



Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship
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Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre
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Editor: Jan Tendys

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Schedule of Services

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

4 Nov. Martin Horlacher "In Time"

Time is of the essence, as they say, and I believe it is still on our side. But will time prove to be the enemy - or, in time, will we be dancing in the streets all night?

11 Nov. Warren Simmons "Introduction to the history and beliefs of the Latter Day Saints."

In 1820 a young boy of 14yrs of age has a visitation and some ten years later is directed to recreate the new-testament church on earth. Thus began the restoration movement which currently consists of some 300 different denominations that trace their beginnings to these events. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is the largest of these organisations. The history will be outlined as well as including some of the distinctive beliefs of two of the organisations that operate today.

18 Nov. Morandir Armson "J.R.R. Tolkien: Enigma and 'Sub-Creator'."

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was something of an enigma; a devout Catholic who created the most staggeringly complex fantasy world yet devised. But was his religion at odds with his fantasy creation? This talk will examine Tolkien's religion, in the light of his literary creations, and seek to explain the religious aspects of his work.

25 Nov. Rev. Dr. Ian Ellis-Jones "William Wordsworth: the Mystic Romantic"

Ian will speak about the poetry of William Wordsworth, a mystical giant of the Romantic Age who had an incredible insight into the illusory nature of the 'self' and who understood reality as a 'process' unfolding from one moment to the next.

2 December Martin Horlacher To be announced.

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**Letter to "The Sydney Morning Herald"** Wake up, Australia! Do you want better roads and better public transport? Improved education, a National Disability Scheme; more widely available dental services? Do you really expect to get these if there is no rise in taxation levels? It's easy to blame the pollies for everything, but in the area of taxes both major parties are doing what middle Australia says it wants As Ross Gittins has pointed out ("Don't judge government by its size", 14.3.12), in Denmark, Sweden and Finland, the rate of tax per GDP is between 44 and 49 per cent, compared to ours at 29 per cent. **Cont. p. 3**

# Pollie Bothering

Colin Whatmough

## Supporting TAFE

### A letter to

Mr Piccoli,  
NSW Minister for Education,  
Parliament House, Sydney, 2000

Dear Mr Piccoli,

I would like to make known my strong opposition to the proposed cutbacks to TAFE.

TAFE is the engine room of Australian productivity as it educates and trains the bulk of Australian skilled workers with the skills to effectively produce across a broad spectrum of vocations—covering all the trade areas.

When I take my car to the auto technician, I want to be, and deserve to be, assured that the technician is authorised and well trained—very important to my personal and family's safety. The same applies to the work of electricians, carpenters etc. etc. etc. and so it goes on in many areas of our lives. We should be nationally proud and encouraging of our Australian workmanship.

Another very important outreach of TAFE is in their New Start Programs assisting adult students who for a variety of reasons have had gaps in their school education, to readdress their deficiencies in order to be better placed to seek employment, give confidence in their current employment, lead into TAFE courses, increase their skills and in some cases open doors to higher education through TAFE Diploma courses that provide credits for University courses.

Central to the above programs is the excellent work done by the Adult Basic Education departments to increase literacy and numeracy skills generally and specifically relevant to course and work requirements. It takes a lot of courage and determination for these students to re-enter the learning environment and it is vital that they are taught by highly professional and sensitive teachers. Some of those students have expressed their deepest gratitude to their TAFE teachers on talk back shows on the radio lately. The stories have been very moving.

Instead of cutbacks TAFE should be

receiving an injection of extra funding to encourage more students to take the opportunities to be confidently skilled, to experience the satisfaction and respect of being productive and to escape from the tragedy of unemployment or being in jobs with few future prospects.

Such outcomes are in our *national interest* and NSW is the key state of the nation. It seems that we are killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Whatmough

**From your editor, Jan Tendys: I am guilty of the title for this article. We mustn't give the pollies the impression that all we care about is less tax. Speak up for what you care about! I invite members and friends of the Fellowship to make use of the information provided by Colin to write their own letter or email to Mr Piccoli.**

Google has supplied me with the following address information:

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli, MP  
Level 34 Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

- or use the address supplied by Colin.

Email:

[office@piccoli.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@piccoli.minister.nsw.gov.au)

According to NSW Teachers Federation On September 11 2012, the NSW state government announced it was slashing funding to education by \$1.7 billion.

This includes the loss of 800 TAFE employees over the next four years. The jobs cuts in TAFE include front line teachers.

TAFE students face a fee increase of 9.5%, and the student concession fee will almost double. This yet again puts obstacles in the way of students seeking to further their education in an effort to gain skills and employment that will help address the nationwide skills shortage.

All this is happening at the same time as Australia faces a serious skills shortage.

Federation have a "form submission" you can sign if you are too busy to write your own letter/email, but such submissions are

less effective than a personal one, even one considerably shorter than Colin's.

<http://www.nswtf.org.au/forms/send-protest-letter-mr-ofarrell-mr-piccoli.html>

**It is a requirement, even with an email, to add your full name and postal address and phone number if you want a reply.**

Some of Colin's other letters to politicians over the last couple of years:

- World poverty Increasing Australia's poor Foreign Aid to 1% GDP. **Gillard.**
- Requesting the Government to support Vietnam's campaign for war compensation from the US, for the victims of Agent Orange. **Rudd.**
- Opposition to women in the front line of combat. **Gillard.**
- Australia's deteriorating OECD educational ranking. **Gillard.**
- What is the Australian Government's and Opposition's policy re nuclear weapons on Australian soil. **Gillard. Abbott.**
- The Great Barrier Reef and coal development threat. **Gillard.**
- Dental health—need to be placed under Medicare. **Plibersek.**
- In the government's interest to stay in Afghanistan—questioning this view. **Smith.**
- Have we put in place rehabilitation from the "Gulf War Syndrome", caused by DU (depleted uranium) exposure? **Smith.**
- Selling arable land. **Combet. Abbott. O'Farrell.**
- Are the US armed forces using DU weaponry in exercises on Australian soil? **Smith.**

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Cont. from p. 1 In their view, it's worth it for the increased services. And increased fairness. Sadly, among middle Australia today, there's a strong mood of self-pity and greed. Not the least sad thing is the view apparently held by half the nation that it's not worth saving the planet for our grandchildren unless the cost to us today is virtually zero. **David Blair, a member of Sydney Unitarian Challenge Circle & Humanist Society of NSW.**

Who were the Huguenots?

Peter Berry

(From a talk given by Peter for U3A at Bowden Bray Village.)

Why have I chosen to speak on this subject? Partly because of my interest in religious thought, and in the history of religions. But also because my own father's ancestors were French Huguenots.

They, being Huguenots, were caught up in the persecution by the Catholic Church, which led to suffering on a wide scale across France. Large numbers of them migrated to other countries in the second half of the sixteenth century. My father's family went to southern England to live.

In due course, they chose to come to Australia and settled in Sydney, at Summer Hill. Being Huguenots, they of course were very conservative Christian Protestants. The Church of their choice was a long established Baptist Church in Belvoir Street, Sydney, not very far from Central Station and alongside the premises of the current Belvoir Street Theatre. Some family members have since joined the Uniting Church here.

To return now to the Reformation in France. The Berry family took their name from the former French province of Berry, where they lived. Berry was slightly north of the centre of France -- not far from Orleans; and to its east lay Burgundy.

From 1789 onwards (see French Revolution) the provinces were replaced by departments, which were smaller.

The Protestants of France were known as Huguenots. They were part of a widespread movement in 16th Century Christian Europe known as the Reformation. People who studied the Bible realized that some of the teachings and practices of the church of Rome had become far removed from the original teachings of the Gospel. Consequently they attempted to reform the church from within, but were unsuccessful. Then they began to establish their own liturgy and places of worship which were not under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic church. They rejected Catholic practices like the sale of indulgences, and the wealth of the clergy and monks.

Although he was not the first French reformer, John Calvin (Jean Cauvin) (1509-

1564) was a tremendously important figure in the Reformation, who gave his name to Calvinism, the form of Protestantism which became popular amongst the reformed worshippers in France, Switzerland and the French-speaking part of the Netherlands (now Belgium). Working from exile in Geneva, he supplied the new church with its theology and its form of organisation.

Despite its early successes, French Protestantism never claimed more than 10% of the population of France, and there were bitter religious wars which caused great harm and suffering between 1559 and 1598. In 1572 thousands of Huguenots were massacred in the **St Bartholomew massacre** in Paris. After the fall of the Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle in 1629, the Huguenots settled down as law-abiding citizens of France, hoping to enjoy the civic and religious freedoms which had been promised them by Henry IV (who had originally been a Protestant) when he issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598.

Unfortunately this was not to be, and the Roman Catholic Church did everything it could to undermine the Edict and its guarantees of Protestant freedoms. Life for the Huguenots became intolerable in the 1680's under Louis XIV who was determined to force them all to become Catholics. In 1685 he revoked the Edict of Nantes, and forced a quarter of the Huguenots into exile. Those who remained were made Catholic, whether they liked it or not. However the Protestants of France maintained their faith in secret, despite vicious persecution, and still exist today.

The Huguenot Migrations

Huguenots chose exile in more friendly countries during a long period (probably around 1550-1750) but the main decade of exile was the 1680's when approximately 250,000 people fled France. It was at this time that the word refugee came into the English language. They went to any country that would take them, allow them religious freedom and the chance to work to support themselves and their families. The principal places of refuge were the Netherlands, England, Germany, Switzerland and Ireland, although some refugees spread to as far away

as Russia, and Scandinavia, the American colonies, Canada and South Africa. Everywhere they went they brought with them their religion, their considerable artistic and industrial skills, and their habits of hard work and civic responsibility. They made good citizens and their loss was a great blow to France.

Although no Huguenot refugees ever came directly to Australia, many of the descendants of these people have come here, and have contributed much to the country's development. They came principally from England and Ireland, and were here from the beginning of European settlement: **Jacob Bella, a Huguenot silkweaver, was on the First Fleet, and Capt Edward Riau was in charge of H.M.S "Guardian" in the Second Fleet when it struck an iceberg in 1789.**

In later years Huguenot descendants have come to Australia from many countries, including France, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the Channel Islands, South Africa, and even from more unexpected places, like Jamaica, India and Sri Lanka

Some Australian Huguenots:

Charles Chauvel, film maker.

Charles la Trobe, First Lieutenant, Governor of Victoria.

Wilfred de Beuzeville, prominent genealogist.

Marie Beuzeville Byles, first woman to practice law in NSW, fought to improve women's legal status in the 1920s.

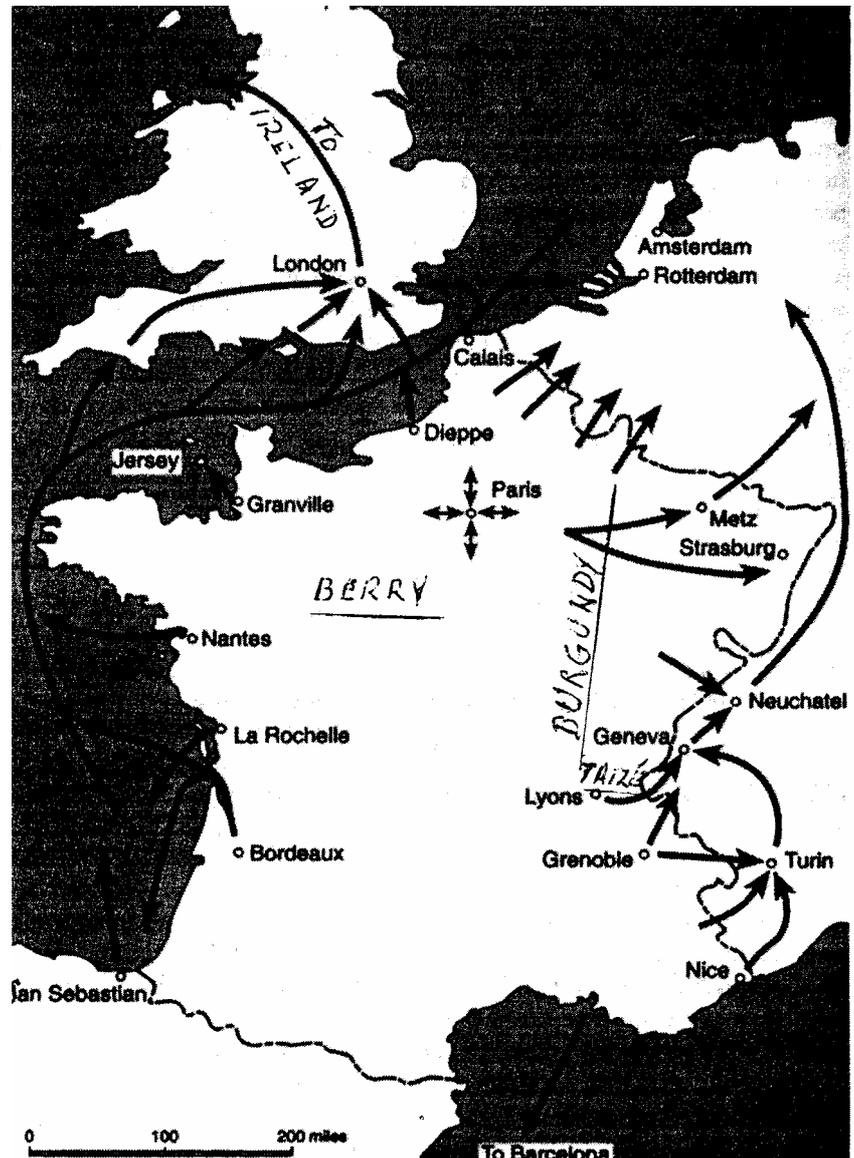
Rohan Rivett: author of "Behind Bamboo," highlighting suffering in the Burma Railway.

The coming of Ecumenism

The first printed edition of the Bible was made in Germany in 1455, and a second edition followed seven years later. A number of copies made their way to France, where, as the manufacture of paper improved, the Bible became available to the mass of the people. It became clear to ordinary people that they could read the Bible and pray to God in their

Huguenot Escape Routes from France

(from 'Huguenot Heritage' by Robin Gwynn, courtesy of Sussex Academic Press.)



own language, instead of through priests, in Latin. The authority of the Church was thus challenged. Bible studies provided thoughtful men and women with new ideas about their life and death. It impressed them with a deep sense of responsibility, and to the poor it opened up a completely new view of the world. The effect on Martin Luther was profound. By the end of the sixteenth century, thousands of copies were circulating throughout Europe.

There was a desire for a return to the simpler form of the Christianity of the Apostles. It was becoming clear that some practices of the Catholic Church, such as Indulgences, and the wealth of the clergy and monks needed investigation.

We have already seen how the long conflict involved religious wars, and how this resulted in hundreds of thousands of Huguenots seeking exile in other countries over a long period: 1550-1750. We have seen a little of the contributions they have made to the people of these other

countries.

In the final section of my talk, I want to discuss an ecumenical venture involving Catholics and Protestants together, along with a smaller number of people from other denominations and from other faiths. This is at Taizé in Burgundy, France, and currently remains very active.

Taizé, (France)

(From: *Encyclopedia of Sacred Places* Norbert C. Brockman. Vol. 2. 2nd ed. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011. p. 539-540.)

Taizé is remarkable as the site of a monastic order that includes both Catholics and Protestants and has become known worldwide, particularly to young people looking for a deeper spirituality unaffected by modern materialism. The Taizé spirit incorporates meditation and faith sharing with a respectful acceptance of a wide variety of religious tradi-

itions.

In 1940, at the onset of the Nazi occupation of France, a young Calvinist, Roger Schutz (1915-2005), embarked on an unusual enterprise. He founded a small religious order with monastic vows but made up of both Protestant and Catholic brothers. Brother Roger chose the tiny hamlet of Taizé, a few miles from the ruins of the great monastery of Cluny, to establish this ecumenical community. The area is poor and out of the way. During World War II the community sheltered Jews and was raided by the Gestapo.

Taizé includes no great art or architecture. Its buildings are rude and simple. Only the atmosphere is impressive. The main worship centre is made of poured concrete, without adornment. It was built by a German group in 1962 as a symbol of reconciliation. The places of prayer are plain—one is an open-sided chapel in a wooded area—but they are also intense. At any hour of day or night the former village church and the large underground Church of Reconciliation are occupied by silent praying figures deep in meditation, the only light coming from small candles placed throughout the room. There are no chairs or pews. The atmosphere of contemplation is powerful yet peaceful. Each evening, vespers is celebrated in the church by candlelight, a moving event where all join in the chants as the white-robed monks enter in procession. Taizé's chants and songs have spread all over the Christian world. The style of shared prayer popularized here has spawned numerous groups for "Taizé prayer" across across the Christian world,

Taizé is one of the religious phenomena of recent years. During the summer, the hill on which it sits is taken over by numbers of young people, upwards of 5,000 at once. The sight can be daunting—big tented areas with fields tramped into oozing mud. But somehow a semblance of order and cleanliness is maintained, and the spirit of harmony and joy is infectious. **The visitors are by no means all Christians or even believers of any kind. Taizé brings together people of every faith and none, in its gentle way sharing what it has to offer—simple food, shared chores, prayer, and community.** Realizing some years ago that the Taizé property was inade-

quate, Brother Roger began holding youth gatherings around Europe, often drawing more than 100,000. Since his death, it has been held in cities in the Third World.

Small communities of Taizé monks have settled in other places—in the slums of an American inner city or among Muslims in North Africa—but Taizé remains the centre. The monastery sits amidst the tents and cinderblock housing, maintaining the rhythm of daily prayer. The community of about ninety is ecumenical, including Protestants of several denominations and Roman Catholics, living and sharing together without a loss of identity. Brother Roger himself and several other monks were considered leading ecumenical scholars. Catholic Mass is celebrated daily in a separate facility, although the vespers is the main communal prayer. The community accepts no donations or gifts but lives from its own work and the sale of publications and pottery.

In 2005, Brother Roger was stabbed to death during the evening prayer by a deranged person. He was succeeded by a German monk whom Brother Roger had chosen beforehand. His funeral was presided over by a Vatican cardinal, a sign of a growing Catholic sensibility at Taizé that has been troubling to some.

REFERENCES

Jason Santos, *A Community Called Taizé*. Downers Grove, IL, Intervarsity, 2008.

Roger Schutz, Brother Roger of Taizé: *Essential Writings*. Maryknoll, NY; Orbis, 2006.

Kathryn Spink, *A Universal Heart: The Life and Vision of Brother Roger of Taizé*. Chicago, GIA, second edition, 2006.

Peter Berry adds: *My son, David Berry, has been a great help to me in recommending some of the material for this article. He is a staff member at the State Public library, where he is directly involved in the Family History Team. My old friends Lance and Jenny Johnston, are well acquainted with the spiritual community at Taize, Burgundy, France.*

Next month there will be a concluding note on the life of Marie Beuzeville Byles.

'Called out into the great, open, windy world'

Jack Mendelsohn made social justice essential to Unitarian Universalist identity.

By John Gibbons

When the Rev. Dr. Jack Mendelsohn accepted the Unitarian Universalist Association's Distinguished Service Award in 1997, he chose the occasion to critique the oft-quoted claim by Theodore Parker (later picked up by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) that "the arc of the universe is long but it bends toward justice." Mendelsohn agreed that the universe is long, but, wary of unwarranted optimism, he warned that there is nothing inevitable. "Nothing is settled!" Jack exclaimed. "Nothing! If—if!—it is to bend toward justice, it will be human hands that do the bending, and those hands can be our hands."

In the world of Unitarian Universalism, Jack Mendelsohn, who died October 11, 2012, at the age of 94, singularly exemplified the possibility and power of human agency to make a difference. He is significantly responsible for making Unitarian Universalism what so many of us assume it of course is, but which Unitarian Universalism wasn't always: a public ministry, ever committed to freedom, justice, human rights, and the spirit of democracy.

Though there have been historic UU public ministries, like that of John Haynes Holmes (1879–1964), who inspired Mendelsohn, social justice was not always a core priority for Unitarians or Universalists. As a prolific author and indefatigable activist, Mendelsohn redefined our faith for the twentieth century. With human agency at the center, Jack Mendelsohn is largely responsible for making social justice essential to the DNA of Unitarian Universalist identity.

Mendelsohn entered our ministry with a single goal: to make the world a better place. Too often religion was anti-intellectual, conformist, effete, and subservient. In Unitarianism, Mendelsohn saw the unfulfilled potential for a world-changing movement. Writing in the 1940s, Mendelsohn acknowledged, "for all its shackles of New England traditionalism and 'best-family-ness,' [Unitarianism] granted freedom to its ministers and vowed deep faith in the moral competence and progress of

humankind."

Thus Mendelsohn championed a liberal religious movement that is modern, smart, edgy, countercultural, and dangerous to every power and principality that would smother the human spirit. In print, in the pulpit, around the world, and on the front lines of every progressive cause, Mendelsohn made Unitarian Universalism something meaningful, exciting, attractive, and important, a vital and vigorous approach to life that makes a difference.

Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1918 to professional pianist Anna Torrey and Jack Mendelsohn Sr., a music publisher, he regarded his mother with deepest affection. He said, "It was difficult for me to think of God as being other than a woman, like my mother."

Thus, when he was eight, he was deeply affected by his mother's death from peritonitis. "All that mattered to me was the loss of the most important person in the world. I was hurt and angry, desolate and resentful. For the first time in my life I had asked God for something. I had begged God for something! And God had turned and slapped me in the face, as I had seen some parents strike my playmates. Since that moment religious questions have never been far from my thoughts. It may be a gift or a neurosis, but I am gripped with the habit of religious searching."

Mendelsohn's searching led to the ministry where, following education at Boston University and Harvard Divinity School, he served congregations in Brewster, Massachusetts (and where he also played semi-pro baseball in the Cape Cod League); Chicago (at Beverly Unitarian Church, where he was ordained in 1945) and Rockford, Illinois; Indianapolis; the Arlington Street Church in Boston; First Unitarian Church in Chicago; and finally First Parish in Bedford, Massachusetts, where he was named minister emeritus in 1988.

In his ten-year ministry in Boston, beginning in 1959, Mendelsohn transformed the liberal but stodgy Arlington Street congregation by welcoming artists, young people, and Boston's new black leadership. Public figures like future Boston Mayor Kevin White and future Massachusetts Governor Michael and Kitty Dukakis were often in the pews.



The Rev. Jack Mendelsohn (1918–2012)

(Photo: courtesy of Judith Frediani)

The author of this article, Rev. John Eric Gibbons, is senior minister of First Parish in Bedford, Massachusetts.

..... Recalling their time at the Arlington Street Church, former Gov. Michael Dukakis remembers, “It’s hard to describe just how important Jack was to young people like Kitty and me as we were gradually coming of age politically and philosophically during the McCarthy era and beyond. People think times are tough these days, but the Tea Party and its views are a pale imitation of the kind of hysteria that ruled the land at that time. There weren’t many people, including people of the cloth, who had the courage to stand up and call us to our better values, and Jack was one of them. Kitty and I are affiliated with different religions, but an occasional sermon at the Arlington Street Church was balm for our souls. He was very, very special.”

The above is part of an article from

www.uuworld.org

You can read the complete article at :

<http://www.uuworld.org/life/articles/279161.shtml>

The Canberra Unitarian Universalist Fellowship has now been meeting for more than a year. John Maindonald writes, “Its creation followed an initial meeting with six of us present, on Sun. June 26, 2011 at Tilley’s restaurant. We held several initial meetings in a private house. Starting on August 7, 2011, we have met at the Australian National University Chaplaincy.”

The group celebrated its founding with Pastor Rob MacPherson from Adelaide Unitarian Church on October 21. His address was: “Let us Pray: A Unitarian Approach to Prayer” The address explored Kierkegaard’s idea that, “the function of prayer is not to influence (a) God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.” Website: <http://cuuf.wordpress.com/>

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**Would you care to join Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship? Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter.** *Full membership \$50 concession \$20* . If you would like to join us as an active member of Spirit of Life, please ring **0466 940 461** or consult our website [www.sydneyunitarians.org](http://www.sydneyunitarians.org) . Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee. Ask Rev. Geoff Usher or Ginna Hastings for an application form at the Sunday service.

***If you have a news item or written article you believe would be of interest to the congregation, we invite you to submit it for Esprit.*** It would be helpful if items for publication, including articles and talk topics with themes could reach Esprit editor by the 15th of each month: [jtendys@bigpond.com](mailto:jtendys@bigpond.com) or hand to Jan Tendys at the Sunday service.

***Do you have a topic of a spiritual nature that you would like to share with the congregation?*** Please see *Caz Donnelly* at the Sunday service. As Unitarians, we support an “Open Pulpit” and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish.

**Fellowship contact 0466 940 461**