



**Spirit of Life** Unitarian Fellowship  
PO Box 1356, Lane Cove NSW 1595  
Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre  
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Editor: Jan Tendys

Volume 5, Issue 10

October, 2009

## Schedule of Services

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

### ANZUUA CONFERENCE 2009

LAST MINUTE ATTENDEES: Ask Michael Spicer : [info\\_syduni@yahoo.com.au](mailto:info_syduni@yahoo.com.au)

**Note that because of the Conference there will be NO SERVICE 4th October**

11 October Candace Parks Flower Communion

First written and delivered in Prague in 1923 as "a new experiment in symbolizing our liberty and brotherhood", everyone is asked to bring a flower to symbolize their individual character. Flowers are placed in the vase as a symbol of belonging together as one spiritual community. At the end of the service, everyone takes one flower without making any distinction where it came from and whom it represents, to confess that we accept each other as brothers and sisters without regard to class, race, or other distinction.

18 October Geoff Matthews We are the Meaning Makers

This interactive session will explore the sources of meaning for religious liberals – an opportunity for each of us to consider our purpose in life.

25 October Colin Whatmough Practising the Art of Loving

The Bible speaks much about "Love" - none more elegantly than that of Corinthians 13, an inspirational reading that beautifully illustrates the paramount importance of love in connecting humanity. Today we will analyse the concept of love from the discipline of psychology - enlisting the help of Erich Fromm - the leading social psychologist of the 20thC

1 Nov., Jan Tendys, Are Pagans Acceptable? 8 Nov., Ross McLuckie, TBA

15 Nov. Laurence Gormley, Lulu and the interdependent web of existence.

22 Nov. Janet Horton, Worshipping Together vs Worshipping Alone,

29 Nov. GUEST SPEAKER; Dr Elizabeth Watson (Adjunct Research Fellow, University of Western Sydney) - otherwise known as "Liz" - will speak on : With Fire in the Belly .

Liz has had a long time interest in social justice issues

## Wooden Boats

I have a brother who builds wooden boats,  
Who knows precisely how a board  
Can bend or turn, steamed just exactly  
Soft enough so he, with help of friends,  
Can shape it to the hull.

The knowledge lies as much  
Within his sure hands on the plane  
As in his head;  
It lies in love of wood and grain,  
A rough hand resting on the satin  
Of the finished deck.

Is there within us each  
Such artistry forgotten  
In the cruder tasks  
The world requires of us,  
The faster modern work  
That we have  
Turned our life to do?

Could we return to more of craft  
Within our lives,  
And feel the way the grain of wood runs true,  
By letting our hands linger  
On the product of our artistry?  
Could we recall what we have known  
But have forgotten,  
The gifts within ourselves,  
Each other too,  
And thus transform a world  
As he and friends do,  
Shaping steaming oak boards  
Upon the hulls of wooden boats?

~ Judy Brown ~  
(The Sea Accepts All Rivers & Other Poems)

## Courage

It is in the small things we see it.  
The child's first step,  
as awesome as an earthquake.  
The first time you rode a bike,  
wallowing up the sidewalk.  
The first spanking when your heart  
went on a journey all alone.  
When they called you crybaby  
or poor or fatty or crazy

and made you into an alien,  
you drank their acid  
and concealed it

Later,  
if you faced the death of bombs and bullets  
you did not do it with a banner,  
you did it with only a hat to  
cover your heart.  
You did not fondle the weakness inside you  
though it was there.  
Your courage was a small coal  
that you kept swallowing.  
If your buddy saved you  
and died himself in so doing,  
then his courage was not courage,  
it was love; love as simple as shaving soap.

Later,  
if you have endured a great despair,  
then you did it alone,  
getting a transfusion from the fire,  
picking the scabs off your heart,  
then wringing it out like a sock.  
Next, my kinsman, you powdered your  
sorrow,  
you gave it a back rub  
and then you covered it with a blanket  
and after it had slept a while  
it woke to the wings of the roses  
and was transformed.

Later,  
when you face old age and its natural  
conclusion  
your courage will still be shown in the little  
ways,  
each spring will be a sword you'll sharpen,  
those you love will live in a fever of love,  
and you'll bargain with the calendar  
and at the last moment  
when death opens the back door  
you'll put on your carpet slippers  
and stride out.

~ Anne Sexton ~

(The Awful Rowing Toward God)

## **A Paradox of environmentalism – it could happen here too\***

A proposed solar energy project in the California desert that caused intense friction between environmentalists and the developers of renewable energy has been shelved.

BrightSource Energy Inc. had planned a 5,130-acre solar power farm in a remote part of the Mojave Desert, on land previously intended for conservation. The company, based in Oakland, Calif., said Thursday that it was instead seeking an alternative site for the project.

The Wildlands Conservancy, a California environmental group, had tried to block the solar development, as had Senator Dianne Feinstein, Democrat of California, who proposed that the area become a national monument.

The land was donated by Wildlands to the Interior Department during the Clinton administration, with assurances from President Bill Clinton himself, the group says, that it would be protected in perpetuity. But the Energy Policy Act of 2005, a Bush administration initiative, opened the land to the development of solar projects.....

.....BrightSource, a high-profile company with investors like Google and advisers like the environmental campaigner Robert F. Kennedy Jr., builds large-scale, sophisticated solar plants in the United States, Israel and Australia. It is developing more than four gigawatts of solar power in the southwestern United States, according to its Web site.

The company uses a technique in which hundreds of small mirrors redirect desert sunlight onto a single central tower, where the heat generates steam.

\* My title JT Adapted from an article in the New York Times

Published: September 18, 2009

By ELISABETH ROSENTHAL

Will many more cases of conflicts between environmental goals arise?

Probably. A friend of your Editor says: "We've got our very own Inner West conflict of a similar sort. The Ecotransport group are lobbying for light rail on the old goods rail-line from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill, while the Green-

way group, who have been revegetating the edges most beautifully want it for a cycle way, and say the planted wildlife corridor would be compromised by a train service."

"And there are no end of grumpy landholders in the vicinity of wind farm complaining about the noise. Nothing is without its cost."

Moreover, alas, while coal mining and coal-fired power stations don't take up really huge amounts of space, wind power and solar power do require large amounts of space to generate the same amount of energy. That shouldn't be a consideration in Australia except that almost everywhere seems to be "unique" and "irreplaceable", or the habitat of something endangered.

**Contributed by Jan**

## **Throw Yourself Like Seed**

Shake off this sadness, and recover your spirit

sluggish you will never see the wheel of fate that brushes your heel as it turns going by, the man who wants to live is the man in whom life is abundant.

Now you are only giving food to that final pain

which is slowly winding you in the nets of death,

but to live is to work, and the only thing which lasts

is the work; start then, turn to the work.

Throw yourself like seed as you walk, and into your own field,

don't turn your face for that would be to turn it to death,

and do not let the past weigh down your motion.

Leave what's alive in the furrow, what's dead in yourself,

for life does not move in the same way as a group of clouds;

from your work you will be able one day to gather yourself.

~ Miguel De Unamuno ~

(Roots and Wings, edited and translated by Robert Bly)

## This Only

A valley and above it forests in autumn colors.  
A voyager arrives, a map leads him there.  
Or perhaps memory. Once long ago in the sun,  
When snow first fell, riding this way  
He felt joy, strong, without reason,  
Joy of the eyes. Everything was the rhythm  
Of shifting trees, of a bird in flight,  
Of a train on the viaduct, a feast in motion.  
He returns years later, has no demands.  
He wants only one, most precious thing:  
To see, purely and simply, without name,  
Without expectations, fears, or hopes,  
At the edge where there is no I or not-I.

~ Czeslaw Milosz ~

(The Collected Poems, 1931-1987, trans.  
by Robert Hass)

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### Bit of a Worry

"Faith is to believe what you do not see;  
the reward of this faith is to see what you believe".  
--St. Augustine

Could this mean the belief becomes so strong  
that no evidence will penetrate the world of  
myth, superstition, delusion and unreason?  
Or .....well, what would you say?  
Let us know. JT

"Misquotations are the only quotations that are  
never misquoted."  
-- Hesketh Pearson

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### GIVE ME THAT OLD-TIME RELIGION

Anon

Give me that old-time religion. Give me that  
old time religion.

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

Let us worship zarathustra, just the way that

we use to.

I'm a zarathustra booster. He's good enough  
for me.

Let us worship like the Druids, drinking  
strange, fermented fluids.

Running naked through the woods. That's  
good enough for me..

Let us meditate like buddha. There is no god  
that is cuter.

Comes in silver, brass, and pewter, and he's  
good enough for me.

I'll invoke the triple goddess when she wears  
her Cretan bodice.

No she isn't very modest but she's good  
enough for me.

We will pray to aphrodite, we will pray to  
aphrodite.

She wears that see-through nightie and  
that's good enough for me.

We will pray with those egyptians. Build  
pyramids to put our crypts in,

over subways with inscriptions and that's  
good enough for me.

Ha-re krishna he must laugh on with my  
robes all trimmed in saffron,

and my hair that's only half on. And that's  
good enough for me.

I'll arise in early morning when my lord gives  
me the warning

that the solar age is dawning. And that's  
good enough for me.

Give me that old-time religion, give me that  
old-time religion.

Give me that old-time religion, it's good  
enough for me

*Contributed by Candace*

## Paradoxes Abounding.\*

Slightly Adapted :[New Scientist](#) 22 Nov. 2008,  
Debra MacKenzie

It is astonishing how many demons get stirred up whenever you mention population — and sometimes even when you don't. This magazine recently examined how modern economies predicated on growth are ravaging the planet. Our mailbag rapidly filled with letters asking why we didn't emphasise the number one problem: population.

Has this become a politically taboo subject, they wanted to know. Don't we realise that overpopulation is destroying the planet? What's the point of saving resources when population in developing countries is spiralling? Can't we pay people not to have babies?

Our global problem is that we are consuming vital resources at rates we cannot sustain, or at costs to the environment that we cannot or should not pay. That is happening both because of rising consumption by the rich, and rising numbers of poor people who consume the bare minimum.

So population is part of the problem, although if we had emphasised this, the letters would no doubt have complained of western, patriarchal plots to blame the depredations of the greedy rich on the babies of the poor. But the situation is not what many people seem to think. The righteous intensity surrounding this debate has obscured the fact that the story has changed. The "population bomb" has already gone off.

Traditionally, human societies needed high birth rates to balance high death rates. As they start defeating famine and disease, death rates drop. Then population soars until birth rates eventually fall too. Countries passing through this "demographic transition" have caused the global population to more than double since 1950.

The first societies to industrialise — Europe and its colonies — were first to make the switch. Now everyone is doing it, and for the same reason: if you're fairly sure they'll survive, two well-fed, well-educated kids make more economic sense than six starving, unemployable ones.

So birth rates have fallen dramatically — and voluntarily. Coercive birth control, includ-

ing "paying people not to have babies", was discredited and abandoned decades ago (though it may still sometimes happen in China).

Nearly two-thirds of couples in poor countries now use birth control, and not because some patriarchal westerner told them to. In the 1970s, the government of Bangladesh offered people in the Matlab region low-cost contraceptive supplies and advice. Birth rates promptly fell well below neighbouring regions. So Bangladesh extended the service nationally and its birth rate plummeted from six children per woman to three. Given the choice, people want fewer children.

So do governments, whose own life expectancy falls when people multiply faster than they can be provided with food, water, medicine, schools and jobs. In 1989 Iran introduced free contraception nationwide. It experienced the fastest fall in birth rates ever seen: from five births per woman to two by 2000.

But here's the rub. For countries making the transition, high birth rates in the recent past mean there are far more young people than old. So if these young people have only enough babies to replace themselves, there are still more births than deaths. Even when birth rates fall, this lag means populations keep growing for decades until birth and death rates even out.

On current trends of birth and death rates, the UN predicts that world population will hit 9.2 billion by 2050, before it stops climbing. Because of the time lag, even if everyone moved to birth rates of around two children per woman tomorrow, we would still hit 8.5 billion. This means the population explosion will continue.

We can't solve the problem by forcing all those over-fertile poor people to stop reproducing, because they've mostly already done it. However, we can at least try to make sure that population peaks closer to the lower figure. There is most work to do in Africa, which has high birth rates that even AIDS deaths don't dent. Women still want large families, for the old reasons: high infant mortality and desire for sons, field hands and support. Educating girls changes this by delaying marriage and raising both child survival and women's power. Providing this basic human right .....(PTO)

(from p.5) will bring Africa through the transition, like everyone else.

Meanwhile many who want birth control can't get it. In most of Asia and Latin America, women average 2.5 babies each. Still, people there say they want fewer. There is a huge unmet demand for birth control; 1 in 5 births — and 36 million abortions — in developing countries would not happen if people had more choice.

The UN Population Fund published a report last week pointing out that population efforts must be "culturally sensitive". This is crucial, as the most effective way to bring down birth rates is to empower people to control their own reproduction, free of coercion from within their society or outside.

For the past eight years, the US has not funded birth control efforts, in order to appease religious extremists. Under a new president, many people hope that will change, and soon. Too much time has been wasted.

\* My title JT

*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 publication.*

### **Notice**

**DEADLINE** for copy for the next issue of Esprit is  
LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

Please be sure Jan has your WRITTEN items by this date. Preferred method is as an MS-WORD or email to [jtendys@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jtendys@optusnet.com.au)

Hardcopy (or electronic media) submissions can be hand-delivered to Jan or posted to:

Spirit of Life  
PO Box 1356  
LANE COVE NSW 1595  
Please note:

*"The unexamined life is not worth living." Socrates*

**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.

**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.sydneyunitarians.com](http://www.sydneyunitarians.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.