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## **MODERN UNITARIANISM IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE (Part 2)**

The Religious Society of Czech Unitarians was established by Norbert Fabian Čapek (1870–1942) in 1922. Born a Catholic, Čapek became a Baptist minister, serving as a missionary as far east as Ukraine. In the process, he became aware to free Christian groups in Moravia, which influenced his thinking. Already an accomplished writer and editor of religious journals, he attended the conference of the IARF in Berlin in 1910, where Tomáš Masaryk, the future president of Czechoslovakia, introduced him to officers of the American Unitarian Association.

Čapek moved his family to the US in 1914 and led two Baptist churches before he left that faith in favour of Unitarianism. When Czechoslovakia became independent after World War I, he returned to Prague in 1921 and founded the Religious Liberal Fellowship a year later. In 1930, he formed the Czechoslovak Unitarian Association.

The Fellowship's numbers in Prague grew to 3200 over the next twenty years, making it the largest Unitarian congregation in the world at that time. The national membership was 8000, including six lay-led fellowships in other cities and towns, which Čapek visited regularly. He wrote many books and hymns, translating some of the latter from English to Czech, and developed the Flower Communion that Unitarians around the world now celebrate. He wrote courses in religious history and philosophy that were used in the public schools.

Tragically, Čapek was arrested after the Nazi invasion for listening to BBC radio and eventually sent to the Dachau internment camp. He wrote his most haunting hymn, 'Out of the Depths', there and it is reported that he was of great comfort to other inmates. In the October of 1942, he was taken to Hartheim Castle in Austria and killed by poison gas.

It is unclear whether the Prague Unitaria building was acquired or constructed and when; however, it is near the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Charles Bridge on the city side of the Vltava River. It serves as both the main Prague church and the headquarters of the RSCU.

Anyone with a desire to travel should certainly see that amazing city and visit the church there. They actually have services in English on the first and third Sundays of every month, after the normal Czech service. Here are scenes of its front door and the stained glass window inside.

Today, the Society's membership is not as large as before but it has churches in Prague (two), Brno, Teplice and Plzeň (Pilsen); also fellowships in Liberec and Ostrava, so it is represented in four of the six largest cities in the country. A recent addition is the National Wider Fellowship, which welcomes members from all over the country.

Despite producing one of the most famous Universalists, George de Benneville, France was very late in discovering Unitarianism. In 1986, the French Unitarian Association was formed by ten people from around the country. Its first president was Rev. Lucienne Kirk, who had studied at Manchester College in Oxford and was ordained in Kolozsvár.

In 1996, a majority of the membership moved for a less specific Christian identity and the group changed its name to the Fraternal Assembly of Christian Unitarians, merging with the Francophone Unitarian Association founded by the scientist, Théodore Monod (1902–2000), also in 1986. This brought in members who lived in Belgium and Switzerland, and the new organisation acquired a headquarters at Digne-les-Bains in the French Alps (possibly Monod's home). Since Monod's death, the FACU has been led by Secretary-General Dr. Jean-Claude Barbier, a retired sociologist.

Today, there are groups in Paris, Marseille, Bordeaux, Nantes, Nancy and Digne-les-Bains, as well as one in Brussels. The FACU is also in partnership with Christian Unitarian bodies in Italy, Quebec, Burundi and the two Congos. It has founded an umbrella organisation, the French Council of Unitarians and Universalists, for ICUU purposes but the other members are very minor players.

The FACU has also founded the on-line Francophone Unitarian Church, which ministers to French-speaking people in Europe (including Monaco and Andorra), North America (Quebec, Acadia, Louisiana and even Philadelphia) and former French and Belgian colonies in Africa. At Dr. Barbier's expense, the FUC sponsors annual seminars for ministerial training, alternately in Burundi and Rwanda.

This will be an appropriate time to mention the Italian Unitarian Community, as so little is known about it. Their president, Rev. Roberto Rosso, was ordained as Italy's first Unitarian minister in 2008 under the auspices of the Transylvanian, Norwegian and Danish Churches.

Another latecomer is the Dutch Remonstrant Church, despite its 17<sup>th</sup> Century origins. As followers of Jacobus Arminius, they famously rejected Calvinism with their Five Articles of Remonstrance in 1610. As a result, all of their pastors were exiled and, even when conditions were relaxed, the Remonstrants were not allowed to have their own churches until 1795.

While their main church is in Rotterdam, dating from 1895, the Church has 46 congregations in the Netherlands and one just across the German border in Friedrichstadt – some 5680 members and 'friends', in all. In 1996, the Remonstrants were the first Christian church in the world to conduct same-sex marriages. They joined the ICUU in 2012 and – perhaps making up for lost time –hosted last year's Council Meeting and Conference at their conference centre in Kerkade.

In Spain, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a group of liberal Spanish intellectuals and reformers called themselves Krausistas, after the German idealist philosopher, Karl Krause. They also admired the natural religion and religious rationalism of the American Unitarian leaders, William Ellery Channing and Theodore Parker, though they were not in a position to form a church.

After the death of Francisco Franco, the Constitution of 1978 finally established religious freedom in Spain (though there were still many restrictions in actual practice). In 2000, the UU Society of Spain was founded in Barcelona by Jaume de Marcos, an IT specialist and translator (pictured far right). However, they were unable to achieve legal recognition as a religious organisation, even after they changed their name to 'UU Religious Society' in 2005. However, the UUSS is affiliated with the ICUU and it now has members-at-large elsewhere in Spain; plus, there are reports of a fellowship being formed in the northern city of La Coruña.

The UU Society of Finland was formed some time after 2000 and has been a Full Member of the ICUU since 2003, despite having only a single lay-led Fellowship in Helsinki and smaller groups in the cities of Turku and Kuopio (if they still function). The group in Helsinki meets only monthly but it also has bi-monthly informative evenings with refreshments and active email discussions. Despite their small numbers, they have produced two books in Finnish, as well as translations of two other Unitarian and/or Universalist sources.

*(Continued on p. 16.)*



## ICUU NEWS

### Special Council Meeting Global Flower Communion EUT Spring Retreat



The outgoing Executive Director, Rev. Steve Dick, issued a report on the Special Council Meeting that was held by videoconference on 10 November 2016. One of its primary purposes was to review and approve the ICUU 2017 budget, which was done along with the implementation of measures to improve their accounting.

In other news, Vice-President Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana (formerly of Burundi and now living in Canada) stepped down as the ICUU Regional Staff for Africa at the end of last year. That position will be filled after consultation with the African member groups. Also, a group has been meeting formally in Sierra Leone since March 2015 and it is applying for ICUU membership.

Elsewhere, the Regional Staff for Latin America, Rev. Jorge Espinel of the UUA, has been working with several people in Buenos Aires who have contacted the ICUU and he visited the Cuban communities late last year. The minister of the Italian Unitarian Communion, Rev. Lawrence Sudbury, reports that they have applied to be formally recognised as a religious institution, which will bring them many benefits.

Closer to home, it is reported that, after a peaceful demonstration against corruption in Jakarta turned into a riot, the Unitarian member group there (known as the Global Church of God) became involved in Interfaith dialogue with the government to add their voices to the conversation about civil and human rights. Plans for the 2018 Council Meeting and Conference in the Khasi Hills of India are progressing well, now that Rev. Dick and the ICUU President, Dávid Gyerő, went there in December for some on-the-ground preparation.

We have been informed that the Prague Unitaria and the (English-speaking) International Unitarian Church of Prague will celebrate the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Flower Communion on Sunday, 04 June 2017. Their respective ministers, Rev. Dr. Petr Samojský and Rev. Mark Shiels, have invited U\*Us from all over the world to join them on this special occasion, either in person or by holding their own Communions wherever they are. They write: “We would also welcome photographs and greetings from our sister churches participating in this global event. We will display these at our service [which] will be filmed and broadcast live on social media.”

The European UUs’ annual Spring Retreat has been expanded this year to a joint project with the German Unitarians, to which Unitarians and UUs from all over Europe have been invited. This European Unitarians Together Spring Retreat will be held over 02–05 June in the German city of Ulm with the theme of ‘Faith without Borders – *Glaube ohne Grenzen*’.

The venue is the Edwin-Scharff-Haus on the south bank of the Danube, near the Old Quarter of the city. The keynote speakers are:

Prof. Manuela Kalsky, Professor of Theology and Society at the Free University of Amsterdam and head of the Dutch multimedia project, ‘New We’, which aims to strengthen social cohesion and the capacity to live with others from different cultures and religions. Her topic is ‘Flexible Believers and the Search for a New We’.

Rev. William Schulz, President Emeritus of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, former President of the UUA and Executive Director of Amnesty International USA. His topic is ‘The Limits of Dignity: Is Democracy Incompatible with Human Nature?’.

The Retreat will also feature the choir of the First Unitarian Society of Newton, Massachusetts, and attendees are encouraged to bring instruments for self-styled singing and musical events in the evenings. Ulm offers many opportunities for sightseeing, as it is Einstein’s birthplace and its Old Quarter has the highest church tower in the world – various guided tours will be available.

Lastly, ANZUUA has paid its annual dues of \$US500 to the ICUU and added a donation that brings the total to \$A1000, in keeping with what was done last year.

## Third International Convocation of UU Women and People of Progressive Faith 16 – 19 February 2017, Monterey, California

By Renee Hills



Saturday night, and women are dancing in the aisles under the ornately ribbed ceiling of Merrill Hall, to the toe-tapping rhythm and stirring words of *emma's revolution*, a duo backed by drums, an excellent keyboard and double bass. There's a palpable feeling of relief that our hectic conference schedule is almost complete. The hard work of unpacking significant issues affecting women in the areas of Economic Opportunity, Education, Health and Reproductive Justice, Leadership Development, and Violence Prevention is almost done. (These were the 'five streams' of the Convocation program.)

I realise that tomorrow is our last day, my last opportunity to speak with and farewell friends, old and new, from countries around the globe: Poland, Romania, Hungary, France, Bolivia, Colombia, India, Japan, the Philippines, New Zealand and many different US states. (Despite determined efforts, the African delegates were denied visas and could not attend.) It's been a wonderful time of reconnection, especially with women who were on the Bolivian Pilgrimage in 2015. We laugh as we recall our challenging but bonding experiences there. It's wonderful to have Bolivian activist Olga Flores with us again, as well as our energetic translator, Michelle O'Brien.

This is the third International Women's Convocation and our venue is the California State Park conference facility, *Asilomar*, at Pacific Grove, near Monterey. We overlook a seething Pacific Ocean, courtesy of an unseasonal Californian storm with high wind and rain. Widespread flooding and road damage in nearby locations occurred during the conference and on the days following. On site, we coped as best as we could, finding our meeting rooms and workshop venues on the sprawling 107-acre site while the wind whipped the rain under umbrellas. Now I understood the reason that raingear was listed as a 'must bring'! Fortunately, the worst of these conditions eased after the first day.

*Asilomar* is derived from the Spanish phrase, '*asilo al mar*' ('refuge by the sea'). It was designed and built by architect Julia Morgan from 1913 to 1929 for the YWCA as a place for girls to meet in conference (11 of her 16 buildings still stand, including the iconic Merrill Hall and Social Hall, built of wood and stone.) How appropriate, then, that this 235-strong IWC is meeting here, some 86 years later.

My first activity was to attend a Global Sisters Process (GSP) facilitators' training, a follow-up to an earlier Zoom (videoconference) training. Having experienced the process in Bolivia, I thought it beneficial to train and facilitate. The GSP is a way of identifying and discussing issues and developing action plans within a small group (up to 10 people, usually a mix of internationals and locals). Each group's output is consolidated so that two key actions in each of the conference streams were reported. Key findings are currently being collated for widespread sharing. The GSP is an efficient and inclusive way to identify key issues and develop outcomes in any large group. I am happy to share this process with anyone interested.

As a GPS facilitator, my schedule became extremely busy. The program was packed with a rich offering of keynote addresses, workshops and speakers in each of the five streams. In addition, there were early morning movement and meditation sessions followed by worship, complemented in the evening by inspiring and grounding messages from UU Minister and Soto Zen (Buddhist) priest, Rev. Florence Caplow. These beautiful sessions led into Chalice Circles, an opportunity to connect deeply with yet another small and diverse group of women. My Circle was led by a Hungarian minister, Maria Zsuzsanna Bartha, and included Indian, Romanian, Filipino and Polish delegates.

But the action did not end there! IWC founding member, Barbara Beach, organised for movies to be shown every night starting at 10 p.m. I missed them all, finding it difficult to be in bed before midnight anyway. The beds were super-comfortable; my lovely roommate, Rev. Irene Grumman from San Diego, was a delightful companion; and the distant roar of the waves ensured we slept soundly.

Outstanding presenters included popular black American author, feminist and activist bell hooks (that's how she spells her name). She spoke of how white supremacy is inculcated into white people, about her abhorrence of violence and the transformative power of love.

Another keynote speaker was Cecilia Conrad, a distinguished economist who has researched the effects of race and gender on economic status. She said black women in Chicago spent 80 minutes more per day commuting to work than their white counterparts because of where they can afford to live. This means less time to cook nutritious food and less time to read to their children. They also have less access to quality schooling and a much greater likelihood of evictions. Prof. Conrad said that race intersected with gender, age, ethnicity, language and immigrant status to create a complex non-linear issue. She urged women to be informed and to stand up for each other.

Cathy Allen (Hillary Clinton's voice coach during the recent election) offered an inspiring workshop on leadership, advising women to lead like a woman. This means accessing the typical qualities of collaboration, honesty, compassion, justice, inclusivity, persistence, efficiency, patience and active listening. A plethora of excellent workshop offerings on race, gender, community, poetry, art, UU principles, sexuality education, eliminating violence against women, feminism, education, place, leadership and many other topics reflected deep planning and attention to detail.

Of unexpected interest was the UUA Presidential Forum, featuring the three female candidates standing for that office at this year's General Assembly. Revs. Jeanne Pupke, Alison Miller and Susan Frederick-Gray spoke openly and cooperatively about their visions and strategies for the challenging role of UUA President.

Yet above and beyond all the fascinating information and discussions, I found the most valuable and memorable part of the Convocation was the connections I made with UU women from all over the US and around the world, women who share my values and who I now can reach out to in times of celebration or when I need support. There's a wonderful sense of empowerment that comes from such connections and from simply being in a large gathering of motivated, committed women, all working to make their corner of the world a better place.

I thoroughly recommend that you make an effort to attend the next IWC in 2019 or whenever the opportunity arises. Your life and experience of UUism will be enriched and enlivened. (Men can also attend.)

[As most of you know, Renee is the President of the Brisbane UU Fellowship. She attended the Convocation following her connection with several IWC members on the Bolivian Pilgrimage in 2015. (Please see her article in the Autumn 2016 issue. Shortly after that event, she was invited to join the IWC's Global Sisters Leadership Council.)

The International Women's Convocation (formerly the International Convocation of UU Women) works in conjunction with the ICUU, though most of its funding appears to be donations from the US. It's a bit confusing that they also call their conferences 'Convocations' (hence, Renee's title) but the first of those was held in Houston, Texas, in 2009 and the second was in Marosvásárhely, Transylvania, in 2012.

The IWC's current president is Arlene Johnson of All Souls UU Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who is also a former president of the UU Women's Federation. See their website: [www.intlwomensconvo.org](http://www.intlwomensconvo.org) for further information.]



# ANZUUA CONFERENCE October 20-22, 2017

## **Unitarianism in our Region – Flourishing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Hello Friends,

It's that time again! Time to put the biennial ANZUUA conference in your calendar! We've got an exciting agenda lined up for you, including a Keynote Address by Dr. Hugh Mackay.

The theme for this year's conference is: *How Unitarianism flourishes and grows in Australasia. What is church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? How can we ride the waves of change? Vital, Relevant, Attractive.*

The conference will be held at the Unitarian Meeting House, 99 Osmond Terrace, Norwood. The Keynote Address will be at the Norwood Town Hall. Details of registration, other information and accommodation options will be available soon.

### **ANZUUA CONFERENCE – SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

#### **FRIDAY, 20 OCTOBER**

7:30 pm – 9:00 pm                      Keynote address by Dr. Hugh Mackay  
(Books will be available for purchase and signing, EFTPOS available)

#### **SATURDAY, 21 OCTOBER**

8:00 am – 9:00 am                      Registration opens  
9:00 am                                      Conference begins with a *Welcome to Country*  
9:15 am – 10:00 am                      Main presentations (Youth, Outreach, Social Justice, Worship)  
    Musical Interlude  
10:15 am – 10:45 am                      Morning Tea  
10:45 am – 11:30 am                      International Presentations  
    Musical Interlude  
11:45 am – 12:45 pm                      Breakout discussion sessions  
12:45 pm – 1:45 pm                      Lunch  
1:45 pm – 2:45 pm                      Report back and open forum  
    Musical Interlude

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Afternoon Tea   |
| 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm | Biennial General Meeting (including Meadville Lombard Report) |
| 6:00 pm           | Pre-Dinner drinks   |
| 6:30 pm           | Dinner and Music  |

## **SUNDAY 22 OCTOBER**

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 9:00 am  | Carryover business from Biennial General Meeting (if any)                                 |
| 10:00 am | Worship Service   |
| 11:00 am | Morning Tea   |
| 12:15 pm | Depart for Shady Grove  |
| 1:00 pm  | Potluck lunch at Shady Grove  |
| 2:30 pm  | Transport to the Airport. (Please note that Shady Grove is 1 hour from Adelaide Airport.) |

Registration will close on 15<sup>th</sup> September and we are offering *Earlybird* discounts for registrations received by 31<sup>st</sup> July. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us ([unitariansa@bigpond.com](mailto:unitariansa@bigpond.com)) and we'll do our best to get you sorted. We can't wait to see you in October!

Your hosts,  
The Unitarian Church of South Australia

## **REPORTS FROM MEMBER GROUPS**

*Adelaide UC* had a hugely successful evening in March with their 'The mUUsitarians Fringe Show', which featured a varied program of talented musicians from the congregation and some friends. (Those who attend the ANZUUA Conference Dinner in October can look forward to a performance by some of these.) In March and April, they have their 'Annual Month of Observance' and, this year, the commitment will be to do an act of random kindness to a stranger each day. Research has shown that kindness spreads like a virus – if someone is the recipient of a random act of kindness, that person will act kindly towards four strangers.

Members have been holding a weekly vigil for refugees on the steps of Parliament House every Friday afternoon for several months and, on 09 April, some of them joined the Palm Sunday Walk for Refugees. They are also forming groups to help challenge Australia's weak climate change policies and in response to the recent national Interfaith marriage equality conference in Canberra.

The Sunday Club children's group had an overnight stay at the Shady Grove hostel on 22–23 April. (The Shady Grove Chapel is a historic Unitarian church in the Adelaide Hills, where AUC members join the local congregation for a Vespers Service and potluck dinner once a month.)

On 21 May, their minister, Rev. Rob MacPherson, visited the First UU Fellowship of Melbourne for a full day of activities. In June, he will be going to the European Unitarians Together conference in Germany (see p. 3), where he will lead two workshops on 'Three Models of Religious Pluralism' and 'The Future of Church and the Church of the Future'.

(Continued on p. 10.)

## THE FATHER'S DAY SONG



Every day you keep me safe and warm and loved and fed;  
But today's your special day. It was my turn instead.  
So I got up at 5 a.m.. I've-been working hard since then  
Some things I didn't get quite right, next year I'll try again.

Just for you I did my best to cut my own hair;  
Some places came out pretty good. And some are kind of bare.  
I washed all your nicest clothes, but the washer wasn't free;  
So I used the dishwasher. Pretty smart of me!

*(Chorus:)*

Remember no one's perfect Every kid has faults.  
Remember it's the thought that counts, more than the results.  
My heart was in the right place even though I did it wrong;  
It was all to say on Father's day my love for you is strong



I vacuumed really quietly, I didn't use the power.  
I cleaned your dirty iPad screen, I held it in the shower.  
I painted all the ceilings, it was easy with the mop.  
Now the carpet's painted too with cool rainbow drops!

I answered all your work emails with "Just leave me alone"  
And we gave a prince from Scamdinavia a loan.  
I watered all the house plants with the garden hose;  
I forgot to turn it off sometimes, that's how it goes

*(Chorus)*

Your car's shiny inside and out with lots of olive oil;  
Who knew that oatmeal splatters up so high and far on boil?  
I tried to make you orange juice but I spilled it on the floor;  
I tried to fry you bacon, we don't have a stove no more



Since you can't really cook this week, I called the pizza place;  
I emptied out the fridge and freezer, so there's enough space.  
They should be here any time, two dozen pizza pies;  
I paid with your credit card, I hope that you're surprised.

Bryant Oden (2013)

The proper title of this unusual item is 'My Heart was in the Right Place Even Though I Did it Wrong' – it was adapted from an earlier Mother's Day song. However, Father's Day is celebrated on the third Sunday in June in some 76 countries, so that will be my excuse for presenting this song now.

Singer-songwriter Bryant Oden was born in 1969 and started writing songs well before he graduated with a BA in Humanities from Oklahoma City University. He then moved to Colorado and worked in jobs ranging from childcare counsellor and supervisor at a treatment centre for children to teaching English as a Second Language at college level to being an Internet entrepreneur. He also spent ten years in Canada, where he completed a Master of Educational Psychology degree at the University of Alberta in 2006.

Many of Bryant's songs were for children, some 80 of which have been recorded on CDs, while others (like the one above) are for adolescents and adults. Since 2009, he has placed 200 songs on YouTube and iTunes, which have received an incredible 500 million views on the former medium. First amongst those, with 250 million views, was 'The Duck Song', which was animated by a 14-year-old (!) graphic artist named Forrest Whaley and published in book form here by Scholastic Australia a few years ago. You can find both songs and many others on Bryant's website ([www.songdrop.com](http://www.songdrop.com)) or on YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)), just by searching the writer's name.



## THE WANTS OF MAN

'Man wants but little here below,  
Nor wants that little long.'\*  
'Tis not with me exactly so;  
But 'tis so in the song.  
My wants are many and, if told,  
Would muster many a score;  
And were each wish a mint of gold,  
I still should long for more.

What first I want is daily bread –  
And canvas-backs, – and wine –  
And all the realms of nature spread  
Before me, when I dine.  
Four courses scarcely can provide  
My appetite to quell;  
With four choice cooks from France  
beside,  
To dress my dinner well.

What next I want, at princely cost,  
Is elegant attire:  
Black sable furs for winter's frost,  
And silks for summer's fire,  
And Cashmere shawls, and Brussels lace  
My bosom's front to deck, –  
And diamond rings my hands to grace,  
And rubies for my neck.

I want (who does not want?) a wife, –  
Affectionate and fair;  
To solace all the woes of life,  
And all its joys to share.  
Of temper sweet, of yielding will,  
Of firm, yet placid mind, –  
With all my faults to love me still  
With sentiment refined.

And as Time's car incessant runs,  
And Fortune fills my store,  
I want of daughters and of sons  
From eight to half a score.  
I want (alas! can mortal dare  
Such bliss on earth to crave?)  
That all the girls be chaste and fair, –  
The boys all wise and brave.

I want a warm and faithful friend,  
To cheer the adverse hour,  
Who ne'er to flatter will descend,  
Nor bend the knee to power, –  
A friend to chide me when I'm wrong,  
My inmost soul to see;  
And that my friendship prove as strong  
For him as his for me.

I want the seals of power and place,  
The ensigns of command;  
Charged by the People's unbought grace  
To rule my native land.  
Nor crown nor sceptre would I ask  
But from my country's will,  
By day, by night, to ply the task  
Her cup of bliss to fill.

I want the voice of honest praise  
To follow me behind,  
And to be thought in future days  
The friend of human-kind,  
That after ages, as they rise,  
Exulting may proclaim  
In choral union to the skies  
Their blessings on my name.

These are the Wants of mortal Man, –  
I cannot want them long,  
For life itself is but a span,  
And earthly bliss – a song.  
My last great Want – absorbing all –  
Is, when beneath the sod,  
And summoned to my final call,  
The Mercy of my God.

John Quincy Adams (1840)



\* A quotation from Oliver Goldsmith's novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766).

The reason for this item will be seen on pp. 14/15 – few people know today that Adams was a serious reader, translator and writer of poetry from his youth and continuing through his entire life. His works, 350 of which still survive, included secular verse, hymns and versifications of the Psalms. After Adams' death, many of his poems were collected in *Poems of Religion and Society* (1848), edited by Senators Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri and John Davis of Massachusetts (top two pictures).

The above poem is the first in that book but it was originally published in 1841, probably in a newspaper and definitely anonymously. The Unitarian essayist and poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson (bottom picture), included it in his book, *Parnassus* (1880), which was a collection of his favourite poems.

## **(Reports from Member Groups, *cont'd.*)**

The Committee of Management has commissioned a strategic plan for developing the church's public identity in Adelaide, thanks to the generous financial support of several members. Work on a planning document started this month.

*Auckland UC* heard their minister, Rev. Clay Nelson, speak on the following topics in March: 'Building a Beloved Community', 'Unitarians Seeking Sanctuary', 'Reforming the Reformation' and 'Loving Your Political Opponent: Creative Conflict'. In April, he spoke on 'Roots and Wings of a Unitarian Lent', 'Ignore Easter? So Tempting', 'In Anticipation of Anzac Day' and 'A Fishy Love'. There were also guest appearances by a Latin American choir in April and by members Lynne O'Brien and Barbara Thomborson, presenting 'ChristoPaganism' in May.

The Adult Religious Education program started in March with a three-part series on 'Making Sense of the Treaty of Waitangi' (between the British and the Maori), intended to provide basic information about why it was written, what it says, what went wrong, and current treaty issues. Beginning in April, Rev. Nelson will facilitate 13 sessions on 'Creative Conflict Skills'.

In March, \$1200 collected at the Christmas Eve service was donated to UNICEF's efforts on behalf of Syrian children and to a NZ NGO helping asylum seekers. Outreach efforts to help dyslexic children in Tonga and Samoa are continuing, with particular success in the former thanks to government cooperation. At the end of April, the annual canvass will kick off with a Quiz Night and congregational supper.

*Brisbane UU Fellowship* had a presentation by Renee Hills in March in which she introduced, via pictures and stories, friends she had made at the Meadville-Lombard Theological School in Chicago and the International Women's Conference in Monterey, California. Also in that month, member Lynn Kelly presented a thought-provoking service on 'Fear and Love at the End of Life'. 'Listening' was the topic for 09 April and Earth Day was celebrated on 23 April with a guest presentation by Dr. Chris Dalton on the Australian landscape and its role as a 'Beloved Companion'.

As an alternative to the ubiquitous Mother's Day themes, the service on 14 May was dedicated to 'Flags for Peace', a moving ceremony from the Japanese Byakko Shinko Kai organisation that has been saying prayers for world peace for the past 60 years. The BUUF's ceremony was part of an annual event – the Symphony of Peace Prayers – held at the Fuji Peace Park in Japan and around the world. That service was led by local Byakko member, Babs O'Connor, as they said a prayer for every country in the UN, as well as all others.

Planning is in hand for the creation of a small pastoral care group and also for the Annual Retreat in July. Members are contributing funds for our education scholarship for Filipino student, Doni Gino.

Renee Hills has become a key organiser for a Queensland branch of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (QARRCC). This multi-faith group is crafting a letter to the Queensland government calling for a stop to the massive Adani coal mine and a commitment to renewable energy. A prayer vigil is also planned in June. QARRCC also hosted a training session in Non-Violent Direct Action on 08 April, which over 20 people from a wide range of faith traditions attended. Renee and James Hills also joined a gathering of eco-groups organised by the Queensland Churches Environmental Network and met members from various Christian denominations.

*Christchurch Unitarians* have continued their series of services on the Seven Principles with Brenda Crocker speaking on the 1<sup>st</sup> Principle, "The inherent worth and dignity of every person", on 09 April; Natalia Artemiev on the 6<sup>th</sup> Principle, "The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all", on 14 May; and Jim Lovell-Smith on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Principle, "Justice, equity and compassion in human relations", on 11 June.

Their service on 09 July will be followed by the Annual General Meeting.

*First UU Melbourne Fellowship* had a service in March led by Claire Butler, on 'Music as a Human Right', accompanied by her son, Matt, on guitar. Their April meeting, brought forward because their meeting place was not available on the Easter weekend, incorporated an introduction to a religious education workshop series called 'Cakes for the Queen of Heaven'.

This UUA program is a ‘woman honouring adult Religious Education curriculum’, written by Rev. Shirley Ranck, that examines pre-Judeo Christian cultures that may have worshipped the female as divine. They plan to hold workshops on the first Saturday of each month with individual reflections and group activities, hoping to bring in other women who might be interested in this UU feminist theology. The session in May covered the first topic, ‘Reclaiming Our Female Bodies’, which generated some good discussion.

On 21 May, they welcomed Rev. Rob Macpherson from Adelaide, who attended their Committee meeting and conducted the afternoon service, titled: ‘Is there a Uniquely UU Spirituality?’. After that, he facilitated a workshop on ‘Growing Churches/Fellowships for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’, leaving them with some practical ideas for their future growth.

Some of their members attended the Palm Sunday March on 09 April outside the State Library, brandishing their banner. Given the strong American influence amongst the congregation, they have also contacted a group associated with the US Consulate-General who are following up on the Women’s Marches in January. A few members attended the Medical Association for the Prevention of War’s Anzac Eve function at Trades Hall.

*Melbourne UC* heard the Honorary Secretary, Marion Harper, speak on ‘The Forces of Evil are Gathering’ in the second half of March, followed by Barry Jones, writer, social activist and former politician on ‘Old and New Jobs/Elites v. Populists/Trumpism’. The month of April featured Luba Grigorovitch of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union on ‘Public Transport, Public Hands’, member Richard Tate on ‘Hamburger with Nothing, Mark II’, peace activist Dr. Hannah Middleton on ‘What’s Wrong with ANZAC?’ and Kelvin Thomson, erstwhile federal politician, on the work of the Alliance for Gambling Reform.

The Walk for Justice for Refugees on Palm Sunday attracted a very large crowd of 10,000, including a good contingent of MUC members. The Social Justice Action group screened an excellent film, *Guarding the Galilee*, about the fight against the Adani coal mine in Queensland. The film is supported by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and was produced by well-known people in the film industry here, so they recommend it to all ANZUUA members. The official launch of the new state-of-the-art theatrical facilities will take place after the service on 11 June, featuring the film, *I, Daniel Blake*.

*Perth Unitarians* heard the third instalment of their ‘Who Was Jesus’ series in March, presented by member Gordon McDonald, followed by Rev. John Shepherd (previous Anglican Dean of Perth for 25 years). He addressed the topic of judgment – whether there will be one and should we be afraid? In April, their minister, Rev. Peter Ferguson spoke on his experiences in South Africa and, on Easter Sunday, Prof. Paul Hardisty spoke on the big water-related challenges of the next twenty years. (He has a PhD in Environmental Engineering, is Adjunct Professor at the University of Western Australia and a visiting professor at the Imperial College in London, and was Director of CSIRO Land and Water Research.)

The speakers in May were Rev. Ferguson on ‘Symptoms of a Sick Planet’ and member Goff Barrett-Lennard on ‘Oh God! – Differing Beliefs Humans Die For and From’. The first speaker in June will be Prof. William Loader, presenting ‘Sex and Celibacy’. Some members are attending Progressive Christianity classes with the Uniting Church.

*Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship* started March with a musical session, ‘Remembering Leonard Cohen’, recalling his music and his life, led by Carolyn Donnelly, Barbara O’Brien and Eric Stevenson. (See pp. 12/13 for more about this.) Later in that month, Martin Horlacher spoke on ‘What Would Confucius Do?’, applying his philosophy to today’s world, and Rev. Geoff Usher presented ‘Two Travel Stories’, asking: What sort of impression do we leave with the people who happen to meet us as we travel life’s journey?

In April, Rev. Usher spoke on ‘What Unites Unitarians’. The AGM followed with no changes to the Committee except for two vacant positions, which it is hoped will be filled by younger members. The month ended with Jan Tendys leading discussion on ‘The Sensible Centre – Is That Us?’ and Martin Horlacher speaking on ‘Control-Alt-Right’, exploring the influence of ultra-conservative nationalism. (There were only three services in that month because their meeting place was closed on Easter Sunday.) In May, Max Lawson spoke on Charles Dickens, Rev. Usher examined what binds Unitarians in ‘Alone Together’ and Martin Horlacher presented ‘Holy Days and Holidays’, suggesting that we celebrate Moon Landing Day and Polio Vaccine Day. The speakers in June will be Ruby Willis on ‘Colouring Outside the Lines’, Colin Whatmough on ‘Why the West is Losing’ and Max Lawson on D.H. Lawrence.

(Almost finished! – please see p. 16.)

## HALLELUJAH!

By Rev. Eric Stevenson

It was the choir singing the chorus at a wedding ceremony in 1997 that I first put contemporary meaning into Leonard Cohn's favourite song. Because I was taught the meaning of the word 'Hallelujah' at Bible College, I understood that it was a kind of glorified 'hooray'. But the choir members didn't have a clue about the etymology; they (and the wedding guests) just enjoyed the melody. But if Leonard understood its literal meaning, what was he hooraying about?

To try and find out, I go to the lyrics of the first two popular verses which are most likely his. They make reference to a blend of his Jewish acquaintance with the stories in the Scriptures: the shepherd boy harpist playing for the depressive King Saul, David's affair with Bathsheba, and Delilah's seduction of Samson. The genius in the words is that, although Leonard gets these familiar Old Testament bible stories confused, the song still carries a powerful message.

Well I heard there was a sacred chord  
That David played and it pleased the Lord;  
But you don't really care for music do you?  
Well it goes like this: the for fourth, the fifth,  
The minor fall and the major lift,  
The baffled king composing Hallelujah!

Your faith was strong but you needed proof,  
You saw her bathing on the roof,  
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you.  
She tied you to her kitchen chair,  
She broke your throne and cut your hair;  
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah!

In verse one, some commentators think he begins by addressing God. No, I think he is addressing the King Saul inside of all of us. David the shepherd boy played "cunningly" (I Samuel, 16:16) and it pleased "the baffled Lord,( King Saul) composing Hallelujah". Our baffled King Sauls in this generation, to whom Leonard sings with healing power, are many and varied. Our King Sauls, like the real one, can be given to bouts of deep depression. Despite having attained positions of self-sufficiency and comfort and independence and comparative affluence, they no longer find personal fulfilment in life.

Saul, the king of Israel had acceded to a throne and achieved a kingdom, but lost his sense of achievement. The Spirit of the Lord had departed from him and an evil spirit troubled him (v. 14–15). *So Leonard's music assumes a spiritual role, driving out our demons and teaching us to sing Hallelujah in praise of the life-energy which motivates us and which is responsible for the bad as well as the good.* In 1985, at the time of composing 'Hallelujah!', he said that it was his desire to affirm his faith in life. And he does so without the trappings of doctrine and dogma, as he said, "not in some formal religious way, but with enthusiasm, with emotion".

And he is not alone. Many others in the classical and pop music scene have been using music to lift their spirits and ours. Franz Schubert in his 'Ode to Music' sings, "Noble art, how often in dark hours, when the savage ring of life tightens round me, have you kindled warm love in my heart, have transported me to a better world. *Often a sigh has escaped from your harp*, a sweet sacred harmony of yours, has opened up the heavens to better times for me. O blessed art, (Music) I thank you for that!" Note Schubert's reference, no doubt, to our Bible story.

In verse two, Leonard is now talking firstly to another King inside of us, the new King David. He moves from responding to our endogenous moods to coping with our failures and our disasters,...our secret sins, even our evil thoughts, our suppressed guilt, and our haunting sense of imperfection. He starts with a full confrontation of our natural sexual desires and criminally selfish passions. The original King David used and abused his power in order to satisfy his lust for the woman bathing on the roof. He got her husband killed by putting him in the front line of battle! How could he with integrity continue to reign in shame as the divinely chosen leader of God's people? And even harder, how could he cope with his self condemnation or face public ridicule for being such an idiot, seduced not by an innocent naked body but by the greedy desires and lascivious thoughts of his own mind?

Secondly in verse two, Leonard addresses the Samson inside of us. He is referring to the Samson of his Jewish scriptures who made the mistake of rushing into a foolish relationship. He is like the immature teenager whom we learned about in the news last week, who shared her private life on the internet with her murderer. Our Samsons lack the wisdom to share their confidences appropriately. This Samson shared his private life with a deceitful and manipulative Delilah. She betrayed his deepest secret, exhausted the source of his energy and robbed him of his dignity. “She tied you to her kitchen chair, she broke your throne and cut your hair.”

Thus in one brilliant literary stroke, Leonard plunges us from reigning on our thrones to being tied to a kitchen chair by our own stupidity and naiveté! In his commentary he says that we humans are “irresistibly attracted to each other, and irresistibly lonely for each other”. And to this we could add, “irresistibly in search of sharing our inner self with another understanding and accepting human being.” But as both victims and beneficiaries of such a wondrous set of emotions and desires, we have no alternative but to learn to cope with them. In teaching us to do so and to, (as Leonard has written) “embrace it all”, his lyrics take us from our highs to the pits. And, from those humiliating places, he inspires us to rise up and sing, “Hallelujah!”.

*(Closing Words)*

We go out from this place with gratitude for every vocalist and every musician who has helped to lift our depression, calm our spirit, enthuse our endeavours, strengthen our resolve and affirm us with joy and a sense of fulfilment. We salute the lyricists and composers to whose artistry we have been privileged to listen and gifted to appreciate. As we go back into life, with all its ups and downs and all our strengths and failings, may we keep learning to sing the Hallelujah, again and again and again. “Hallelujah!”.

[Biography of Leonard Cohen presented by Carolyn Donnelly]

Born in September 1934 into a middle class Jewish family in Montreal, Canada, he was a musician, singer, songwriter, poet, novelist and painter. His works commented on and explored religion, politics, philosophy, social justice and personal relationships, often in cryptic, symbolic and metaphoric interpretation.

Educated at McGill University, he studied English; however, disappointed with his lack of financial success as a writer, he moved to the US to pursue a folk singing, and song-writing career. In the 1960s, many singers included his songs in their repertoires: Judy Collins, Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, latterly Jennifer Warnes, Jeff Buckley and KD Lang, to name a few.

By the end of the 90s, Cohen discovered that his manager and now former friend had embezzled most of his finances, leaving him almost penniless. He then reinvented himself and embarked on a series of world tours from 2003 to 2010, taking in London, Europe, New Zealand and Australia, receiving rapturous receptions and many standing ovations. Many of the audiences said that “his concerts were like attending a religious experience.”

Cohen observed Jewish faith all his life, and this was reflected in some of his music and lyrics which included Old Testament quotes. He also became very interested and involved with Buddhism, and was ordained as a Zen Buddhist monk in 1996. As well, he showed a genuine interest in Jesus Christ saying: “He may be the most beautiful guy who walked the face of this earth. Any guy who says ‘Blessed are the poor. Blessed are the meek’ has got to be a figure of unparalleled generosity and insight and madness...A man who declared himself to stand among the thieves, the prostitutes and the homeless. His position cannot be comprehended. It is an inhuman generosity. A generosity that would overthrow the world if it was embraced because nothing would weather that compassion.” Powerful words.

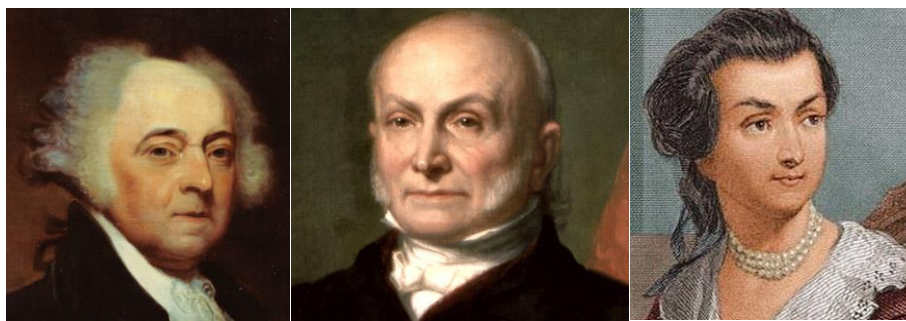
He died at age 82 in November 2016, leaving two children and three grandchildren.

[This article is adapted from a report in the April 2017 issue of *Esprit*, the monthly publication of the Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship in Sydney. Rev. Eric Stevenson is a retired Uniting Church minister and has been a member of SoLUF for seven years. He is also Coordinator of the Sydney branch of the Centre for Progressive Religious Thought ([www.cprtfreedomtoexplore.org.au](http://www.cprtfreedomtoexplore.org.au)).

Carolyn Donnelly is a member of the Committee who puts together their program of speakers, also arranging for guest presenters from time to time. She also circulates some interesting reading to members who are online, often inspiring those who like to send emails to politicians.]

## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, UNITARIAN PRESIDENT

By Mike McPhee



In this year, 11 July will mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of John Quincy Adams, the sixth president of the United States. While he only served one term in that capacity, he spent most of his life in government positions ranging from diplomat to member of Congress to Secretary in the Cabinet. As we shall see, he was one of only two presidents who remained in politics after holding that office – indeed, it is argued that he made his greatest contributions to the country in that ‘second life’.

However, it is impossible to write about Adams without saying something about his famous father, John Adams (1735–1826, pictured left), the first vice-president and second president of the US. He, too, was a diplomat, served only a single term as president and sided with the proto-Unitarian liberal wing of the Congregationalist Church. The younger Adams was the second of five children, all born in the family home at Braintree (now Quincy), Massachusetts; his mother, Abigail (1744–1818, pictured right), was the daughter of a liberal Congregationalist minister and a staunch advocate of women’s rights.

Educated by private tutors, Adams accompanied his father when the latter became the ambassador to France (1778–9) and the Netherlands (1780–2). During that time, he studied at Leiden University, matriculating in 1781. He then went to Russia for three years as secretary to his father’s colleague, Francis Dana, also visiting Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Prussia in that time. Adams then returned home and was admitted to Harvard University with advanced standing, graduating with a BA in 1787. He then studied law, received an MA from Harvard in 1790 and was admitted to the Bar the next year.

Adams soon became bored with legal practice and took up public speaking and writing, instead. In 1794, he was appointed ambassador to the Netherlands by President Washington, after which he was ambassador to Prussia during his father’s presidency (1797–1801). During a diplomatic visit to London in 1795, he met Louisa Catherine Johnson, the British-born daughter of an American businessman, and married her there in 1797. Adams’ diplomatic career was cut short when his father was defeated by Thomas Jefferson, after which he returned to the US with his wife.

Adams’s first elected office was as a Massachusetts state senator in 1802, but the Federalist state legislature elected him to the federal Senate a year later. However, he proved to be an independent voter, supporting some Republican measures and sometimes stood alone against popular measures. In the process, he alienated himself from both political parties and, when the Massachusetts legislature called a special session in 1807 to recall him a year before his term was to expire, Adams resigned.

While he was in the Senate, Adams also held the position of Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard (1805–09), which he enjoyed so much that he wanted to remain in academe indefinitely. However, President James Madison appointed him ambassador to Russia in 1809, where he spent five years. He then served as one of five American commissioners who negotiated the Treaty of Ghent that ended the War of 1812–14, after which he was the ambassador to the UK in 1815–17. Adams reached his highest diplomatic position when he became Secretary of State under President James Monroe in 1817–25.

The presidential election of 1824 was a contest between three of Monroe’s top officers (including Adams) and General Andrew Jackson (of Battle of New Orleans fame). The latter won the most popular votes and seats in the Electoral College but not a majority of either, so a contingent election was held in the House of Representatives and Adams emerged as the winner.

He swore the Oath of Office on a book of constitutional law, rather than the Bible, and embarked on an ambitious program of building national roads and canals – this at a time when such federal activity was viewed with suspicion. He also proposed a national university, observatory and naval college, and sought treaties of reciprocity (free trade) with Mexico and a number of European states.

Unfortunately, Adams' efforts were often frustrated by furious opposition from Jackson and others, who accused him of favouring big government, the northeastern states, industry over agriculture, and Abolition. Losing control of Congress in the 1826 half-term election only made his situation more untenable, as Jackson's cohorts forced through a tariff bill that damaged his credibility. Running for re-election in 1828 with little chance of success, he was overwhelmed by Jackson in a vicious campaign.

Despite a temporary sense of relief, Adams felt the need to restore his tarnished reputation. Thus, at the half-term election in 1830, he ran for Congress as a Representative for Massachusetts, which office he would retain for 17 years under the presidencies of Jackson, Martin van Buren, William Harrison, John Tyler and James Polk. Any thoughts he had about a light workload in Washington were promptly dashed when the Speaker of the House, Andrew Stevenson made him the chairman of the Committee on Commerce and Manufacture. He later chaired the House Committees on Indian Affairs and Foreign Affairs.

It was during those years that Adams gained great political respect for his principled stands on a number of contentious issues. Foremost amongst these was slavery, which the Southern states had prevented from being discussed in Congress by means of a 'gag rule'. Adams cleverly tabled a petition from a slave in Georgia that provoked the representatives from the slave states into censuring him. This enabled him to conduct a lengthy defence in which he repeatedly attacked slavery and slaveholders. In 1841, he joined a case in the Supreme Court that ultimately freed a group of Africans who had taken control of the Spanish slave ship they were on and sailed it into American waters.

Adams opposed the annexation of Texas in 1845, on the grounds that it would be a slave state but also because he thought it was wrong to impose American citizenship on the largely Mexican population there. In keeping with that, he strongly condemned the subsequent Mexican War, along with other Unitarians, such as Henry David Thoreau. He had risen from his desk in the House of Representatives to vote 'No' to a bill to honour veterans of that war when he suffered a massive stroke and died two days later on 23 February 1838.

From his young days, Adams had struggled with the Calvinist doctrines of most Congregationalists and the Unitarian doctrines espoused by people like William Ellery Channing, whom he admired but didn't entirely agree with. He rejected Joseph Priestley's materialism but also the Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson. In 1821, he became one of the founding members of the First Unitarian Church of Washington, which he attended whenever he was there.

Adams' bier in the Capitol was visited by thousands of people before his funeral was held in the House. He was buried in the crypt below the First Parish Church in Quincy, where his parents were already interred.

## **VALE, PETER BERRY**

Peter Berry, a long-time member of the Sydney Unitarian Church and, later, of the Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship, passed away on 02 May in his early 80s. He had been a teacher all his working life, having excelled in classical and modern languages from his school days and majored in French, Latin and English at the University of Sydney. He then taught in both country and metropolitan high schools, finally reaching the levels of Head Teacher and Deputy Principal. His idea of retiring at 60 was to work at a prominent private school for five years and then to teach English as a Second Language to migrants in TAFE until he was 70.

Peter was brought up as a Methodist and had considered training for the ministry. He joined SUC some time before 1976, when he became the lay assistant minister. He later served as the lay minister in 2001–03, and again his services were considered scholarly, liberal and well delivered. With SoLUF, he wrote for their *Esprit* newsletter, served on their Committee, led occasional services, and enhanced the singing with his rich tenor. He was a great admirer of Gandhi (who he thought was as important as Jesus), Transcendentalists like Thoreau, and Al Gore (for his environmentalism).

[Information provided by Peter Crawford of SUC and Jan Tendys of SoLUF.]

### **(Europeans in Europe, cont'd.)**

Recently, some materials were discovered in North America that were written or translated by ministers of Finnish immigrant congregations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, which they also mean to publish.

The Unitarian Universalist Forum in Austria was formed not later than 2011, though at that time its only group was in Vienna. Now they also have a branch in Linz where they all meet once a month and, presumably, those from that northern city attend services in Vienna at other times. Like their German confreres, it appears that their theology is largely secular.

Lastly, I must mention the European Unitarian Universalists, originally founded by American expatriates in 1982. Over time, they have formed chapters in Paris, Kaiserlautern and Wiesbaden in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Basel and Geneva in Switzerland. In the process, they attracted some locals and accommodated them by moving away from standard UUA practices. Their services are lay-led and about half of their numbers are members-at-large; i.e., not living near one of their chapters but still entitled to attend the bi-annual Retreats and vote in the annual conferences. These Retreats are family affairs, lasting three days and hosted by the various groups in turn at picturesque country centres.

Clearly, Unitarianism in Europe is as diverse as the continent is and it will be interesting to see the future developments, especially in those countries whose groups are small and/or relatively new.

[Part 1 appeared in the previous issue and covered developments since 1700 in Transylvania, Hungary, Norway, Germany and Denmark. For those who just came in, three earlier instalments were printed last year: 'The Underground Unitarians' (Winter 20016), 'The Unitarian Spring' (Spring 2016) and 'Modern Unitarianism in Britain and Ireland' (Summer 2016).]

### **(Report from Member Groups, concl'd.)**

Sydney UC had a varied program of services in March and April, with two artistically inclined members presenting respectively on Australian iconography and landscape art. There was also a colourful presentation on Unitarianism in Eastern Canada and another by a new member on the Effective Altruism organisation. A Music Service based on Franz Schubert's 'Schwanengesang' ('Swan Song', his last composition) was led by the Music Director, Kaine Hayward, and another by his predecessor, Chad Vindin, who recently completed his post-graduate study in London and is now teaching there.

The program in May included a Music Service featuring Brahms' 3rd Violin Sonata and the former federal minister, Peter Baldwin, speaking on 'The Poison of Identity Politics'. In June, there will be a pictorial report on the Secretary and Treasurer's recent trip to Vietnam and a presentation on the life of Ava Gardner.

## **LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

Sorry for not getting this out before the end of May but I also have to produce an issue of my *SUN* (Sydney Unitarian News) magazine at this time of year. I'm also sorry for the patchwork nature of the 'Reports from Member Groups' and for any drastic editing needed to fit even that amount of space. I think, in future, either the groups will need to send more concise reports or I will have to allocate four pages for that purpose.

My final regret is that there wasn't more space for Peter Berry's obituary. However, SoLUF has made up for this with two pages in their most recent *Esprit* newsletter, which you can read at: [www.sydneyunitarians.org](http://www.sydneyunitarians.org).

I would like to add, with reference to the funny song on p. 8, that I chanced upon it quite by accident while desperately searching for something that had relevance to the month of June. I subsequently wrote to Bryant Oden, asking his permission to reprint the song and for some more information about him. He was more than pleased to let me use his song, saying that he had great respect for the UUs in his country, and he told me a good deal more about himself and his publications.

Please send any material you have for the next issue to me at: [michael.mcpheee@optusnet.com.au](mailto:michael.mcpheee@optusnet.com.au) and don't wait till August to do it.