

What, Who and Why

Members and friends are invited to submit pieces. Please consider 270, 540 or 810 words. These are best sent electronically, as should be any high quality only images. Author biographies should be limited to 50 words. Advice is offered regarding copyright matters. Please see the Hull Unitarians Website for details on submissions.

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Webmaker is Keith Brown; the **Treasurer** is Barry Cundill; the **Reaching Out Co-ordinator** is Mavis Lake; **Music Providers** are Dr Tony Ward, Dr Daniela Fountain and Dr Adrian Worsfold; Pastor Dr Ralph Catts is the **Magazine Editor** and Dr Adrian Worsfold is the **Writer and Compiler**.

Hull Unitarians aim to welcome and care for all, celebrating life through free and inquiring religion, respecting the diversity of views of the congregation. Find us at Park St. HU2 8TA.

streamed the result, a condition of the funding, and a friend of mine who viewed the content online commented on the jargon involved in the presentation.

The final event, beyond the useful review, was a repeat of classifying posters from four years ago, that I had attended then. The only difference now is the smart phone by which people now take pictures of posters, bigger and simpler directive text. A poster should **hook** by an attractive image, **pull** in by larger text, **catch** in by detailed text and **land** in taking action (as in making contact).

A weekend away is more than the formal activities. It is a chance to have a gossip around the denomination and make good relationships out of situ, such as between Barry and myself. Also Hucklow should value its informal seating areas: a plan to widen the dining area and shrink a passageway used for seating, snoozing and chat, would be quite disastrous to how the place functions in between functions.

Adrian
Worsfold



Pastor's Letter

Ralph Catts
Winter
2015

Justice for the poor: In the past month two former Prime Ministers, Labour and Conservative, have spoken with concern about the increasing gap between the affluent and the poor, including the working poor. We could all end up impoverished if the next generation grows up without the quality of schooling, health services, libraries, playing fields and other public amenities we took for granted in our youth. Tony Cann at our first



Social Justice Forum (November 18) pointed out that the gap between the rich and the poor is more extreme than in other European countries. In the *Poverty and Justice Bible*, Vest & Sterns (2008, 2) claim that the only times when Jesus spoke about justice was about how society treats the poor. This indicates how to approach the needs of poor and marginalised people.

Coming Events: We have our annual Candle Lit Supper on December 5 and our carol service at 3:00 pm on December 20. Please confirm you can come, and if you need transport. Book for both events to help us cater by calling the church and leaving a message.

Season's Greetings: I hope all members and friends can attend at one of our December events so that I can wish you well in person, but if not then I hope that you and your loved ones have a safe and joyful time.



Church member Dr Tony Ward, Guest Speaker Mr Tony Cann, and Dr Shahrzad Fouladvand from the University of Hull at the forum.

Immigration does reduce wages at the lower end of the economy, but the economy recently has been divided and slack monetary but tight fiscal policies have led to a self-sustained London property-based high-end dealer economy with no trickle-down: there is an absence of demand on Keynesian lines to create a general dynamic economy once again. Gross Domestic Product figures recently added prostitution and drug-dealing estimates, and despite these and the population growth the real economy has shown little increase.

Dougie Bell

1929 to 2015
Rest in Peace

We farewelled a much loved friend of
the Church on November 20th 2015



Barry Cundill's Comments

I have drawn upon what I would regard as several key and salient references, principally contained within the **Executive Committee's** Thoughts introduction.

To build new communities in the future, we are going to have to be prepared to move away from the classic Sunday service.

Such a departure here is an evolving process led by our own pastor, Ralph Catts, and I, for one, find it refreshing to have a more relaxed atmosphere with more congregational input. Over the centuries the format seemed cast in stone as we sought to perpetuate rigid adherence to what was perceived as acceptable conformity.

The dynamics within congregations should process moral sensitivity among members in ways that lead to specific commitments to action based on their skills and interests.

I think we should encourage members and friends more to give readings and renditions of poetry/ music, or whatever they feel moves them personally, be it a song, a hymn...

We need to get out rather than expect people to come in. We should be more adventurous with our funds and resources.

Pastor Ralph started this process by reaching out to various groups and taking the spirit of the *Vision Statement* to heart and with initiatives to improve the fabric of the building.

Rev Bill Darlison, who has great respect within the movement submits a thought-provoking and at times provocative piece...

So God caused the Cool Breeze to come upon a chosen young woman called Mo Yan, who had no husband, and she became pregnant. The whole world saw this, and understood what God had wrought. The power of God is such that it can create a bodily spirit and lead to the clear, pure path of compassion. Mo Yan gave birth to a boy and called him Ye Su, who is the Messiah and whose father is the Cool Breeze. Some people claimed they could not understand how this was possible, and said that if the Cool Breeze had made Mo Yan conceive, then such a child must have been created at the bottom of the world.

...When Ye Su the Messiah was conceived, the whole world saw a bright mystery in the heavens. Everybody saw from their homes a star as big as a wagon wheel. This mysterious light shone over the place where God was to be found, for at this time the One was born in the city of Wen-li-shih-ken [Jerusalem] in the orchard of But Lam [Bethlehem]. After five years had passed the Messiah began to talk. He did many miraculous and good things while teaching the Law. When he was twelve he assumed the Holy Word and began teaching.

He came to a place of running water called Shu-Nan [Jordan] so that he might be given a name. Thus he came to one called the Brother who dwelt in the wilderness and who, from his birth, had never eaten meat or drunk wine, but instead lived on vegetables and honey gathered from the wilderness.

At that time many people came to the Messiah, bringing gifts, and worshipped him. These people were deeply troubled. The Messiah went to them, bringing the precepts. When he emerged from the waters the Cool Breeze visited him from Heaven and a voice proclaimed, 'This is my son, obey him.' (Palmer, 2001, 166)

could be argued to now mostly be about individualistic diversity, but, as Bill says, people may come to us driven by anxiety and despair, so the church needs to express how it might help and affect their journey through the vale of tears. Now many Unitarians and those others possibly seeking our help may be isolated and remote from any congregation, but they still need to be able to feel wrapped up in a supportive coherent community.

For me a vision for the future should be built on our fundamental shared ideas and principles and I regret that these are not simply and clearly set out as the starting point for this document, reaching out and giving a sense of meaningful national community and solidarity to every individual Unitarian, doggedly holding on to their faith, against all the odds. Social action, Facebook, videos, and all the rest, can only come from this solid core, which can only be built by our religious community. This is not really about resources, more about communicating clear messages and how the big unity works, what it means in real life, and how we can express it, in our liturgy and worship and in our lives.

Individualism in Unitarianism can too easily blur into an isolated, desperate, position of having to make it up as you go along. Unitarianism must want to speak to and support every person. Forget growth, perhaps: concentrate on a practised faith? Finally, any document needs ownership. Whatever the past failings, I don't think that will really happen unless the Church has an elected governing council, perhaps drawn from the districts and with an elected executive chair.

Perhaps British Unitarianism needs to accept, finally, that it cannot really be all things to all people in any meaningful way: choices have to be made and perhaps they will not suit everyone, but at least we would know where we were. I feel that this bringing together and binding process needs to

Dorothy Morgan

Dorothy Morgan's life, longevity and service to the Church was celebrated on Sunday 22nd November, it being her birthday on the 23rd. How old she has become, she did not



say, but on the Friday before I did ask how she had reacted at the time to the death of George III. She responded by saying she would kick my bad leg, and if I didn't have a bad leg it would be after she had kicked it. The real

connection to royalty is that her mother was "chief cook and bottle washer" to the Middleton family; this connection made aware to the royal Kate by post. We were told this on Sunday in the special service, as well as hearing about and seeing interesting

samples from Dorothy's scrapbooks. The service was followed by a celebratory lunch in which congregational members and friends were joined by her relatives.



(25-26), she writes that “one of the ways” in which Unitarians can be religiously literate ... “is by being able to articulate what Unitarianism is today in a clear and understandable manner to all adults and children who ask the question *What is Unitarianism?*”

I agree with the need for a clear articulation of Unitarianism, but not with her conclusion that we need “to be educated and knowledgeable across the wide field of religion”. It takes years to engage in depth with any of the world's religious or spiritual traditions. Unless we engage in depth we run the risk of being superficial in our grasp of the teachings of various wisdom traditions, or as the World Council of Churches has done, to appropriate concepts out of context to bolster their claims to wisdom... It may also not be very productive if all we gain is an understanding of the variety of myths invented by people in different cultures to try to explain what was beyond our comprehension, without the benefit of modern scientific insights.

Our Unitarian principles of mutual respect, freedom of conscience, social action, and responsibility for continual questioning of our assumptions should make our approach to being spiritual attractive in a rational world. However, we are not unique in adopting these principles. There are Atheists, Quakers, 'Progressive' Christians, Muslims and Buddhists who can make the same claim. What may distinguish us is that increasingly Unitarians are adopting a *Universalist* approach to faith, in the modern sense of recognising the diversity of ways in which people can connect with the divine spark within themselves. Universalism in the 21st Century is inclusive and respectful of all people of goodwill whether they claim to have a faith or to be atheist. In this sense we need to know enough about other traditions to act in a respectful manner, but that does not mean engaging in depth. Rather it demands a new approach to theology which dismisses the old tenants

a new ritual the orthodox would reject, that of panting, and a bodily posture so that our shiny flippers lose heat; conversely, further south, Unitarians get cold feet. Our Penguin Pastor keeps encouraging us in our spiritual practice of panting and exposing our feet.

We received our religion from your chap who visited with his Beagle, who went to Unitarian Sunday School in Shrewsbury. He was impressed by our craters but didn't know about our tectonic Wedgwood plate. Today there are only around one and a half thousand of us left, and our population crashed in the 1980s as old congregations died out. There is a little bit of a recovery: there has to be, if we have the vision! Older chapel islands have disappeared below the sea, whilst our main churches Isabela and Fernandina keep changing and at times erupt dramatically. Perhaps panting rituals will attract some more in, along with life-long coupling (both parents assist with eggs and parenting - we pursue equality). We eat our own small Sunday Schooling fish, mainly mullet, sardines, and crustaceans. We try to be interfaith with the cats, dogs and rats that came first to Isabella with you people, along with crabs and snakes everywhere, and other birds, and then sharks, fur seals, and sea lions in the sea, but they all find us too tasty and so we have become defensively denominational.

There is also our concern for wider issues: these humans with oil damage and over fishing. We have to be aware!

All love from Juan



Unitarianism of his New England family. He writes:

Unitarianism, from a dogmatic Christian position, is a religion of air. It is full of spirit and bereft of letter. It is optimistic, with a spiny emphasis on charity and good works.... It is somewhat tiresomely untragic (we see this in Emerson).

Wood's point is that for people with a more 'tragic' outlook, like Eliot's, what embodies the sense of tragedy is original sin, and what is needed to correct it is a religion of dogma, discipline and order - a kind of religion that Wood finds 'repulsive, clenched, spiritless and wrong'.



When Bill Darlison wonders what Catholicism and Mormonism offer that Unitarianism doesn't, he seems to overlook the possibility that what makes these religions, or certain varieties of them, attractive to some converts is not so much that 'their imagination can be fed' (although I am sure there is plenty to feed the imagination in the fantastical *Book of Mormon*) but a strong element of authoritarian conservatism. If we are going to be 'a faith that matters', we should not be trying to compete with that.

So where are the religions that can attract large numbers of new members seeking a cure for their 'existential sickness of soul' but which do not represent, as Wood writes of Eliot's brand of Christianity, 'the dark to Unitarianism's light'? I don't really have the expertise to judge, but I suspect that the most plausible candidates are westernised forms of Buddhism - and that Unitarianism might, indeed, have something to learn from them.

Many Thanks!!

Sponsored Walk Friday October 23rd

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to my Sponsored Walk in aid of Hull and East Yorkshire Mind. The final total raised was £464.



Many thanks to my daughter Hazel who walked the eight mile city walk with me and raised £112 of the total from friends and work colleagues.

Many thanks to Heather Barratt who provided a welcome cup of tea and biscuit at our half way point.

Many thanks to Georgina and helpers for manning the tombola and stalls whilst I was walking.



Many thanks to Claire Thomas of Hull and East Yorkshire Mind who helped to lead the service for Mind on the following Sunday. Also to Gavin who bravely spoke at the service about his struggles with mental problems and the help he received from Mind.

The tombola and stalls and the service raised a further £150 making a total of over £600 for the week-end. **Thanks to everyone involved!** They can feel they made a worthwhile effort and made a real difference.