



Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship
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 Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre
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Volume 5, Issue 6

June 2008

Schedule of Services

Services are held every Sunday at 10:30 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

Date	Speaker	Topic
7 June <u>NOTE CHANGE IN TOPIC</u>	Jan Tendys	A loving response to the newsletter of a friendly Church. How many people who come to Spirit of Life read <u>The Beacon</u> ? Should we be a more politically-minded Fellowship? Whose politics would prevail? Are we liberal or left wing? What about Unitarians who are liberal in religion and rightist in politics?
14 June	Rev. Steve Wilson	Re-Educating Isaac: A female friend turned to me and said, "Men You can't live with them, and yet the hunting season is so short!" This sermon looks at masculinity with clear eyes. On Sunday we will honour the virility men bring to the table of humanity and we will challenge the socialization that leaves so many men disconnected and violent.
21 June	Rev. Steve Wilson	What Would Buddha Do? On Letterman WWJD "What Would Jesus Do?" It is a great question. It is in reality oddly a very Unitarian Christian one to come from fundamentalist circles. Today we switch up this great question to ask what would happen if we switched gurus and refine the question to What Would Buddha Say if he was invited on to a late night talk show. (This will, in all likelihood be my last sermon, (sad to even write it now)
28 June	Ross McLuckie	"The Ultimate Investment". At the time of "Global Financial Crisis" we're thinking about our financial investment, but how about that "ultimate investment" - in yourself !

As soon as he came he is leaving

I write this in nearly mid May, but I know what I have to write. I can't submit just a piece about this or that UU, I have to say goodbye, because as the fates work, the next newsletter will be my last month with you. By the time the following newsletter is being constructed by our Jan, I will be complaining about the high cost of taking the train to the airport. Yuck! But sad, as I write I am smiling at the thoughts of:

Margaret H and I catching up while we set up;
Margaret A and I talking movies, avocado's and radio;
Martin and I drinking beers in Manly and sketching out the Les Darcy story;
Janet H and I eating prawns, complaining about the US, and laughing at the rest of you;
Candace and I whingeing about something and comparing Australian slang;
Ross and I riding the Northern Beaches and laughing;
Jan T and I sitting quietly with cupcakes at the Kirribilli Sale;
swapping war stories about relationships with Geoff while dropping leaflets;
carrying heavy things with Sherman and his boys;
looking at Jane telling me at the migrant center that she thinks I am a gentleman;
and that she wants to have a conversation that language seems to forbid;
Laurence and I working smartly and swiftly on the Easter Ad;
drinking a glass of champagne with Patty Ge on my grassy porch;
walking the zoo with Anthony;
and more.

I am very happy I came, sorry I have not helped us grow more.
I will be leaving on June 23rd. THANKS SO MUCH FOR HAVING ME.

However, I have carved the last two Sundays in late February of next year. Save those spots on the calendar.

You have not seen the last of me. **Rev. Steve Wilson**

A "Farewell to Steve" will be held at Sherman's house, date to be arranged.

This will be a **fundraiser** for social conscience endeavours
Steve gets to choose the charity.

Fellowship News: Geoff was able to visit **Jason and Patricia** up on the central coast with a card and present for their baby, a little fellow whom we can regard, not too extravagantly perhaps, as our Spirit of Life baby since his parents chose to join us when first embarking on their married life.

Helen May, of CPRT, has died at age 43 of aortic embolism. As Eric says: life "is neither cruel nor kind, it is just there!! And we have the choice of making the most of its sacred mystery when hope is all we have left." Our Fellowship salutes her memory.

Part of the Service for Helen May

But as we part with her living presence, that does not mean we do so without hope! Every cosmic explosion is filled with new possibilities. Hopefully, a world of splendour can emerge out of chaos. When everything seems to be blown away, hope is always there; sometimes hope is all there is, hope that a new day will dawn following our dark night; hope that we can get up and try again, hope that we will be able to discover something beautiful and worth while which is a direct consequence of this, this ...big bang.....**plus the faith in ourselves and in each other to make it happen.** So in this service we can also help each other to do just that as Helen has had to do.

Eric Stevenson

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Small is Beautiful

Margaret Armstrong contributed these words written by John Maynard Keynes:

“I sympathise with those who minimize, rather than those who would maximize, economic entanglement between nations. Ideas, knowledge, art, hospitality, travel; these are things which of their nature should be international. But let goods be homespun whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible; and above all, let finance be primarily national”.

Margaret’s comment:

If Keynes had had his way, there would have been minimal global finance, and therefore no Global Financial Crisis!

I am surprised by the Ghandian concept of “homespun”.

Comment by Jan Tendys

it reminds me of that brief, exploding star of the sixties and seventies [E. F. Schumacher](#). who wrote “Small is Beautiful – Economics as if People Mattered”.

Certainly in these days when peak oil is playing peek-a-boo with us and we all finally know putting carbon dioxide into the air is not a good idea, it does seem strange that we are burning up oil transporting oranges from California to sell in Australian cities, and sheep from Australia to the Middle East (at great stress to the animals incidentally) when the people there could eat homegrown camel or goat’s meat.

Of course, with climate change Australia’s orange growing areas may be virtual desert; but then so may California’s.

Quotes from Schumacher:

- *Man is small, and, therefore, small is beautiful*
- *"[A modern economist] is used to measuring the 'standard of living' by the amount of annual consumption, assuming all the time that a man who consumes more is 'better off' than a man who consumes less. A Buddhist economist would consider this approach excessively irrational: since consumption is merely a means to human well-being, the aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption. . . . The less toil there is, the more time and strength is left for artistic creativity. Modern economics, on the other hand, considers consumption to be the sole end and purpose of all economic activity."*
- *"It is clear, therefore, that Buddhist economics must be very different from the economics of modern materialism, since the Buddhist sees the essence of civilisation not in a multiplication of wants but in the purification of human character. Character, at the same time, is formed primarily by a man's work. And work, properly conducted in conditions of human dignity and freedom, blesses those who do it and equally their products."*
- *"The most striking thing about modern industry is that it requires so much and accomplishes so little. Modern industry seems to be inefficient to a degree that surpasses one's ordinary powers of imagination. Its inefficiency therefore remains unnoticed."*
- *"Ever bigger machines, entailing ever bigger concentrations of economic power and exerting ever greater violence against the environment, do not represent progress: they are a denial of wisdom. Wisdom demands a new orientation of science and technology towards the organic, the gentle, the non-violent, the elegant and beautiful."*
- *"[N]o system or machinery or economic doctrine or theory stands on its own feet: it is invariably built on a metaphysical foundation, that is to say, upon man's basic outlook on life, its meaning and its purpose. I have talked about the religion of economics, the idol worship of material possessions, of consumption and the so-called standard of living, and the fateful propensity that rejoices in the fact that 'what were luxuries to our fathers have become necessities for us.'*
- *"Systems are never more nor less than incarnations of man's most basic attitudes. . . . General evidence of material progress would suggest that the modern private enterprise system is--or has been--the most perfect instrument for the pursuit of personal enrichment. The modern private enterprise system ingeniously employs the human urges of greed and envy as its motive power, but manages to overcome the most blatant deficiencies of laissez-faire by means of Keynesian economic management, a bit of redistributive taxation, and the 'countervailing power' of the trade unions.*
- *"Can such a system conceivably deal with the problems we are now having to face? The answer is self-evident: greed and envy demand continuous and limitless economic growth of a material kind, without proper regard for conservation, and this type of growth cannot possibly fit into a finite environment. We must therefore study the essential nature of the private enterprise system and the possibilities of evolving an alternative system which might fit the new situation."*

"The way in which we experience and interpret the world obviously depends very much indeed on the kind of ideas that fill our minds. If they are mainly small, weak, superficial, and incoherent, life will appear insipid, uninteresting, petty, and chaotic. It is difficult to bear the resultant feeling of emptiness, and the vacuum of our minds may only too easily be filled by some big, fantastic notion – political or otherwise – which suddenly seems to illumine everything and to give meaning and purpose to our existence. It needs no emphasis that herein lies one of the great dangers of our time."

- *"Education can help us only if it produces "whole men". The truly educated man is not a man who knows a bit of everything, not even the man who knows all the details of all subjects (if such a thing were possible): the "whole man" in fact, may have little detailed knowledge of facts and theories, he may treasure the Encyclopædia Britannica because "she knows and he needn't", but he will be truly in touch with the centre." Wikipedia*

Worship

Rev. Steve Wilson

I have been working on a review and tips and observations for the SOL community; a somewhat objective Minister's perspective thing. This I wanted to share more broadly.

I walk into the pulpit every other week with a little fear. Some of the fear involves practical matters, like do I know the hymns, or am I missing any announcements. But the real anxiety relates to the quality of the worship. I am always worried, "Will this service take people anywhere?" "Will it touch people enough to warrant them getting dressed and out of bed on a Sunday?" In particular I ask myself will it reach those of you that I had in mind when I wrote it?" I want worship to have a bit of that pensive energy for you too. I want it be a balance in one moment between creating so comfortable a sense of being at home with loved ones that you lean back into each others' shoulders. In the next moment I want it to feel inspiring, the next jarring.

I want you to hold us, and in particular me, but in the deepest sense us, to high standards. I have a faith that it is our experiences that heal us. So bring the best and most vulnerable of yourself to church. And let's remember that that is what each precious one of us is bringing. If there is a prayer here it is that what we do together is always a balance between moments so comfortable that we want to take our shoes off and moments so holy that like Moses you feel like you need too. Demand nothing else. Let's be purified by a desire to love ourselves for what we are, and purified by a momentum of being better than we are. The Spirit of Life Community will rise or fall by Sunday's poignancy more than anything else.

Blue Mountains Weekend

Theme: **"Where to from Here for the Tolerant and Open-Minded Person?"** Plus some discussion about Building our own Theology . Leadership: Rev. Steve Wilson

Venue: The Holiday Ranch in the Blue Mountains (contact Eric Stevenson for actual location). Time: **Friday Evening June 5 till Sunday afternoon June 7**

Cost: Accommodation Free, Meals by Arrangement

Saturday, August 29 from 9.30 am till 4.30 pm Talk and discussion hosted by CPRT. The participants will gather in the courtyard of the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre at 9.30 am and the meetings will continue in The Gallery from 10 am till 4.30 pm. on that day

Topic: **Does God create Religion, or does Religion create God?**

This is the theme for a full day regional gathering with Dr. Val Webb, the author of "Like Catching Water in a Net". As well as having written several publications, Dr. Webb is a teacher, artist, scientist and theologian. In the course of her address, she will revisit a question asked for centuries. Our host and companion speaker for the occasion is Rev. Rex Hunt, the founder and National Director of the Centre for Progressive Religious Thought.

ANZUUA CONFERENCE 2009

Theme: Think Truly, Speak Bravely, Act Justly

Friday October 2 to Monday October 5
Venue: The Centre, Randwick

REGISTRATION DETAILS: Michael Spicer info_syduni@yahoo.com.au

After one look at this planet any visitor from outer space would say
"I want to see the manager."
-- William S. Burroughs

Would you care to join us?

Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter

If you would like to join us as an active member of Spirit of Life, please ring 9428-2244, consult our website www.sydneynunitarians.com or speak to one of our members before or after the Sunday service.

Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee.

Do you have a topic of a spiritual nature that you would like to share with the congregation?

As Unitarians, we support an "Open Pulpit" and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish.

Just let Candace know what you would like to speak about and when you are available and we will fit you into the schedule.

Also, please feel free to give us your feedback on any of the services. This is the best way to ensure the services address the needs of the congregation.