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‘THE LADY WITH THE LAMP’

Not for nothing is International Nurses Day commemorated on 12 May, as that is the anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale in 1820. She was born to upper-class British parents at the Villa Colomaia in Florence, Italy – hence the name, just as her older sister, Parthenope, was born in a Greek settlement in the same area. Her father was William Edward Nightingale (1794–1874), whose surname was Shore until he inherited the estate and coat of arms of his maternal great-uncle, Peter Nightingale. Her mother, Frances, was the daughter of the abolitionist, William Smith.

The family must have shifted between Italy and England over the years, as Florence was at the family home in Hampshire when she perceived a call from God to become a nurse, though she didn’t announce that intention until 1844. This was clearly an outrageous proposition for a woman of her status and it was fiercely opposed by her family. However, she worked hard to educate herself in the art and science of nursing, even rejecting the courtship of the poet and politician, Baron Richard Monckton Milnes, for fear that marriage would interfere with her calling.

In Rome in 1847, Florence met the politician and recent Secretary of War, Sidney Herbert, who would hold that position again and greatly support her work during the Crimean War. At that time, though, she continued her travels to Greece and Egypt, still hearing the call of God as she sailed up the Nile in 1850. Later that year, she was at the Lutheran community of Kaiserwerth-am-Rhein in Germany, where she saw the pastor and deaconesses working for the sick and deprived. That experience was a turning point in her life and she published a report on their practical training methods anonymously the next year.

In 1853, Florence became superintendent of the Institute for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen in London, with an annual income of £500 from her father so she could still live comfortably. In 1854, the Crimean War broke out and she became aware of the horrific conditions of the wounded. Authorised by Sidney Herbert, she arrived with 38 of her trainee nurses (including her aunt, Mai Smith) at the Selimiye Barracks in the Asian part of Constantinople in the November of that year. The place was understaffed; medicines were in short supply; and the hygienic conditions were indescribable, with ten times as many soldiers succumbing to such illnesses as cholera, dysentery and typhus as died from their injuries.

Until recently, it has been believed that Florence and her team were instrumental in improving conditions and drastically reducing the death rate. Certainly, they were of help in the hospital and their nocturnal vigils would have improved the morale of the patients, but it now appears that the greatest factor was the arrival of a Sanitation Commission, which did much to improve the sewerage and ventilation at the barracks. At the time, however, British press lauded her as “a ministering angel” and dubbed her ‘The Lady with the Lamp’. In late 1855, a public meeting in recognition of Florence’s work led to the establishment of the Nightingale Fund for the training of nurses, which received an outpouring of donations. Sidney Herbert served as honorary secretary of the Fund and the Duke of Cambridge was its chairman.

The war ended in 1856 and Florence returned to Britain, where she began collecting evidence for the Royal Commission on the Health of the Army. Only then did she realise that nutrition, which had been her priority in Turkey, was a lesser factor in mortality than sanitation. Consequently, her sanitary designing of military hospitals reduced more deaths in the army in peacetime than she had in wartime.

By 1859, the Nightingale Fund stood at £45,000 and Florence established the Nightingale Training School at St. Thomas’ Hospital in London. She also campaigned and raised funds for the Royal Buckinghamshire Hospital in Aylesbury, near her family home. Her short book, *Notes on Nursing*, was published in 1859 and served as the cornerstone of the curriculum of her school and of other nursing schools established in that period, even though it was written for home nurses. The book also sold well to the general public and is considered a classic introduction to the practice of nursing. She wrote two other books on sanitation in hospital and the efficient administration thereof, which were also well received.

During the American Civil War, the Union government approached Florence for advice about organising field medicine. Although her ideas met with official resistance, they inspired the volunteer US Sanitary Commission that Thomas Starr King raised funds for (see the April/May edition). In the 1870s, she mentored Linda Richards (‘America’s first trained nurse’), who went home to establish nursing schools in the US and Japan. By 1882, Nightingale nurses had an influential presence in the embryonic nursing profession. Some of them became matrons at several leading hospitals in the UK and even here at Sydney Hospital.

Florence was awarded the Royal Red Cross by Queen Victoria in 1883 and, in 1907, she was the first woman to receive the Order of Merit. While there is no record of her attending any church, she wrote that she considered herself a ‘Christian universalist’ in her three-volume *Suggestions for Thought to Seekers of Religious Truth*, which has never been published in its entirety. When she died in her London home on 13 August 1910, her family declined the offer of burial under Westminster Abbey and she was interred instead at the St. Margaret (Anglican) Church in East Wellow, Hampshire, near her family home.



ICUU NEWS

Report on the Theological Symposium Sad News from Pakistan and Transylvania



[News is more plentiful and travels faster, now that a Blog section has been added to the ICUU website (www.icuu.net). What follows are abstracts of longer reports, starting with Rev. Brian Kieley, president of the ICUU, on the third International U*U Theological Symposium on 13–17 July 2010.]

The ICUU Symposium met in the Rolduc Conference Center in Kerkrade, Netherlands, a small town in the southeast corner of the country. The town’s eastern limit is the German border town of Herzograt, and it’s only about 20 km north of Belgium. The region, including bits of all three countries, is Limburg, a hilly region a bit different from Netherlands’ usually flat geography.

The Rolduc site itself began life as a monastery in 1104. The abbey church, which dominates the site, was completed in the 1260s and renovated (beautifully) in the 19th Century. Built at the end of the Romanesque period, it is surprisingly bright and airy with a second transept and an extra set of rose windows at the

entrance crossing away from the altar. Although a small seminary remains, the sprawling Rolduc site is primarily a conference center these days.

Our rooms are grouped around a delightful quadrangle that holds a terrace cafe. The south side of the square is dominated by the church and its cloisters and we often heard the organist practicing for the weddings and concerts that are now the main activities. The dining room is the old monks' refectory (modernized, of course, but complete with the niche where a designated brother read Scripture during silent mealtimes).

Although the schedule looked much the same as for the ministers meeting a few days earlier, the content requires a different treatment. Collegial conversations about ministry and call were replaced with carefully researched and content-rich academic papers. Some 60 lay and ordained participants from 14 nations joined in thoughtful reflection, debate and conversation on the theme, 'Belonging: Our Unitarian Identities and the Nature of our Relations'.

The papers will be available online through Amazon.com in the near future, as soon as they are given final edits and delivered to us. I highly commend them to you, for they were of impressive quality and depth. We will spread word of their availability through all of our lines of communication as soon as that comes to pass.

The collection of shared worship services at an international Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist event is a most marvellous experience, as we come together to see what we can learn from and be moved by one another. There were 30-minute services morning and evening. Sometimes they spoke to the day's academic theme, sometimes they taught about how our friends worship elsewhere in the world.

This week we experienced Filipino and African worship (featuring leadership from three countries), a service by an American ministering in Germany, an American ministering in French Canada, a native Englishman now a Canadian citizen, and two UK ministers. Within that we heard music from Africa, USA, the Philippines and Europe, enjoyed two sacred dance meditations, and lit the Chalice in seven or more languages. We heard sermons and moving personal stories. We sang Scripture, and Gospel and Latin chants and simple popular hymns.

And when the chalice light was extinguished and the flame was carried only in our hearts...well, the whole world and the U*U world seemed just a little smaller, a little more friendly, a little less foreign.

From Rev. Steve Dick, Executive Secretary: We regret to report the death in July of Rev. Indirias Bhatti, known in ICUU as a representative of Unitarians in Pakistan. Messages of condolence were sent to his family by the ICUU Honorary Treasurer, Rev David Shaw, and former Honorary Secretary, Rev. Richard Boeke.

Rev. Shaw wrote: "I remember his dedication and vision for all things fair. I have since been aware of how much work he has done and achieved in difficult circumstances towards achieving peace, support, co-operation and love for humanity around him."

Rev. Boeke wrote: "I am sad to learn of the death of Inderias. For two decades he struggled bringing a Unitarian witness to Pakistan."

[Rev. Bhatti founded the UU Christians of Pakistan in the early 1990s but it was forced 'underground' by the tense political climate in recent years.]

The late Rev. Dr. Árpád Szabó, former Bishop of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania and first Vice-President of the ICUU, was a significant figure on the international scene and he touched the lives of many members of liberal religious communities around the world. He will be missed and fondly remembered by both leaders and laity. ICUU has launched a Tribute Website (www.szabo.icuu.net) as an opportunity for groups and individuals to post reflections, recollections and images in tribute to the life and work of Árpád Szabó. At a later date, copies of all the items from this Memorial Tribute website will be printed and copies will be presented to his family and to the Consistory of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church. For Árpád walks gently among us in our minds and hearts as long as we remember him and celebrate the truth that this world was a better place because of his presence and work among us.

[Rev. Szabó died on 30 September at the age of 76. He was Bishop of the UCT from 1996 to 2008.]

THOUGHTS ON A UU SEMINARY IN AUSTRALIA

By Lev Lafayette

At the recent ICUU/ANZUUA conference hosted in Brisbane, there was some discussion of the possibility of a Unitarian-Universalist seminary for Australia. “The time is right”, was a commonly expressed statement indicating a confidence in our current capacity and needs. There were also suggestions that an ICUU/ANZUUA-approved seminary process would ensure the highest possible quality of formal ministerial qualification. The following is a preliminary sketch of how ANZUUA might proceed with assistance from the ICUU in establishing such a seminary with some references to how such training is conducted at Meadville-Lombard and Starr King seminaries in the United States.

To begin, such a seminary must – like Meadville-Lombard and Starr King – aspire to the highest possible standards of professionalism, academic excellence and qualification. Unitarians and Universalists, within their respective dedications to rationality and social service, have historically sought this and there should be no move now towards lowering such standards. According to the *Times Higher Education* supplement, the top universities in the world have strong Unitarian and Universalist histories and associations. Unitarians secularised Harvard University (ranked 1st), holding the presidency from 1805 to 1933; California Institute of Technology (ranked 2nd) was founded by the Universalist, Amos G. Throop; and Stanford University’s (ranked 4th) first president was the Unitarian-Universalist, David Starr Jordan. Whilst it would be highly presumptuous of a UU Seminary in Australia to even make comparisons between itself and these great institutions, their dedication to the highest possible standards is certainly an intention worthy of emulation.

It is not surprising in that context that the recognised post-graduate qualification for ministry in Australia, Canada and the United States is a Master of Divinity (M.Div, *Magister Divinitatis*), the equivalent of two years’ full-time study with a Bachelor’s degree as a prerequisite. Using the standardised European system for higher education (the Bologna Accords), this would equate to approximately 1800 hours of study per annum. In this case, the six course areas would neatly equate with 300 hours of study per unit in the first year and the second year taken up by a 20,000 word thesis on a topic mutually agreed to by the student and their supervisor and approved by an academic board. As with contemporary Australian standards, all courses would be graded (HD, High Distinction, 80%+; D, Distinction 70-80%; C, Credit 60%-69%; P, Pass 50%-59%; and F, Fail, <50%), with assessment based on a combination of an essay of c. 3000 words, online tutorial participation and a short-answer based open-book exam. Emphasis should be given to proximal and network knowledge, rather than the individual and isolated variety, especially given the subject matter.

Following typical course and subject outlines, an Australian UU Masters in Divinity would include coursework in:

- church history and polity, the study of the development of Unitarianism and Universalism and governing institutions, local, national and international
- pastoral care and counselling, including leadership, social and moral education, behaviour management, emotional support, and psychology
- comparative religious theology, reviewing earth-centered and indigenous religious beliefs (especially of Australia and New Zealand), the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Bahá’í), Dharmic religions (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism), Taoic religions (Taoism, Shinto, Confucianism, Cao Dai), reconstructionist paganism and humanist metaphysics, etc..
- ecclesiology, emphasising on the principles of Unitarian-Universalism, universal salvation through deeds, ‘the building of heaven on earth’, and the role of UU fellowships and leadership in achieving this, along with comparative criticism of other religious orientations.
- liturgical studies of services and addresses, ritualisation of life-events (birth, maturity, marriage, death, etc), and
- practicum, a period of internship with a strong emphasis on administration and financial management.

With regards to course delivery and cost, Meadville-Lombard and Starr King both have annual fees of about \$15,000–\$20,000 (US) per annum for online courses or \$30,000–\$40,000 for face-to-face campus tuition. In comparison, an MBA from Chifley Business School (a joint venture between La Trobe University and the Association of Professionals, Engineers, Managers and Scientists of Australia) via online delivery comes to a \$1200 per unit (including the union membership discount), for a total cost of \$19,200. It is probable that a similar fee structure would operate to pay for academic staff and the minimal administrative and technical

services. In regards to the latter, there is already some exceptional products for the delivery of online courses, the most well-known being the Australian-led MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment), a free and open-source product with over 45,000 registered sites serving 32 million users in 3 million courses around the world, including prestigious institutions like the Australian National University, the University of South Australia, the London School of Economics, the Robert Gordon University of Aberdeen, and *l'Université du Québec à Montréal*.

Finally, it is necessary that the qualification that we offer has the approval of the Australian government, specifically an Australian State or Territory government that accredits and recognises such qualifications. Comparative institutions include theological colleges such as the Adelaide College of Divinity, the Australian College of Theology, the Australian Lutheran College, and the Melbourne College of Divinity. It is worth noting that, in addition to these well-regarded colleges, there are also quite a number of accredited institutes of higher education that have been accepted with a religious and invariably Christian orientation, but there is little for those whose spirituality does not bind them to a denominational creed. Auditing by the Australian Universities Quality Agency is also requisite for a UU divinity college for standards assurance; we may not have money or numbers but what we lack in both must be made up in the quality of our ministers – the best and the few.

In conclusion, it is worth reflecting on what we are doing this for. The Unitarian and Universalist religious perspective is a unique blend of rationality and justice, and is only found elsewhere, in part, at best. In establishing a seminary, ANZUUA would not just be producing a ‘factory’ to churn out ministers but would provide an outlet for the best religiously-informed individuals to act on contemporary secular issues with a Unitarian-Universalist perspective. Perhaps it is obvious to state but, if we do not offer this training, nobody else will do it for us. As much as the institutional formality of structured study is important, and the recognition of degree and title is a just reward for those who undertake such rigour to completion, there is another issue at stake, one perhaps best summarised by the popular book, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, by Robert M. Pirsig. As the author correctly noted, it wasn’t an exceptional book about Zen or motorcycle maintenance, as such. But it did try to make some a serious contribution to the formation of values, and especially the notion of quality. It had these remarkable and inspiring words to say about places of higher education:

“The real University ... has no specific location. It owns no property, pays no salaries and receives no material dues. The real University is a state of mind. It is that great heritage of rational thought that has been brought down to us through the centuries and which does not exist at any specific location. It’s a state of mind which is regenerated throughout the centuries by a body of people who traditionally carry the title of professor, but even that title is not part of the real University. The real University is nothing less than the continuing body of reason itself.”

[Lev is a long-standing member of the Melbourne Unitarian Church who works as a systems administrator for scientific and high-performance computing. He is also a PhD candidate in Social Theory at the University of Melbourne even as he completes an MBA in Technology Management with the Chifley Business School.]

NEWS FROM MEMBER GROUPS

Adelaide UC have appointed a part-time administrator, Michael O'Conner, to organise their ‘Stream of Life, community outreach program. More news about that program in the next issue; however, there will be a Fundraising Ball for it on the evening of 06 November at Littlehampton Hall in the Adelaide Hills, which will feature dinner and dancing.

UUs of Christchurch report that, despite some minor property damage (including to their meeting place), their members fared better than many parts of the city during the earthquake of 04 September and its many aftershocks. They have appreciated the many well-wishings that poured in from all over the world.

Perth Unitarians conferred Orders of the Flaming Chalice on two of their founding members, Helen and Godfrey Barrett-Lennard, on 20 June 2010 in recognition of their commitment to Unitarian Universalist principles and their long service to the group. A full report will appear in the next issue.

[This is all we have received, presumably because it has only been two months since the last issue.]

WIT FROM MARK TWAIN

This year marked the centenary of the death of Samuel Langhorne Clemens on 21 April 1910. Born in Missouri in 1835, he grew up in a port town on the Mississippi River and became a printer's apprentice at the age of twelve. By 1851, while still a typesetter, he was contributing articles and humorous sketches to the newspaper he worked for. In 1859, after two years of training and study, he qualified as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi – later to take his pen-name from a boatmen's expression

In 1909, with his wife and both daughters already dead, he was quoted as saying: I came in with Halley's Comet in 1835. It is coming again next year, and I expect to go out with it. ... The Almighty has said, no doubt: 'Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together.'

Here are some more of his witticisms:

Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture they do not understand, but the passages that bother me are those I do understand.

Sometimes I wonder whether the world is being run by smart people who are putting us on or by imbeciles who really mean it.

If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything.

Get the facts first. You can distort them later.

I find that the further I go back, the better things were, whether they happened or not.

If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a man and a dog.

[04 July] Statistics show that we lose more fools on this day than in all the other days of the year put together. This proves, by the number left in stock, that one fourth of July per year is now inadequate, the country has grown so.

Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.

Buy land. They've stopped making it.

Of all the things I've lost, I miss my mind the most.

Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been.

When we remember we are all mad, the mysteries disappear and life stands explained.

In the first place God made idiots; that was for practice; then he made school boards.

Sometimes too much to drink is barely enough.

It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.

Principles have no real force except when one is well-fed.

Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.

Denial ain't just a river in Egypt.

[Yes! – Twain actually wrote those last two well-worn lines!]

SANTA FILOMENA

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.

Honor to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low!

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
The trenches cold and damp,
The starved and frozen camp, –

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
The cheerless corridors,
The cold and stony floors.

Lo! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see
Pass through the glimmering gloom,
And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
Her shadow, as it falls
Upon the darkening walls.

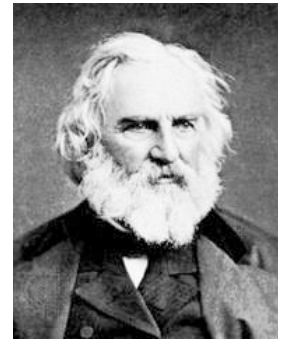
As if a door in heaven should be
Opened, and then closed suddenly,
The vision came and went,
The light shone was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
From portals of the past.

A lady with a lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here
The palm, the lily, and the spear,
The symbols that of yore
Saint Filomena bore.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
(1807 – 1882)



This poem was written by the famous Unitarian poet in 1857 and there can be no doubt that it is really about Florence Nightingale. According to legend, Saint Filomena (properly, Philomena) was a Greek princess who was martyred in Rome in the 4th Century. She was never canonised and was all but forgotten until the bones of a young woman and the inscription 'Filumena' were found in the Catacomb of Priscilla in the early 1800s. The remains were taken to Mugnano de Cardinale in the south of Italy and became the focus of widespread devotion. A number of miraculous healings were attributed to her after that, which probably explains Longfellow's title. How sad that he didn't know he was honouring a fellow Unitarian!

Longfellow was born in Portland, Massachusetts (now Portland, Maine), the son of a lawyer and future member of both state and federal Congresses. His parents were Congregationalists, but adherents of the Unitarian faction that split from the main church in the 1810s. His father, Stephen Longfellow, was a lawyer and a member of the state and federal Congresses (at different times). His first published poem appeared in the *Portland Gazette* when he was thirteen years of age. By the time he graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825, he had committed himself to a literary career and 40 of his poems had been published in periodicals.

In 1834, Longfellow accepted a position at Harvard University which required him to spend a year abroad. After returning to the US, he wrote two volumes of poetry, *Voices in the Night* (1839) and *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841). The latter included 'The Village Blacksmith' and 'The Wreck of the Hesperus', which proved to be very popular. In 1847, his first truly famous poetic work, *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie*, was published, followed by *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858) and *Paul Revere's Ride* (1861). His next major work was a translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, a three-volume work which took several years and came out in 1867. His last years were spent translating the poetry of Michaelangelo, the results of which were published after his death.

Longfellow's younger brother, Samuel (1819–1892), attended the Harvard Divinity School and had a long career as a Unitarian minister. A committed Transcendentalist, he composed and wrote lyrics for a number of hymns, some of which are still found in the current UUA Hymnal.

“If Not Love, What Are We Here For?”

[This report on the *Planning for Growth and Vitality for ANZUUA Congregations Conference* held at Mercy Place, Brisbane, 20th – 22nd August, 2010 was compiled by Renee Hills. It represents the author’s interpretation of content and events and is not intended to be an official report on the Conference.]

Excited greetings and introductions over tea and coffee in Kitty’s Corner, the social area at Mercy Place, marked the beginning of this gathering of 25 members from around Australia, New Zealand and the USA on Friday, 20th August. Most came with expectations of strategies and tips on how to grow our congregations and hopes were expressed in the first evening meeting for solutions to issues such as: greying of current members; inability to retain visitors, especially younger people; reluctance of some groups to embrace change; the need to revitalise community and burnout of the willing few.

However, the lead facilitator, Rev. Jill McAllister from the ICUU, assisted by Rev. Bob Hill of Brisbane, challenged us to examine why we wanted more people in our groups and to look at what Unitarians could offer that people might need. Ultimately, we were led to realise that growth happens when members find their needs being met in groups that facilitate exploration of questions of religion, spirituality and worship.

Jill suggested that ‘religion’ was the human process of making meaning of our relatedness with life. At its best, it aimed to help human beings live their best and directed them towards harmony, justice, love, concern for the environment, etc. It helped with the question: Who am I in relationship with life? Religion was truly understanding that we are born and that we die.

She defined ‘spirituality’ as the nurturing of integrity in our relationships. She suggested that, too often, Unitarian ‘worship’ was overly intellectual and that it was time to reclaim experiential feelings of connection that could be spiritually uplifting. Thus, one could offer a religious perspective on a secular world, an inspiration to keep living the good life.

She said worship was to lift up what is of worth and that it should have a sense of stepping into another time and space, otherwise it would not work. It recognized that we were part of something that included mystery and, in coming together, we honoured what was important.

Chalice Circles and Listening

Chalice circles or covenant groups were formed in the first evening session and met again in subsequent sessions, giving all participants an experience of the depth of connection and sharing possible in this respectful listening environment. Bob Hill gave us strategies from his valuable book, *The Complete Guide to Small Group Ministry*. Jill reiterated the importance of listening to what others have to say in chalice circles and in our congregations, so that each has a chance to speak their own story, to tell their truth. She said small group ministry was a commitment to be with others in ways that made right relations possible.

Using this attitude of listening was also a way of connecting with visitors. Jill said that everyone who came in to a service was looking for something. We needed to ask them: “What is it that you are looking for? What do you need?” She advised us to work out a welcome speech that included “Hello. Welcome. Tell us about yourself.” rather than “We don’t believe in this, we don’t do that...come and see if you fit in.”

Connection

Jill facilitated several other opportunities throughout the workshop for us to connect with each other and to experience the heart and head connection referred to earlier. These included strategically timed, thoughtfully presented and meaningful worship experiences; learning simple canons including “*If not love, what are we here for?*” and experiencing a movement ritual that demonstrated that our whole bodies experienced the world, while our brains processed only part of this experience. She also created a sense of connection between us and Unitarians throughout the world by sharing a slide show and stories of people and groups she had visited.

Mission

Jill shared her church’s mission statement: *The Peoples’ Church is a welcoming religious community drawing on wisdom and inspiration from many sources to discover and live out our highest values.* She said that everything that happened in the church ought to reflect the mission. Growth for the sake of growth was not worth it. We needed to know why it was important, why it was important for other people.

Needs

To focus our thinking on the needs of our congregations, Jill posed the scenario: *Imagine it is five years from now and there has been no growth in the UU groups in Australia and New Zealand. What needs have not been met? What has been happening?* Subsequent discussion led to a consideration of the indefinable ‘buzz’ that existed in some groups and the suggestion that, if we expressed what excited us, it was likely others would feel it too.

We were also introduced to the latest research on congregational vitality from the UUA via the *Seven Principals of Congregational Vitality from UUA Growth Consultation*. These included focus on purpose and mission; being theologically informed of our place in the world; strong leadership and participation and building of leadership skills; vital worship and Sunday experiences for all ages; excellent administration and leadership; cultivation of religious community (shared rituals and practices) and strong ministerial leadership to support the development of all the above.

Ministry

Jill reiterated the importance of ministry to congregational growth (a proven strategy). It was suggested that Australia and New Zealand could participate in the pilot ICUU project to train their own leaders (ministers). Jill will be initiating three pilot ICUU ministry training projects in the next 18 months and she invited us to: catalogue training resources here against the checklist provided; look at Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL); look at guidelines and do our own credentialing; and develop our own ethical requirements. This could lead to the development of a local program.

Management Committees

It was suggested that ANZUUA groups could develop best practices for management committees and share strategies for key functions such as:

- keeping the group aligned with its mission
- focusing on the important things
- checking that policies and procedures meet the mission
- creating policies and procedures to remove *ad hoc* responses
- delegating
- looking after the money, ethical issues and everything to do with the mission
- ensuring each sub-committee knows it exists to serve the mission
- encouraging each committee to incorporate chalice circle strategies so all have an opportunity for spiritual growth and connection
- being transparent in operation: more communication is better than less (be succinct).

Definitions of Growth

Growth was defined in four ways:

- Numbers and trends in numbers – is the group renewing (newer members replacing old? maturing as a community? developing the ability to nurture and be nurtured?)
- Broadening of spiritual experience and imagination – what are you for? what moves you? Learn from your members.
- Organic growth – resilient, strong structures and policies; a leadership transition policy, such as a two year term for committee members?
- Incarnation growth – what does it mean to have our values live through us? Do we have enough evidence to convict us as Unitarians? Do our values match what we say we believe?

Growth Actions

Each congregation represented at the Workshop met with their own members to identify ways in which their groups could take growth actions. Common themes included:

- establish chalice circles or special interest groups
- pay more attention to Sunday morning; learn a limited number of songs very well (working out how to do less that means more); revisit the Order of Service; greeters, ushers and welcomers trained
- management committees: use the chalice circle check-in before meetings; regular membership changes; support non-members to become leaders; develop a management plan with targets and time limits; develop policies on marginalised and minority groups
- coalition with other like-minded groups

- follow up on visitors (not all left to one person)
- outreach to remote groups
- display values prominently, e.g. the Principles; develop a banner, e.g. *Standing On The Side of Love*
- ANZUUA could work on the Principles and come up with a local expression of how we wanted to say them
- develop lay leaders into ministers
- present an education program about UU
- convey the message that we are part of something that predates us
- hold a one day brainstorming in our groups on how to revitalise
- report back to our groups about this weekend's experience
- develop one clear, brief mission statement.

Other Workshop Highlights

These included Rev. Peter Ferguson's measured and erudite address on parallels between humanism and Unitarianism; Sally Mabell's lively presentation on clear, confident and connected communication and the passing of a motion to proceed with the development of an Australian and New Zealand anthology of music and readings.

Conclusion

Most participants left this workshop with an awakened sense of purpose and possibilities for their home congregations. We experienced rich connections in old and new friendships, a personal connection to the ineffable, and a deeper understanding of the strength and power of our wonderful Unitarian heritage. Thank you, Jill and Bob, for a deeply satisfying weekend.

Report from Jane Brooks and Pauline Rooney, Adelaide Unitarian Church

Representatives of the nine Unitarian congregations in ANZUUA met in Bardon, a leafy suburb in Brisbane. Leaders for the workshop were Rev. Jill McAllister, Program Director for the ICUU, Rev. Bob Hill of the UUA (currently resident in Brisbane) and Rev. Peter Ferguson, the President of ANZUUA, from Perth.

It seems that we were all wanting to explore ways that we can create an inviting church presence to retain visitors, who may find a spiritual home in our Unitarian churches and fellowships around Australia and New Zealand. Many visit, but don't keep on coming.

Much of the discussion centred around what we considered to be valuable aspects of our Unitarian way of worshipping, and how we lived our Unitarian values in our church communities and in our lives. An interesting question posed was: *If being a Unitarian was an indictable offence, and some one inspected your home and viewed your life, would there be enough evidence found to convict you?*

There was much discussion around what it meant to be a Unitarian. Peter Ferguson gave an excellent address on a positive definition of Unitarianism, based on the concept that we affirm the *unity* of existence; we have respect for the interdependent web of existence, of which we are a part. His point was that when we explain what Unitarianism is, we need to present a positive view of what we *do* believe or hold to be important, rather than talk about what we don't believe in.

All of the groups represented created strategies for future growth potential to be considered by their committees of management. It is easy to think that growth means more people in our church on a Sunday morning but there is seen to be four kinds of growth that a congregation can have:

Incarnational – Living our values to ensure that what is done within the church is guided by the principles of Unitarian philosophy. Do we truly demonstrate and live out our church's stated mission? (Hence, the question about finding evidence in our daily lives.)

Organic Growth – To ensure that the decision-making process and structures of organization, procedures and governance are transparent, strong and resilient.

Maturation – To broaden our religious imagination and perspective. Investigate different ways of conducting worship and interacting with other Unitarian groups for mutual sharing of ideas and development. Be flexible in our ways of interacting with different age groups with different needs.

Numbers – Increasing the number of people who visit and return to our church and who will feel welcome to make our church their spiritual home, just as many of us already have. This will be the outcome of increasing the vibrancy and relevance of the church’s activities. Be mindful of who is *not* there on a Sunday morning; what needs of potential new members may not be met. How do we reach them to let them know what we do?

We look forward to seeing at least some of the ideas presented from all the Unitarian groups within Australia and New Zealand revitalizing and re-energizing Unitarian communities. It was a wonderful experience to spend time with Unitarians from all over Australia, and to know that we have so much in common – our shared challenges, but also so many opportunities and much enthusiasm for an exciting future together.

Report from Kathy Nielssen, Perth Unitarians

The Workshop was very informative and a great success, with everyone accommodated at the one venue with consequent great interaction and good fellowship. It was interesting to see the process that Jill McAllister, our lead facilitator, was working through to get us to the ‘take-aways’ to bring back to our group. There was no direct answer from Jill, only tools to use. The method we would use would come from us, the ANZUUA delegates. We would work out our own ideas of planning for growth. We would work from the heart with feelings of love and compassion. The aim was to balance our growth planning with creative ideas and not lose sight of concern for the betterment of our congregation.

Our *modus operandi* was what Bob Hill terms Covenant Groups or Chalice Circles, which we in Perth will probably call Friendship Circles. These comprise up to ten people meeting away from our Sunday Services – i.e., maybe at lunch – to keep people on track with Unitarian ideas. In an endeavour to bring forth a feeling of compassionate intimacy and creative interchange, we would put forward something like, “How are you really feeling right now?” and “Did you enjoy today’s talk and subsequent discussion?”. Ask this group what they think would be a good ‘elevator speech’; that is, a description of Unitarianism concise enough to be given to someone sharing a lift with you. Alternatively, we could meet at our homes, asking three members to bring along a friend.

Religion – Jill considers that we may scare people away with our intellectual ideology whereas we should be balancing both the intellectual experience and emotive feelings to get in touch with the relationship of self. At this stage we were led by Jill through body movements with some accompanying words beginning with: *I touch the earth and feel it supporting me and this is good; ... I feel the friends around me and this is good;* – illustrating that our bodies experience the whole world and that our brains process only a part of it, so that we acknowledge our complete life with relationship at the centre. Jill said religion is a way of understanding the human process of life in relationship with self in the daily struggle to be honest and relate with others. It gives us a path to follow in justice, love and concern for the environment.

Reaching Out – Jill stressed that we should concentrate on the positives rather than the negatives as we approach new people by asking them what are they looking for and what they need. Say to them: “Tell us about yourself” rather than saying we don’t believe in this or that. We should have our ‘elevator speech’ ready for all eventualities. We should be good listeners, show keen interest in their replies and be truly open to meeting their needs.

Another shared problem with most of our groups is not starting our services on time. Jill advised starting the service on time, as visitors won’t be impressed with being kept waiting. Our greeters should use any waiting time to extend to the visitors a welcoming friendship.

Thank you to everyone who attended the workshop and for your shared ideas in a friendly and compassionate atmosphere.

[In order of appearance, Renee Hills of the Brisbane UUF and her husband, James, did most of the physical organisation of the Workshop. Rev. Jill McAllister is the ICUU’s Program Director and Rev. Bob Hill of the UUA currently lives in Brisbane. Rev. Peter Ferguson needs no introduction but Sally Mabell is a member of Auckland UC. Pauline Rooney, Vice-President of the ICUU, and Jane Brooks are members of the Adelaide UC’s Board of Management. Kathy Nielssen is Secretary of the Perth Unitarians.]

DID YOU KNOW?

The southernmost U*U congregation in the world is located at Ushuaia in the Argentine portion of Tierra del Fuego. The *Centro Paz y Armonía* (Peace and Harmony Centre) describes itself as a place “where people from different traditions exchange ideas and worship together.” There must be plenty of cultural diversity in that bustling Antarctic port of 60,000 people, not to mention visiting eco-tourists and others on cruise ships. (Virtually the whole of Tierra del Fuego is a national park, dedicated to preserving its sub-polar environment of forests, rivers and glaciers.) The Centro holds fortnightly ‘Meditations’ (services), as well as public meetings and workshops.

The organisation was founded in 1994 by Dr. Lilian Burlando, a psychologist, who still runs it. If you access its website (www.centropazyarmonia.ar) via a search engine, you should be able to translate the Spanish text. The ICUU website (www.icuu.net) also lists two relatively new groups in Argentina, the Unitarian Christian Church of Argentina in Buenos Aires and UU Rosario in San Nicolás, but their websites are in Spanish and little is known about them.

CORRIGENDA AND UPDATES

With reference to the previous edition, Rev. John Clifford asked (p. 2) for people conversant with the Australian deaf sign language to communicate with him via Skype. However, he has since discontinued the email address given and should be contacted at: clifford@universalist.ednet.co.uk.

Leo LeRiche of Perth wishes to correct the article about new ANZUUA resources (p. 3), saying that his templates for bumper stickers are not specific to Macs and any computer can produce them on the requisite clear plastic self-adhesive sheeting. Contact Kathy Nielssen for details: kathyn@iinet.net.au.

Leo also informs us that the Perth group’s website now has its own registration: www.perthunitarians.com. It can, of course, still be accessed from the ANZUUA website.

James Hills of Brisbane has created a new ANZUUA ‘collaboration space’ in the Brisbane UUF’s website, whose address is: www.brisbaneuu.org.au/anzuua. It contains a number of forums on topics arising from the recent Growth Workshop, as well as one for next year’s ANZUUA Conference. James explains that its purpose is to reduce the number of emails being circulated, which some people were complaining about – however, it is not ‘proactive’ and members need to check it from time to time for new content. All going well, this new feature could be incorporated into an upgraded ANZUUA website in due course of time. For the moment, James will manage the feature, so please contact him if you have any trouble registering to join it: james@brisbaneuu.org.au.

On a related matter (see p. 2), anyone who is interested in ICUU matters will find, under the reference to the new Blog on the home page of its website (www.icuu.net), a link through which you can register to receive ‘real time’ updates of any news that is posted on the Blog.

The ANZUUA Committee has confirmed that the biennial Conference will be held on 26–28 August 2011 at the same Mercy Place venue in Brisbane as the Growth Workshop. The Convener, James Hills, advises that some may find the accommodation there a bit spartan (two single beds to a room, communal toilets and showers), in which case they can get motel facilities not too far from there.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

My thanks to everyone who has contributed material for this issue, thereby enabling me to complete it before I leave for two weeks in Canada. As I said in my first issue, I knew we could get this journal coming out at the intended quarterly intervals if we all put our minds to it. I already have some copy ‘in the can’ for the January issue but will, of course, need more before then. As before, the intention is that *Quest* be made available to the general membership of the ANZUUA groups and my offer stands to provide folded-and-stapled copies to any congregation that request them. Please allow two weeks to receive them, though, as I will be back in the country in early November.