



Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship
PO Box 1356, Lane Cove NSW
1595
Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre
16-18 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli
(near Milsons Point Station)
Tel: (02) 9428 2244
Website:

Volume 5, Issue 8

August, 2009

Schedule of Services

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

2 August

Jan Tendys

“Beyond Right and Left”

Rev. Jim Wallis has been called a “progressive evangelical” and he’s influential in Australia as well as in the US. Let’s take a close look.

9 August

Candace Parks

“Peace is Every Step”

Is the peace movement really peaceful? Only if we as individuals know and are peace.

16 August

Geoff Matthews

“Unity in Diversity—What holds Us Together?”

A facilitated discussion.

23 August

**Eric Stevenson
Michael Bucciarelli**

**“Revelation, Self –evolution and
the New Sacred Myth**

Using the natural environment as our sacred text, participating in our own evolution and adopting the billion year history of the cosmos as our Garden of Eden story.

30 August

Martin Horlacher

Tomorrow’s Song

A meditation on changing moral norms, the shortcomings of religion, and faith for the future.

Yulefest Party—see over page.

Sources, a UU Cantata: following Linda Horton’s much appreciated presentation of this extraordinary piece of music, we have Linda’s CD for a limited time. If you are interested in borrowing it, see Jan after a service.

Fellowship and Committee News

August 16 – Yulefest Party!

At Candace's home after the service. This will be a fundraiser for our Emergency Fund. Last event we raised \$400 and we are hoping to overtake that!

Note also that Sherman and Jane provided all the delicious consumables last time, but for the Yuletide Party we try to cover some of our costs from the money raised.

ANZUUA CONFERENCE 2009 –

Laurence, Helen and Geoff will be going on our behalf but it is not too late for others to come too.

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

Our Spirit of Life Website

<http://www.sydneyunitarians.com/>

Not many people leave comments on our blog. You have to click on “News and Services” on the website first. We have two new blog items. One is our Ghandi quote telling us that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means. The other is an item that could be seen as political (you'll have to check it out).

Candle Lighting *There is no one authoritative meaning to candle lighting at our service. Recently, I lit a candle for cancer sufferers everywhere. Some of the congregation would echo that as a prayer; for some it would be a reminder of calls on our human compassion.*

Please remember that 2 minutes should normally suffice for speaking after lighting a candle.

Jan Tendys

The Centrality of Caring and Caring Values.

..... Dependence is part of the human condition—as children, as aged adults, in illness or in disability. So is caring for others. But caring is devalued and largely invisible in our society. When it is recognised in a private context, it is seen as the natural role of women, not men. When it is recognised in the economy, it is commodified and carers are paid poorly for their work.

While neo-liberals see the economy as an entirely separate realm from that of moral obligations, a new moral framework would see strong connections between them. The radicalism of neo-liberal economics, which refashions society along free-market lines, does not ‘conserve’, but forces change. The Right thus has a major vulnerability because it also claims to stand for family values which support secure and stable family lives. Because most people associate caring values with their families, a new moral framework would assert that family values of caring and the needs of children need to be injected into economic policies. One part of this means that it should not be necessary for both parents to work fulltime while children are young. Another part means raising the social expectation that fathers will be full-time caregivers for a significant period in their children's early years. Both government and society should make a bigger commitment to the years of early childhood.

But to achieve such changes requires a new kind of social movement, and the reframing of a popular debate. What we need is a ‘right to care’ movement around three issues: The first is that families be permitted and helped to care for their members. This involves a workplace challenge to rigid schedules, long hours, mandatory overtime and career expectations that make no allowance for those with family responsibilities; it also means changes to tax and welfare policies to support families when one parent chooses to care for children at home. Second, recognising the social value of care means raising wages and strengthening the career paths of care workers (incidentally benefiting the cared-for). Third, the right to care means delivering care to those who need it. That means recognizing that good standards of health care must be available for all, regardless of income, and that high-quality child care and home care are vital social needs.

David McKnight; Beyond Right and Left, 2005, (from last chapter)

Human Seasons, Religious Needs

Janet Horton began her recent address to the Fellowship as follows:

Earlier this year, I had the unexpected pleasure of learning about the work of Robert Kegan – a noted Harvard Psychologist who has spent his career *charting the upward movement of consciousness across the life span*.

What does that mean? It means understanding how humans make meaning and how our meaning making systems change as we age. He has been able to disprove the long-held believe that human complexity, like height, stops growing at adolescence. That's right – there is finally some good news about getting older.

Kegan's work immediately resonated with me (even beyond the age stuff). It highlights, among other things, how different people at different phases of evolution see the world differently – how they create reality differently, and construct a world that makes sense through their own eyes. It also explains why it is so darn hard to help groups of people to work together – they are all viewing the world through their own unique lens. But, it also got me thinking about something else...if humans' meaning making systems change over time, then don't their religious needs? As Unitarians, we accept that concept quite easily – the free search for meaning. But what about people from other belief systems?

I asked this question on an online forum of students of Kegan. A student of the subject of psychology and religion gave me this answer, which I found especially insightful: "whether an individual believes in god or not, is not nearly as important as how they do that. The how of religion is a much more important question that whether we might be religious or not, since religion is our way of making sense out of our existence".

Janet has promised to put the whole of that very well received talk on our website.

Swinging Voters

The Australian March 8, 2008: On a swing and a prayer.

JOHN Black is a former Labor senator from Queensland. These days he leads a demographic research and marketing group called Australian Development Strategies.

Across the political class he's regarded as one of the most astute observers of electoral politics and his analyses of federal elections are awaited with keen interest by the secretariats of the main parties.

He's just produced his profile of the 2007 Australian Election. The most surprising of his findings is that the religious affiliation of swinging voters played a more decisive role in determining the outcome than any other single factor. This cannot conceivably have been true in any other federal election since the Menzies era and the heyday of the Democratic Labor Party in campaigns fought over state aid to church schools and communist infiltration of the trade union movement and the ALP. Plainly commentators who've blithely assumed that religion is an increasing irrelevance in Australian politics will have to think again.

Black says: "The strongest correlate of the swing to Kevin Rudd's new Labor Party was Pentecostal churchgoers, alongside Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Lutherans, Salvos, Seventh-Day Adventists and the Uniting Church.

"With the Uniting Church included, these activist religions represent 10per cent of Australians in total and they were located in the best possible areas for Labor. In fact, 12 out of the top 20 Pentecostal seats in Australia are located in Rudd's home state of Queensland and (he) won five of them.

"While the blue-collar workers provided the grunt with the national swing, the religious activists provided the leverage and the key seats ... Where former Howard battlers overlapped with churchgoers, the Liberals were blasted out. The pro-Labor swing went up to 14.4 per cent in Forde, one of the many Queensland seats with high concentrations of former Howard battlers and churchgoers."
<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0..23336628-5013596.00.html>

Does God create Religion, or does Religion create God?

Saturday, August 29 Talk and discussion hosted by CPRT with Dr. Val Webb.
Since early bird expiry, now \$50 per person, and \$45 for CPRT financial members.

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

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

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:

If space is limited, submissions may be subject to editing.

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 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.