



**Spirit of Life** Unitarian Fellowship

Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre  
16-18 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli  
(near Milsons Point Station)

Tel: **0466 940 461**

Website: [www.sydneyunitarians.org](http://www.sydneyunitarians.org)

Editor: Jan Tendys

**Volume 11 Issue 5**

**June, 2015**

## Schedule of Services

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

**7 June, Jan Tendys, "Frans de Waal: 'The Bonobo and the Atheist' "**

The Bonobo is our closest ape cousin. What advice might it give to an atheist?

**14 June, Morandir Armson, "Modern Shintoism"**

"Shinto, also called kami-no-michi, is an indigenous religion of Japan. It is focused on ritual practices, which must be carried out diligently, to establish a connection between present-day Japan and its ancient past. These ancient rituals are of an almost Shamanic character, and centre on the Emperor of Japan, who is automatically the High Priest of Shinto. This presentation will seek to answer the question; how does an ancient, Shamanic religion survive in the nation of Japan, which is a particularly fast-paced, almost futurist culture?"

**21 June, Rev. Geoff Usher, "Spiritual Economy"**

Just as music is much more than the efficient arrangement of sounds, so living well, being present to the moment, is much more than the efficient arrangement of time. As is living faithfully, living spiritually, living as if life mattered far more than wasting our powers through getting and spending.

**28 June, Martin Horlacher, "Golden Ages: Gilding the Lily or Living our Lives?"**

It's fairly common to hear someone complaining that things just aren't how they used to be, back in the "good old days". Chances are, we've all done it at some point. But, were there ever any "good old days" to begin with? Or, is learning from the past and making a better future what really counts?

**American friends, Tom & Susan Patterson, were able to spend some weeks in Kirribilli this year. Susan addressed us on  
“Living as an Introvert in an Extroverted World”**

The UU Principal that is closest to my topic today is "acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth". It seems to me that the better we understand how our lives, our thoughts, and our behaviors are influenced by our personalities, the more understanding and accepting we'll be toward ourselves and others, especially those very close to us in our families and work lives.

**Reading: “Revelation” by Robert Frost**

We make ourselves a place apart  
Behind light words that tease and flout,  
But oh, the agitated heart  
Till someone find us really out.

'Tis pity if the case require  
(Or so we say) that in the end  
We speak the literal to inspire  
The understanding of a friend.

But so with all, from babes that play  
At hide-and-seek to God afar,  
So all who hide too well away  
Must speak and tell us where they are.

**Address:**

Robert Frost's poem “Revelation” speaks to my topic today in all three stanzas. He says, "But oh, the agitated heart / Till someone find us really out." I believe it's a common desire to connect with others on a deep level; to meet someone who wants to know and understand who we really are down deep. We call that other person our best friend or our soulmate or sometimes our spouse. But Frost says in the same poem, "So all who hide too well away / Must speak and tell us where they are." So, perhaps before another can really, truly know us, we must know ourselves, and if we are quiet types, we must learn how to speak up and explain ourselves.

I have found this process to be life-long. I think that is true for both extroverts and introverts, but I do think introverts have a harder time doing so - both understanding ourselves

(in a world that celebrates extroversion) and speaking up to explain ourselves (by our very natures).

We live in an extroverted world in Western Cultures. Speaking as an American, I grew up and continue to live in a culture that highly values an extrovert ideal: gregarious and verbal, alpha assertiveness (if not aggressiveness), spotlight and achievement oriented. We prize children who speak early and have large speaking vocabularies. We reward students who volunteer answers and discuss more in classes. A study showed that both Harvard Business School and Harvard Law School seek out and admit many more extroverts than introverts. Most professions advance employees good at public speaking and influencing others over those who are reticent.

The 19th Century was more a culture of character (with admittedly rigid Victorian standards of conduct) while the 20th Century (and ever more so in the present day) became a culture of personality. An outgoing personality helps in job interviews, applying to schools and scholarships (in the US), courting mates, and greatly influences how we raise our children (and grandchildren).

In my case, I am the second daughter of an introverted father and an extremely extroverted mother. My older sister matched the extroversion of my mother from the beginning. She was my father's favorite and was my mother's as well, until my first brother was born, four years after me. I was quiet, talked late and little, stuttered all through my childhood, and never even tried to break into the chatter boxes I lived with. I didn't just feel there was something wrong with me, I knew it. My stuttering was a huge confirmation of that. I gave up the social, articulate, persuasive stage-light without ever even trying for it

I was reminded recently of just how reserved and non-verbal I was as a child. We've been having problems with reliable, cost effective internet service ever since we arrived since our flat did not come with any connection. After a couple of weeks of repeated visits to Vodafone, each of which ended with me buying more gigabytes, I decided to approach

the people in another apartment in our building whose password protected connection seemed to be always on. I procrastinated doing this because I dreaded introducing myself and asking the favor of piggy-backing on their system, even though I proposed to pay them to do so. Still, one Sunday, I decided I had to make myself do it. I went out to the interior stairway with my iPad and could quickly see that the connection I wanted was the apartment directly above us. I had to literally propel myself toward their door, and as I did so, I had a flashback to childhood, strong enough that I felt sick to my stomach.

My father was an oil operator, meaning he dug wells for oil using what was then a new method of secondary recovery, pushing water down in wells to get out more oil - a precursor to fracking I suppose. He had a pumper, a man who lived near his oil leases and checked on them daily. This man and his family lived on a small subsistence farm with chickens and my father decided it would be wonderful childrearing for us five children to be egg salesmen. So, once a week my father brought home anywhere from 30 to 50 dozen boxes of fresh eggs, depending on how productive the hens had been. Then we had to buy the eggs from our father (what he had paid the farmer) and go out around the neighborhood and sell each dozen for 5 cents more than we paid him.

My older sister was the first salesman, of course, and I suppose she did a great job. But at some point when I was about 9 or 10, my father announced that it was my turn to sell the eggs. He went on to stress that if I broke any eggs and couldn't sell them, that would come out of my profits, and that he was raising the number of eggs he'd be bringing each week so I'd have to find new customers. I also knew he thought this whole exercise would be really good for quiet, shy, stuttering Susie.

It was painfully awful and traumatic for me. I could ring the bell and then just stand there holding three dozen eggs when the housewife came to the door. If she was a regular buyer, she just took the eggs and gave me the money. But make cold calls! OMG. I still just stood there and didn't say anything.

Sometimes, the housewife knew of the Davises and this enterprise and saved me, but other times I had to stutter through some sort of explanation. Of course, I avoided and claimed illness and delayed selling the eggs each week - even to the point of tipping over on my bike and breaking many eggs. My mother would sometimes take pity on me and make omelets and puddings and souffles and angel food cakes to use up more of the eggs. I never blamed or was angry at my father; I just thought I was a failure with no hope of ever being able to talk to people.

Approaching and knocking on our upstairs neighbor's door, I felt exactly as I had felt as a 10 year old selling eggs.

**But some things have changed (or I would not be up here speaking today). I gradually learned I was good at doing other things, especially writing and that there were rewards as a student for that skill. I realized I am an excellent planner and organizer, and that led to leadership roles. As I realized and embraced my introverted nature, I became better at pushing myself to socialize, maximizing my strengths, and feeling more confident. As a teacher, my strengths were in planning units, teaching writing and reading skills and appreciation of literature, and managing student behavior.**

I could see, however, that the most effective teachers had good presentation skills, even acting skills, using humor and drama to keep students' attention and help them learn new things. So, I worked on my speaking through speech therapy for my stuttering and on my delivery through Toastmasters (starting here in Australia 25 years ago). I became so competent and confident at teaching that I taught other teachers how to teach writing and taught University students how to manage classrooms of children. So, I over-compensated perhaps or evened out my personality, moving nearer the center of the introvert - extrovert continuum.

It greatly helps to think of this part of our personalities as a continuum, rather than either / or points. For many years Tom was a trained tester for the Myers - Briggs Personality Type

Indicator. Of course, he took the test himself and gave it to me; we scored diametrically opposite on all four axis - he, an extreme extrovert, and I, an extreme introvert. This was helpful early on in our marriage when we did not agree on something because we could blame our very different viewpoints on our personalities. But it wasn't a cure since we had to come to some agreement on how we'd go forward on whatever issue was dividing us. More recently, with Tom's Primary Progressive Aphasia, we've actually done a complete swap. Out of necessity, I have become much more extroverted, handling our needs, and he has been forced by his lack of language to be quieter.

A year or more ago, my book group read Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking by Susan Cain. At the beginning of the book she has a little 20 question quiz to rate your position on the continuum, and if we have time at the end of my talk and you all think it would be fun and interesting to do that, I will read the questions out loud and you can score yourself. You can see if you are closer to Bill Clinton (extreme and highly successful extrovert) or Bill Gates (extreme and highly successful introvert).

Susan Cain talks a lot about work situations, how current practices of brainstorming, work teams, open office plans, wages, risk taking, all favor extroverts. Introverts are not as productive in noisy environments and often choose not to take on extroverts at group meetings, so their ideas are not heard. Reading the book made me wonder about our jury system: is group think, dominated by the extroverts on the jury, more likely to lead to the truth?

Throughout our lives, introverts are pressured to ACT like extroverts. We are capable of doing so for core personal goals (like dealing with my stutter), work we consider important (like my teaching), people we love (Tommy), or anything we highly value, provided we grant ourselves "restorative riches" - places to go and time to be our real selves. It often doesn't take very long for me to feel restored and want social interaction again. Years ago, I rented a cottage on a lake dur-

ing my summers off from teaching (the cottage which we now own). Tom still had a 12 month appointment at the university at that time, and, after 10 months in the classroom everyday, I longed to be by myself, read books, write memoir stories, take walks with the dog, only have the radio or TV on when I wanted it on. After only five days or so, though, I couldn't wait for Tom to come down on the weekend. Not only did that mean having his company, but usually meant we'd have friends or our children around too. Then on Sunday afternoon, I'd happily say good-bye again, come back inside, turn off the radio, and sit and rock on the porch, looking out at the water.

Another book I recommend, The Introvert Advantage: How to Thrive in an Extroverted World by Marti Olsen Laney lists six self-help strategies for introverts:  
deep talks one-on-one (Robert)  
working alone (planning, finances, writing) in quiet  
reading other's works (book a week)  
listening well (SOL talks)  
taking breaks (1 activity daily for me; Tom would like at least two)  
practicing quiet commitment (writing / taking care of Tommy).

Laney also lists common misconceptions about introverts:

- \*Introverts don't like to talk - not so, but we don't talk unless we have something to say; something we've thought about in our brains first
- \*Introverts are shy - no, shyness is fear of unknown people; we just need a reason to interact with others
- \*Introverts don't like people - no, in fact we highly value our few "real" friends. I work hard because I want to, keeping in contact with my friends
- \*Introverts don't like to go out in public - not so, but we are ready to go home after socializing where we can process it all & recharge
- \*Introverts are weird (Big Bang Theory show) - I prefer to say we are individualists; we don't follow the crowd
- \*Introverts always want to be alone - actually, we crave an authentic and sincere connection with one person at a time. True I think a lot, day dream a lot, but I can and do get

lonely when alone for very long

\*Introverts don't know how to relax and have fun - ah, Tom accused me of this repeatedly early in our marriage, but it was just that our preferred settings were different; he had fun with lots of people around; I enjoyed a quite small group at camp or on a hike or skiing together

\*Introverts can "fix themselves" and become extroverts - well, many people who know me would say that this is a "yes" with me being a prime example. I hope my talk today persuades you that I am still an introvert, but a successfully compensating one, skillful after 70 years at behaving extravertedly when I need or want to.

I have been in Bill Clinton's presence once at a college commencement and watched him become more animated and more glowing and, literally, more handsome with each personal exchange - and each exchange, I know, felt personal to the other person. A very introverted friend with us that day said that he was never washing his right hand - the one which shook Bill Clinton's - again. The man is everything our society highly values - smart, tall, good looking, male (and virile), powerful, rich, and charismatic.

But let's not forget Bill Gates, fairly quietly spending his billions helping people all over the world, planning and organizing and using that exceptional brain of his to figure out remedies to the horrible problems of our societies.

So, I encourage us to end the competition as to which is better - to be introverts or extroverts. Studies of babies show that about 50% are what is labeled "highly reactive / sensitive". It is believed they need less Dopamine in their brains and will turn out to be introverts. The other 50% are less reactive / sensitive to Dopamine and will crave more of it by being extroverts. So, we are born with a preference for more or less stimulation, yet our nurturing does influence our feelings about our innate personalities and our free will does enable us to learn and practice skills that may not come naturally.

As Robert Frost says in "Revelation" we need to know and be able to explain ourselves to others; and I will add, try to understand those

on the other side of the spectrum whom we often seek out as mates "to complete ourselves," and, in any case, interact with continuously in our daily lives.

### **Concluding Thought:**

**Extroverts bring the spontaneity, the pizzazz, the sparkle to life; introverts bring the deep meaning, the mystery, the allure. Let's enjoy mixing the two over our social time together this morning.**

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### **"WHAT I WONDER ABOUT A LOT.. .," by Barry Stoddard (from FIRST DAYS RECORD, January 1991)**

What I wonder about a lot is,  
Why churches? or temples or mosques or cathedrals...?  
Surely it was all done as well at Stonehenge, under the open sky.  
Surely there are other ways to give money to work together say and hear interesting ideas.

What I wonder about a lot is,  
that there are a great many people who don't come here or to any temples, mosques, cathedrals, and they don't go to Stonehenge either. And they live OK; and probably have more money and free time than we do. So this place can't be essential to life, like food and water and sleep.

What I wonder about a lot, though, is where would we do the things we do if we didn't do them here?  
Where would we cry and laugh, where would we learn, where would we practise over and over liking the same people?  
Where would we experience having so many guests?

What I wonder about a lot is, what we would do with our questions if we weren't here.

Where else would so many names  
for God, luck, seasons, love, fun and the ag-  
ony, absence of bliss, be found ... if we were  
not here?

With whom would we share hope, help, apti-  
tude, ineptitude,  
if we were not here...

What I wonder about a lot is,  
do we even know what we do here?  
Do we know that what we do here is to create  
with our lives:  
to sing to weave to embroider to solder  
to use hammers and nails and saws  
and what we create, what we build  
exists nowhere else but here

**Presented as a reading as part of a service  
by Rev. Geoff Usher.**

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## **Australia and New Zealand Unitarian Universalist Association Conference 2015**

**ANZUUA holds a conference every 2 years  
in one of the cities in Australia or New Zea-  
land.**

The conference in 2015 will be in Mel-  
bourne, Australia on Saturday 17th and  
Sunday 18th October. The venue will be  
the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial  
Church, 110 Grey Street, East Melbourne  
VIC 3002.

The theme of the 2015 conference is 'The  
Church and Social Justice'. We use 'the  
church' in an ecumenical sense, as all  
churches are involved in some areas of so-  
cial justice.

The registration fee is \$150 per person  
which will cover meals (including the Sat-  
urday night dinner), entertainment and  
other resources. Attendees must pre-  
register by 1st October at the latest and  
preferably much earlier.

Details of reasonably priced accommoda-  
tion close to the Melbourne Peace Memo-  
rial church include City Edge Apartment

**Hotels – [www.cityedge.com.au](http://www.cityedge.com.au) or check  
internet booking systems. Email  
[info@cityedge.com.au](mailto:info@cityedge.com.au) for information. If  
you require further information regarding  
the conference, the Melbourne church  
Office Manager, Donna Sensi, can be  
contacted Monday- Thursday, 9.30 – 4.00  
on (03) 9417 4178 or email  
[admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au](mailto:admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au).**

Previous conference themes have been:

2013 (Auckland) A Free and Responsible  
Search for Meaning

2011 (Brisbane) Standing on the Side of Jus-  
tice and Compassion

2009 (Sydney) Think Truly, Speak Bravely,  
Act Justly

2007 (Perth) A Faith for the Third Millennium:  
a Unitarian Vision

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The above comes from the ANZUUA web-  
site: <http://james4hills.wix.com/anzuua>  
where (among other things) you can find past  
copies of the Association's journal "Quest".

***Note: Jan Tendys and Rev. Geoff Usher  
from Fellowship's Committee will be go-  
ing to the Conference but anyone is wel-  
come to come in an observer status.***

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***ANZUUA President, Peter Abrehart, will  
be attending a Parliamentary Prayer  
Breakfast which will also be attended by  
the Prime Minister and Leader of the Op-  
position. The following reflection has  
been submitted by ANZUUA for the prayer  
booklet:***

"Blessed are the days when we live in bal-  
ance, centered in the heart that holds and the  
hand that helps and the love of life that  
guides us.

Blessed are the days when we live in bal-  
ance, tending the needful and the good,  
righting wrongs, restoring what has been sto-  
len, repairing what was awfully broken.

Blessed are the days when we live in bal-

-ance, letting go of expectations that hurt and that hold us back from bearing healing and hope to one another and to this earth.

Blessed are the days when we live in balance, glad to give what we can, glad to share this life, glad to do all we might to make this world more loving, more peaceful, more whole. Amen.”

By Rev. Naomi King, a minister for the Unitarian Universalist Church of River of Grass, in Plantation, Florida.

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### **Please Consider Writing a Letter to your federal representative.**

Surely nobody doubts the Rohingyas are genuine refugees. *JT*

“The United Nations has described Rohingya in Myanmar as among the world’s most persecuted people. In 1982, a special law was passed that rendered them stateless without basic citizenship rights. They are not allowed to travel without official permission, and were previously required to sign a commitment not to have more than two children, though the law was not strictly enforced.



(Photo Wikipedia)

In 2012, they were the target of violent Buddhist mobs that forced more than 140,000 from their homes into squalid camps. In March last year, the Myanmar government banned the word Rohingya and asked for registration of the minority as Bengalis in the country's first census in three decades. It meant that 1.3 million Rohingya in Arakan, which is also called Rakhine state, were not included in the census.

On April 1, the government formally rescinded the temporary ID or "white cards" that were the last form of official government identification for Rohingya, stripping them of

voting rights which had been linked to the cards.”

**Read more by Lindsay Murdoch at Sydney Morning Herald** : <http://www.smh.com.au/world/sunday-explainer-who-are-the-rohingya-and-why-are-they-being-persecuted-20150523-gh725x.html>

“While we urge other countries to abide by the rule of law and commit to their international obligations, we pick and choose the international laws we wish to abide by.

Where the rest of the world, including the United States, see stateless and stranded refugees and offers asylum to many, the Australian government sees people smugglers, and only people smugglers. Where regional countries, including the Philippines, have come forward to help on humanitarian grounds, Australia has resorted to political sloganeering and looked the other way.

The danger is that once we, one of the aspiring leaders of a liberal world, cherry-pick international laws, we set precedents for regional countries, and we lose the moral high ground. If we can choose to wilfully ignore, manipulate, and ignore our international commitments, what’s to stop or shame other countries, with bleak human rights record, from doing the same!?

In 2015, we have passively and gradually come to accept this standard of response and practice from our government. We sit by idly as our sense of obligation to the rest of the world, and our understanding of human rights and their importance, undergo a paradigm shift. We morph into an isolationist member of the international community.

If the responses in both social and news media are any indications of the matters we care about, the indefinite offshore detention of asylum seekers - who have broken no laws by coming to Australia to apply for asylum - is a non-issue. - **See more By Hadi Zaher at New Matilda**: <https://newmatilda.com/2015/05/24/were-doing-rohingyas-what-was-done-jewish-refugees-during-holocaust#sthash.wwozfzix.dpuf>

**Same-sex marriage will soon be legal in Ireland**, following approval of a referendum on 22 May 2015 to provide in the country's constitution that marriage is recognized irrespective of the sex of the partners.  
Photo Wikipedia



Politicians in **Northern Ireland** will face intense pressure from LGBT rights campaigners to “catch up” with the rest of western Europe after the Irish Republic overwhelmingly backed same-sex marriage in a referendum. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions will join Amnesty International and gay rights group the Rainbow Project to hold a mass rally in support of equal marriage rights on 13 June, while a legal test case has also been lodged with Belfast’s courts. **Read more by Henry McDonald** at <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/may/24/same-sex-marriage-northern-ireland-pressure-referendum-win>

**Our latest Kiva loan is offered to Jacinta of Timor L'Este** to improve her business. Jacinta opened her kiosk in 2011 with savings from her work. She will use the loan to buy stocks to keep in her store like oils, coffee, sugar, salt, noodles, salt, shampoo and slippers.



Jacinta lives in a town with her family.

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After explaining the commandment to 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' a Sunday School teacher asked, 'Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?' Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, 'Thou shall not kill.'

### 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@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jtendys@yahoo.com.au) or hand to Jan Tendys at the Sunday service.

Although we have an Associate Minister, Rev. Geoff Usher, we are primarily a lay-led congregation. **Perhaps you have a topic to share?** We welcome any topic ideas, offers to speak or names of suitable speakers for our meetings whom we could approach. *Please see Caz Donnelly at the Sunday service.*

**Fellowship contact 0466 940 461**