



The  
**SUN**

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Sydney Unitarian News

Editor: M.R. McPhee

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**October/November 2010**

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### **THE WORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES**

Those who follow UN matters will have heard of such ancillary bodies as UNICEF, WHO, FAO and UNESCO. Their essential ‘front-line’ work is so often overshadowed by the politics of the General Assembly and Security Council that we are more likely to hear of the many peacekeeping operations around the globe than about their incessant and tireless battles against poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy.

Moreover, these and other UN organisations have some interesting histories, often pre-dating the parent body. For example, the World Health Organisation began life as the International Office of Public Health, founded by a conference held in Rome in 1907. It became the Health Organisation of the League of Nations after World War I, with its headquarters in Geneva, and was transferred to the UN in 1946. Its first Director-General, Dr. George Brock Chisolm, was a Unitarian and former head of the Canadian Ministry of Health.

From its inception, WHO has sought a holistic and proactive approach with programs in immunisation, control of endemic diseases, provision of medications, safe water and sanitation, food safety and nutrition, and health education. Its first targets were malaria, tuberculosis and parasitic diseases, though it also played a vital role in the eradication of smallpox. The huge variety of programs around the world prompted the establishment of Regional Offices in Brazzaville, Cairo, Copenhagen, Manila, New Delhi and Washington.

Similarly, the Food and Agricultural Organisation inherited the mantle of the International Agricultural Institute, founded by another conference in Rome in 1905. That body continued to operate until World War II and was dissolved in 1948, by which time FAO had been set up with its headquarters in Washington (later moved to Rome). Its activities include agriculture and consumer protection, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, natural resource management, and economic and social development.

With its Regional Offices in Accra, Bangkok, Budapest, Cairo and Santiago, FAO primarily serves as a ‘clearing house’ for information, expert advice and research, which WHO also does in addition to its fieldwork. However, it established the World Food Program in 1963, which now distributes millions of tonnes of provisions every year, mostly in regions where emergencies have occurred.

The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was chartered by the General Assembly in December 1946 to provide food and healthcare in war-torn countries. It was made a permanent

body with a global purview in 1953 under the shorter name of UN Children’s Fund but the acronym was not changed. It promptly embarked on a campaign against yaws, a disfiguring tropical childhood disease that could be easily cured by penicillin. In 1961, amidst the great number of Afro-Asian colonies gaining independence, it turned its attention to providing teacher training and classroom equipment in those countries, with particular emphasis on schooling for girls and women.

From its headquarters in New York City, UNICEF provides long-term humanitarian and developmental assistance at the community level to children and mothers in the Third World. Of its current annual budget of almost \$US 3 bn., two-thirds is contributed by national governments and the remainder is donated by private groups and some six million individuals through their countries’ National Committees. UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was established in 1946 for the purpose of using those avenues to further international respect for justice, rule of law and human rights. Its precursor was the International Commission on Intellectual Cooperation, formed by the League of Nations in 1922, whose members included Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann and Paul Valéry, the French philosopher and polymath. UNESCO has its headquarters in Paris and, though its 58 field offices and many specialised centres, pursues five major programs: education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communications and information. It has sponsored projects in literacy, teacher training, regional and cultural history, and the promotion of independent media and cultural diversity.

UNESCO’s achievements include convening the International Copyright Convention (1952), the environmental Man and the Biosphere program (1968), the World Conference on Education for All (1990), the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (1998) and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001). It is particularly noted for its World Heritage Program, which seeks to preserve and restore sites of historical or natural significance. Its first such campaign was the relocation of the Abu Simbel and Philae temples to save them from inundation by the Aswan High Dam, followed by projects to preserve Venice, the Mohenjo-Daro ruins in Pakistan and the Borobodora temple compounds in Indonesia. To date 911 sites have been listed: 704 cultural, 180 natural and 27 mixed.

These and many other UN agencies all have websites which can be readily located through the usual search engines. We recommend that readers access some of them to learn more about their wonderful work.

[Just with the emblems on the previous page, *Fiat Panis* means ‘Let there be Bread’; the UNESCO emblem represents the Parthenon.]

## SERVICE DIARY

Meetings every Sunday from 10.30 –11.30am  
(followed by coffee, tea and food)

Date	Presenter	Topic
3 <sup>rd</sup> October	Peter Crawford	Galileo: Science and Religion
10 <sup>th</sup> October	Anthony Kewin	Tribalism: the Ego-Booster
17 <sup>th</sup> October*	Peter Crawford	Galvani: Frankenstein and Romanticism
24 <sup>th</sup> October	Michael Spicer	Chanting
31 <sup>st</sup> October	Chad Vindin/Liam Martin	Music and Meditation Service
7 <sup>th</sup> November	Peter Crawford	Rabindranath Tagore: Religion and Patriotism
14 <sup>th</sup> November	Patrick Bernard	Charles Taylor (Philosopher): the Ethics of Authenticity
21 <sup>st</sup> November	Peter Crawford	James Watt’s Impact on the Musical World
28 <sup>th</sup> November	Chad Vindin/Liam Martin	Music and Meditation Service

\* This will include the Flower Communion, which we always hold at this time of year in honour of the Czech Unitarian martyr, Rev. Norbert Fabian Čapek (see next page).

[Please check the church website ([www.sydneynunitarianchurch.org](http://www.sydneynunitarianchurch.org)) for updates. The program for the month of December will be available from the beginning of November.]



Vanity is all human Wisdom.  
 Vanity is our Fear;  
 Sin will continue to reign in our Heart,  
 If Love is Absent.

*Asan ni gbogbo imo je,  
 Asan n' iberu wa;  
 Ese y'o joba l'okan wa,  
 B' ife ko si nibe.*

Submitted by the First Unitarian Church of Nigeria; English and Yoruba words written by Rev. Olufemi Matimoju, who is also a Member-at-Large on the ICUU Council.

*Vše, co mělo svůj počátek, má i svůj konec.*

Everything that has begun will end.

*Tak jako den přechází do noci,  
 tak jako noc přechází do dne,  
 tak i jedna epocha přechází do epochy další.*

Like the day changes into night,  
 Like the night changes into day,  
 In the same way, one stage changes into another.

*Začal život tvůj, začal život můj;  
 jednoho dne skončí život tvůj,  
 skončí život můj.  
 Vše končí, vše se mění,  
 vše z jedné podoby  
 do jiné podoby přechází.*

Your life began and so did mine;  
 One day your life will end and so will mine.  
 Everything will end,  
 Everything changes,  
 Everything transforms  
 From one shape into another.

*V průběhu změn, které jsou tak příznačné pro život  
 světa, je přece něco stálého.  
 Je něco, co se nemění,  
 co zůstává nedotčeno všemi změnami  
 a všemi zvraty vesmírných dějů.  
 Je to Bytí, Jsoucno,  
 je to nehybný, netčený Zdroj toho, co je.*

In the course of changes so characteristic of life in  
 this world,  
 There is, however, Something constant:  
 Something which remains untouched  
 By all the changes and twists.  
 We may call it Being, Existence;  
 It is the untouched Source of all that is.

*Vprostřed změní změn,  
 když se cítíme nejisti,  
 ohroženi nebo osamoceni,  
 ztišme svou mysl a useberme se,  
 a ponořme se v duchu  
 do Zdroje toho, co je, kde pramení Bytí.*

In the midst of changes,  
 When we feel insecure,  
 Threatened or isolated,  
 Let us calm our minds and  
 Move deep into our hearts  
 Into the Source of all that is, where the Being rises.

*Zůstaňme v tichu v tom místě.  
 To je naše zázemí, pevný bod.*

Let us stay in that place for a moment.  
 It is our foundation; it is our stable point.

*Plamen kalicha, který teď zapalujeme,  
 v sobě odráží tento proces usebrání,  
 a také sdílený posvátný prostor  
 tohoto našeho společenství.*

The flame of the chalice we light now  
 Reflects this process of centering,  
 As well as the shared sacred space of  
 Our community.

*Pohlédni do plamene  
 a vnímej tichou radost ve svém srdci.*

Look into the flame and  
 Feel this quiet joy in your heart.

Submitted by the Religious Society of Czech Unitarians; Czech and English words written by Rev. Dr. Petr Samojský, Senior Minister of the Society and Minister of the Prague congregation.

[These are the Chalice Lightings from the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists for the months of September and October.]

The Religious Society of Czech Unitarians (*Náboženská Společnost Českých Unitářů*) has churches in Prague and Brno; also fellowships in Plzeň (Pilsen) and Liberec. Its website is: [www.unitaria.cz](http://www.unitaria.cz).



International  
Council of  
Unitarians and  
Universalists

## 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](http://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 Herzogratth, 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 well meeting Indirias in Sri Lanka – I think now 15 years ago. 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. For years Polly Guild was the ‘angel’ who helped, as she did for other UU groups especially the Unitarians of Khasi Hills.”

[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. We reported on the death of the US ‘missionary’, Rev. Polly Guild, in the December 2009/January 2010 issue. The Khasi Hills Unitarians have 9000 members and live in Meghalaya state in northeastern India.]

As we go to press, another sad announcement from Rev. Dick:

The late Rev. Dr. Árpád Szabó, former Bishop of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania and first Vice President of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (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](http://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.]

## **OUR OCEANS: RICHES BEYOND COMPARE**

**By Peter Crawford**

Only the coast of Japan has ocean life anything comparable to Australia, a new international study has found. The study is the first major worldwide census of marine biology. This ‘Census of Marine Life’ calculated that there were more than a million species of marine life with more than three quarters yet to be discovered.

The investigation also finds that only the waters off Australia and Japan show a relatively pristine quality. Furthermore eighty percent of Australian marine life had probably not yet been described by scientists. In European waters, by contrast, it was just 10%; South Africa, 38%; and Japan, 75%. The study documented a changing marine world, richer in diversity, more connected, more impacted by humans and less explored than expected.

The research involved nearly 3000 scientists, 670 institutions, 540 expeditions and about 9000 days at sea. The investigations were staggering – nearly 30 million observations of 120,000 species were made and 6000 potentially new species were found. The survey set out to find what lives in the oceans, what used to live there and what are its future prospects for life.

Australians should be well aware of this superb natural heritage. In the International Year of Biodiversity, it is worth considering both the extent of, and the continuing and rising threats to, this wonder-world of the oceans. An aesthetic of surpassing grandeur and a sense of wonder resonates from it all.

Currently, world population increase and irresponsible technological advance provide a threat to both the quantity and diversity of the ocean’s wonders. Most fishing grounds are under threat and the present exploitation cannot continue without the likelihood of mass diminutions and extinctions. Australia’s current policies of mass immigration and population increase remain a significant threat to our marine heritage. Tourism, farming and land-based toxins running into the sea also provide a significant threat.

## GIVE ME THAT OLD-TIME RELIGION

Give me that old-time religion, give me that old time religion,  
Give me that old-time religion. It's good enough for me.

Let us worship Zarathustra, just the way that we used to.  
I'm a Zarathustra booster. He's good enough for me.

Let us worship like the Druids, drinking strange, fermented fluids,  
Running naked through the woods. That's good enough for me.

Let us meditate like Buddha. There is no god that is cuter.  
Come in silver, brass, and pewter, and he's good enough for me.

I'll invoke the Triple Goddess when she wears her Cretan bodice.  
No, she isn't very modest, but she's good enough for me.

We will pray to Aphrodite, we will pray to Aphrodite.  
She wears that see-through nightie and that's good enough for me.

We will pray with those Egyptians, build pyramids to put our crypts in  
Over subways with inscriptions. And that's good enough for me.

Hare Krishna, he must laugh on with my robes all trimmed in saffron,  
And my hair that's only half on. And that's good enough for me.

I'll arise in early morning, when my Lord gives me the warning  
That the Solar Age is dawning. And that's good enough for me.

Give me that old-time religion, give me that old-time religion,  
Give me that old-time religion. It's good enough for me.



This intriguing piece was written by Gordon Rupert Dickson (1923–2001) of the US, who is better known for his science fiction – however, we have no idea why he wanted to worship Zarathustra rather than the Zoroastrian deity, Ahura Mazda. Further, while the religion of Minoan Crete was dominated by goddesses, the Triple Goddess is really a Neopagan concept. First recorded by Pete Seeger and Arlo Guthrie on their album, *Precious Friend* (Warner Bros., 1981), the song is one of many parodies of a Negro spiritual of the same title that was first published in 1873. The origin of the melody is not known but it could be from a much older English folk song.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What's a novel? – Well, you see, it's kind of a long story.

Do you ever wonder what eternity means? – All the time.

What does ambiguous mean? – Could mean anything, I guess.

What is perception? – What's it to you?

What does condescending mean? – Sit down and I'll explain it to you in simple terms you can understand.

Are you an agnostic? – I don't believe so.

So you think God is a paradox? – Well, he is and he isn't.

What does paranoid mean? – Why do you ask? Say, who sent you anyway?

## A SONG TO MITHRAS

(Hymn of the XXX Legion: circa 350 A.D.)



Mithras, God of the Morning, our trumpets waken the Wall!  
'Rome is above the Nations, but Thou art over all!'  
Now as the names are answered, and the guards are marched away,  
Mithras, also a soldier, give us strength for the day!



Mithras, God of the Noontide, the heather swims in the heat.  
Our helmets scorch our foreheads, our sandals burn our feet.  
Now in the ungirt hour – now ere we blink and drowse,  
Mithras, also a soldier, keep us true to our vows!



Mithras, God of the Sunset, low on the Western main –  
Thou descending immortal, immortal to rise again!  
Now when the watch is ended, now when the wine is drawn,  
Mithras, also a soldier, keep us pure till the dawn!



Mithras, God of the Midnight, here where the great bull dies,  
Look on thy children in darkness. Oh take our sacrifice!  
Many roads thou hast fashioned – all of them lead to the Light,  
Mithras, also a soldier, teach us to die aright!

Rudyard Kipling

This possibly perverse tribute to Armistice Day is presented for no particular reason other than to add to our 'pagan' theme on p. 6. The cult of Mithras was popular in the Roman military from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Centuries but strangely little is known about its beliefs and practices. Earlier attempts to identify that deity with the Zoroastrian Mithra are now largely discredited and it is thought that the cult may have originated in Rome. Certainly, the underground Mithraic temples found all over the Empire, particularly in frontier areas, often depict Mithras being born fully-formed from a rock or sacrificing a bull (bottom right). The temples contain altars, on which the entrails of animals were burned, and evidence of feasting, but any ritual slaughtering must have been done elsewhere. Mithras is also often associated with the sun-god, *Sol Invictus*, whereas no such connection existed in Persia.

Just for the record, *Leg[io] XXX Ulpia Victrix* means 'Thirtieth Victorious Ulpian Legion', which title was conferred on the original legion by Emperor Trajan (whose family name was Ulpia) for its valiant successes on the Danube frontier in the Balkans during the Dacian Wars (101–106 CE). The Legion served all over the Empire, from Persia to Mauretania, over subsequent centuries until the collapse of the Rhine frontier in 410.

Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) was born in Bombay and sent to England for schooling, which he completed at the United Services College but did not join the military. Unable to get into Oxford, he returned to India in 1882 and worked for a newspaper in Lahore (now in Pakistan). He published his first book of poems in 1886 and the short stories he wrote for the paper were collected in *Plain Tales from the Hills* in 1888. Promoted to a larger newspaper in Allahabad (on the Ganges River), he produced six books of short stories in a single year – none of them well-known, however. In 1889, Kipling went to London via the Far East and an extensive tour of North America, during which he met Mark Twain.

Once there, he wrote his first novel, *The Light That Failed*, and co-authored *The Naulakha* with Wolcott Balestier. In 1891, he married Balestier's sister, Caroline, and they moved to Vermont, where he wrote the two *Jungle Books*, *Captain's Courageous* and many of his most famous poems. The family returned to England in 1896, where he continued to write prolifically, producing *Kim* (1901), the *Just So Stories* (1902) and two works of science fiction set in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Quite famous by this time, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907, the first English-language writer to do so and, to date, the youngest. He is said to have declined the post of Poet Laureate, as well as offers of a knighthood. His last major work was a two-volume history of the Irish Guards, in which regiment his son, John, died in World War I. Kipling died in 1936 and his ashes were buried in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey.

## CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

By Rev. Nihal Attanayake

[Text of a sermon given to the UU Fellowship of Dumaguete City in the Philippines early in 2004.]

In one of our visitations to the local congregations, a person asked this question: Why partnership? Ms. Susan Quisel and I were visiting congregations scheduled by the Faith in Action Department. The church partnership program of the UUCP is one of the concerns of the department and, as such, this particular question made me think. I'm sure, I'll remember this question for a long time in order to find a meaningful and suitable answer, and I realize that I have to constructively understand the nature of the question.

For the purpose of clarity, I started finding definitions of partnership. It seems that in partnership there are participation or involvement, cooperation or working together, a system or structure, a purpose or a need, and a sense of responsibility that overshadows all these. Responsibility is the last thing mentioned here and I like to talk about the last thing first. You know what I mean. I am not going to talk about the last things in biblical language but about responsibility. Though talking about the last things from a theological perspective could be profitable, we need to set apart another time for it.

Rev. Mark Allstrom of South Australia sends us his sermons that he delivers almost every Sunday. To me, these sermons are very helpful. In last Sunday's sermon (15 July 2001), speaking about his 'Father's House' with regard to responsibility, he posed some questions and I quote: "but how can there be real responsibility, if there is no choice? Isn't responsibility the ability to respond? Doesn't that imply an ability not to respond as well?" In understanding these questions in another way, we may say that, in the face of responsibility, we have a choice to respond either positively or negatively.

Responsibility is accountability. Who are we accountable to? In the first place, we are accountable to ourselves. When we learn to nurture a positive attitude in life, responsibility sees us through to success. Responsibility, then, is like a mirror that helps reflect oneself. So, by making a choice to be responsible which is to be conceived by others as one's character. This reminds me of character certificates in my country. In Sri Lanka, when we recommend a person to someone, we make a character certificate – what we have been talking about gets into his recommendation. For one's own good, to be responsible is a necessity.

In our locality, sometimes we overhear parents complaining about their children, as they see them not making enough effort to take responsibility upon themselves. Yes, this is a legitimate concern of parents for their children. We are all expected to make a choice to positively respond to responsibility and, as we all know, there are times when we have acted contrarily. There are times when we make mistakes. In order to keep to the subject matter of today, let us focus on responsibility in relation to partnership.

In today's Scripture readings, one part was taken from the Gospel according to Matthew, Chapter 25: 29–30. It is the story of the three servants who were given responsibility to manage a property and, according to their ability, were given gold coins – to one, ten thousand; to another, five thousand; and, to the third, one thousand. In this parable story of Jesus, we are helped to understand our subject matter in relation to responsibility. According to how the three servants fared in the story, in Verse 29 it declares that, when a person is responsible, more responsibility is expected and will be given.

When a person is responsible to oneself, it is demanded by society for society. In sociology, we learn that an individual decision affects the society. At this point, more and from the inward-tasking to outward-looking with regards to the choice we have made to be responsible persons. In some instances, we become overloaded with responsibility.

In another part of today's Scripture readings, in the Book of Numbers, Chapter 11:14-15, we heard how Moses was so burdened with responsibility that he cried to the Lord in desperation. Sometimes, when we see responsible persons, we keep on adding more responsibilities. For example, here in the UUCP national office we are very few. At the same time, we have an ambition to accomplish many things, as need demands. I may keep on requesting Ms. Susan Quisel, Mr. Persie Mark and Lundy Mae Sienes to attend to matters in addition to what they have already been assigned in their respective fields of activities. I'm sure they will one day cry out like Moses in desperation. I think that, in order to do justice to all, the President of the UUCP,



Rev. Rebecca Quimada-Sienes, is nowadays thinking of a personnel system. We may all have breathing space thereafter.

So now, we see how we exercise responsibility in an organized way, according to a structure or system. Once, when I was talking with Rev. Henry Legaje about partnership, he told me how in his reading he came across a metaphor: partnership is like a bridge. What happens when we build a bridge? We facilitate interaction between two sides. One side is given the opportunity to see the other. This inter-action develops greater realization of the aspirations of each side.

If we are to relate this state to our church partnership program, this interaction is the key to growth. To see what we have not seen among ourselves and appreciate what is already there stored among our-selves, which we have failed to recognize. This kind of self-realization comes only from interaction. This is our need today. It is for this purpose that the UUA have deeply thought about church partnership programs because, in this expression of knowing others' culture, practices and faith orientations, the UUs of the world will be well informed of unbounded limits and great possibilities.

So, on this day of emphasis on church partnership, we extend our best wishes and greet the local pilot congregations – namely, Caican, Cabiguhan and Samoyaw – who have made a choice to enter into a relationship, to be responsible in interacting with their partner churches of First Unitarian Church of Honolulu, Unitarian Universalist Church of San Mateo, California, and Starr King Church of Hayward, California, respectively, and seeking their determination with covenant.

Now permit me to come back to the first question. I hope we have come close to finding an answer to the question: Why partnership? First, it is to know one's self; secondly, to know ourselves as a fellow-ship, as a congregation, as a community.

[The people referred to are Susan Quisel, head of the UUCP's Religious Education Department, Percy Mark Sienes, its Book Keeper and son of Rev. Rebecca Qimada-Sienes, and his wife, Lundy Mae Sienes, who was its Secretary. Rev. Henry Legaje was the Minister for Congregations and succeeded Rev. Quimada-Sienes as President in 2004. Rev. Attayake was ordained as an Anglican priest in his native Sri Lanka but he came to want a free liberal religion. He went to the Philippines to do a Master of Theology degree, after which he returned and took a parish in Colombo. Increasingly conflicted, he resigned and went again to the Philippines to work with Ecumenical and Interfaith groups. That brought him into contact with the UUCP in 2000 and he found what he had been looking for. He became the minister in Dumaguete City the next year, joined the UUCP head-quarters in 2005 and served as President in 2008/9.]

## **THE UU CHURCH OF THE PHILIPPINES**

The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines has 2000 members and 30 congregations, mostly on the island of Negros but also in Manila. (Negros is in the central island group known as the Visayas and Dumaguete City is a centre of learning, home of Silliman University and a number of schools.) It was founded as the Universalist Church of the Philippines by Rev. Toribio S. Quimada, who was excommunicated by the Universal Church of Christ in 1954 for using materials provided by the (then) Universalist Church of America.

Starting with the nine UCC congregations that he led on Negros, Quimada founded the UCP in 1955 and travelled all over the island, spreading the gospel of a unitary God and universal salvation. After the merger that created the UUA in 1961, his church was renamed the UUCP in 1985. He was murdered in 1988 during fighting between government forces and rebels of the New People's Army, after which the UUCP was led by his daughter, Rev. Rebecca Quimada-Sienes. A protracted investigation has failed to identify the persons or parties responsible for that dreadful crime.

While the UUCP focuses on liberal Christianity, it also claims great success in faith healing. It also has a guesthouse for visitors to Dumaguete City and is building a dormitory for female college students there – more information from their website: [www.uuphilippines.org](http://www.uuphilippines.org). This church has a colourful history with many interesting stories, which we mean to tell in future issues. Our personal thanks to Rev. Attayake and Rev. Quimada-Sienes for their information and clarification.

## REPORT ON THE ICUU/ANZUUA GROWTH WORKSHOP

[This report on the *Planning for Growth and Vitality for ANZUUA Congregations Conference* was compiled by Renee Hills of the Brisbane UU Fellowship. She and her husband, James, who is the Secretary of ANZUUA, did most of the physical organisation of the Workshop, which was held at an erstwhile Sisters of Mercy convent in the suburb of Bardon on the slopes of Mount Coot-tha on 20–22 August. The author stresses that what follows represents her own interpretation of the content and events and is not intended to be an official report on the Conference. (However, nothing more official is anticipated.)]

Excited greetings and introductions over tea and coffee marked the beginning of this gathering of 25 members from around Australia, New Zealand and the USA. 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?

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 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 ourselves 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 should reflect the mission. Growth for its own sake 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.

[In order of appearance, Rev. Jill McCallister is the ICUU's Program Director and Rev. Bob Hill of the UUA currently lives in Brisbane while working on a PhD. Rev. Peter Ferguson of the Perth Unitarians is president of ANZUUA and Sally Mabell is a member of the Auckland Unitarian Church.]

**COMMITTEE NEWS**

We regret to announce that Rev. Dr. Ian Ellis-Jones has resigned for personal reasons. His recommendations from the Growth Workshop are with the Committee and will be presented to the membership at a later time. We thank Ian for his committed work as minister and for his erudite addresses.

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**MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM**

I, (name) \_\_\_\_\_

of (address) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (other) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

apply to join/renew membership in (delete one) the Sydney Unitarian Church and agree to abide by the rules as set down by the Constitution and management of the church.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Fee enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*

Cheques should be made payable to: Treasurer, Sydney Unitarian Church. Current memberships are valid for the calendar year 2010 and should be renewed by 01 January 2011.

\* Annual membership is \$20 and includes the SUN journal; subscription to the SUN only is \$15.