostilities. The next casualty was the city of Minerve, which surrendered in mid-1210 after a six-week siege and heavy bombardment that destroyed its well. The Cathars there were given the option of converting to Catholicism, which most did, but the 140 who refused were burned at the stake.

Mass burnings of Cathars took place when other towns were captured but Raymond of Toulouse withstood a siege of his city in 1211 and launched a counter-attack that liberated 30 towns. However, even Toulouse was taken in 1215 until Raymond recaptured it in 1217. The war went back-and forth, outliving all of its progenitors, as Innocent III died in 1216 and Philip II in 1223; Simon de Montfort was killed trying to retake Toulouse in 1218; and Raymond VI died in 1222. The sons of Philip, Simon and Raymond continued the war to its end – their names were Louis VIII, Amaury de Montfort and Raymond VII. In the end, Raymond surrendered on terms and the southern region became forever part of France.

Unfortunately, that was not the end of the story for the Cathars who had survived the war. An Inquisition was established in the region in 1234 that operated for well over a century, imposing forced conversion, imprisonment and burning at the stake on the hapless victims. A mountain fortress at Montségur, near the Spanish border, somehow survived until 1244 but, when it was taken after a 10-month siege, 244 adults were burned alive in an enormous pyre at the foot of the castle.

Getting back to Pope Innocent III, one of his better achievements was his recognition of Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone, later to be known as St. Francis of Assisi, in 1209. Francis had only formed his unordained ‘Order of the Lesser Brothers’ in that year and the twelve of them arrived in Rome in their sackcloth robes, asking for an audience. At first, Innocent only agreed to meet them informally and allowed them to be tonsured, while saying they should increase their numbers before they were formally admitted as an Order. It is said that Innocent then had a dream in which Francis was holding up the Basilica of St. John Lateran (then the cathedral of Rome) and decided to endorse the Franciscan Order.

Innocent’s last major action was to convene the Fourth Council of the Lateran in 1215, regarded as the most significant church council of the Late Middle Ages. Because it was an Ecumenical Council, the attendees included 71 patriarchs and metropolitan bishops, 412 bishops, 900 abbots and priors, and the representatives of several monarchs. The agenda called for sweeping reforms in the governance of the church, the stamping out of heresy and the launching of a new Crusade in the Holy Land.

In only a month of sessions, the Council ratified 70 Canons affecting church governance and the conduct of the clergy, confirmed Innocent’s erstwhile ward, Frederick II, as Holy Roman Emperor and commissioned him to lead the Fifth Crusade. In the spring of the next year, Innocent travelled north to reconcile the warring cities of Genoa and Pisa, but he died suddenly in Perugia on 16 July 1216. His body was buried in the cathedral there, where it remained until Pope Leo XIII had it moved to the Lateran in 1891.

Pope Innocent III did not live to see the Fifth Crusade commence or its disastrous ending, though at least the armies got to Egypt, that time. His greatest legacy was the reforms enacted by the Lateran Council, which lasted unaltered until the Council of Trent in the mid-1500s.

[Just by way of a footnote, St. Francis of Assisi was born in 1181/2, the son of a wealthy silk merchant. By about 1206, he abjured his privileged life and lived as a penitent, restoring ruined chapels in the countryside around Assisi. After his Order was established, his preaching inspired a young noblewoman, Clare of Assisi, to form an Order for women under his auspices in 1212. Known as the Order of Poor Ladies (and, later, as the Order of St. Clare), they took up residence at nearby San Damiano, where Clare became the abbess.

Francis attended the Fourth Lateran Council and later went to Egypt during the Fifth Crusade in an attempt to convert the Sultan – that failed, but he was permitted to visit the Holy Land. He died in 1226 and was canonised by Pope Gregory IX two years later, with 04 October as his Saint Day.]

(Reports From Member Groups, cont'd)

In March, their minister, Rev. Peter Ferguson, gave a challenging talk titled 'Can we still believe in God?', which created an animated exchange of ideas. Fiona Brooks presented 'Conscious Capitalism', based on the belief that corporations have the power to improve quality of life for all stakeholders while simultaneously enhancing corporate performance. She recommended the book, *Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business*, in which John Mackey and Prof. Raj Sisodia, respectively the co-founders of Whole Foods Market and Conscious Capitalism Inc., argue for the inherent good of both business and capitalism.

A friend of some members of the group, Kerry Jane Wilson, was taken hostage at gunpoint from her office in Jalalabad in Afghanistan on 29 April 2016. She founded the Zardozi company, supported by Australia and the UK, to help women make their own cloth and clothing and so to conduct business in that male-dominated country. They hope and pray for her safe return.

Spirit of Life UF had two excellent addresses by Rev. Geoff Usher on the characteristics of a mature religion, which tied in with other talks emphasising theological inventiveness and practical concern for the world. The social commentator, Hugh Mackay, continues to be an inspiration for their speakers, but they have also discovered the wisdom of Dr. Seuss (Theodor Geisel) for Unitarianism. (He was a UU.)

Their most recent guest speaker, author Lyn Macpherson, had them reflect on 'What are we connecting to? And where is it taking us?' Her book, *The Truth by AD Infinitum*, has been selling extremely well.

Sydney UC continue to have speakers (usually members) on a wide range of topics, most of which include PowerPoint presentations. Particularly noteworthy was the talk on 'Buddhism in Vietnam' given by Walter Mason, author of two travel books about Southeast Asia. The Music Service in April featured the work of Johann Sebastian Bach and there was also a public concert at the end of that month. The monthly screenings of historic silent movies from various countries are also ongoing – these have included *The Mark of Zorro* (US), *The Peach Girl* (China) and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (France).

After a presentation on the work of the Sherpa Foundation in support of earthquake survivors in Kathmandu, it was decided to make a donation to that organisation. SUC's sister congregation in the Philippines has no new university entrants in 2016, due to an extra year being added to the national high school curriculum; thus, the most recent contribution will pay for four students to complete their schooling.

MORE ON THE IALRW

The International Association of Liberal Religious Women was founded at the fifth IARF Congress in Berlin in 1910. Its international conferences are held in conjunction with the IARF's Congresses, as are its regional and national conferences. The venue of the tour mentioned on p. 3 may have been chosen because the current president, Prof. Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman, is Malaysian (and the First Secretary, Siti Mariam Salasal, is in Singapore). In any case, the publicity on the website does not specify that only women can attend.

The IALRW promotes equality for women in all aspects of life, peace, and economic and social justice. It currently funds a project in India that provides literacy and vocational skills to disadvantaged women. Previous grants have gone to similar projects in Bosnia and Afghanistan, and also to Child Haven International.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It is with great relief that I come to the end of this issue right on my deadline, much as I would have liked to finish it a day or two earlier. Hopefully, those groups that print hard copies for their members will still have enough time to do so before their next service.

With reference to the 'ANZUUA News' (on p. 6), the change to quarterly Council meetings must not deter the local representatives from reporting monthly on their groups' activities. I am concerned that less frequent reports will likely result in significant events being overlooked and I would prefer to receive too much news than too little. This sharing of information is one of *Quest's* main purposes, as you all know.

My thanks to those who contributed the major articles and, as always, more input will be needed for the Spring instalment. Please send anything you have to me at: michael.mcphee@optusnet.com.au.