

A Radical Religious Heritage

Auckland Unitarian Church and its Wider
Connections

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Line drawings by Marge Barley

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DEDICATION OF THE NEW UNITARIAN CHURCH, PONSONBY

The opening and dedication of the new Unitarian Church, Ponsonby Road, took place on Wednesday. The Rev W. Jellie presided at the dedication service. The church was well filled, and the walls were tastefully decorated. . . . The choir and orchestra were under the baton of Mr. Gribble, choirmaster, assisted by Mr. Edgar Walton, organist. "Break Forth into Joy" (Caleb Simper), by the full choir, was a feature. In the singing of the hymns the congregation joined wholeheartedly. . . . The party adjoined to the Foresters' Hall, where a sumptuous repast was provided. A social gathering and public meeting were held in the evening. . . . At intervals in the addresses, vocal and instrumental items were given. On Sunday next Rev George Walters will preach in the new church.
(Auckland Star, Fri. Dec. 6, 1901.)

OPENING OF CHURCH. The 4th of December 1901, will remain a historic day for us. Such a magnificent beginning surpassed our wildest hopes. It was proof that we have not only a firm root in Auckland, but also many sympathisers elsewhere.
(From the church calendar for the following month.)

Author: John Hilary Maindonald

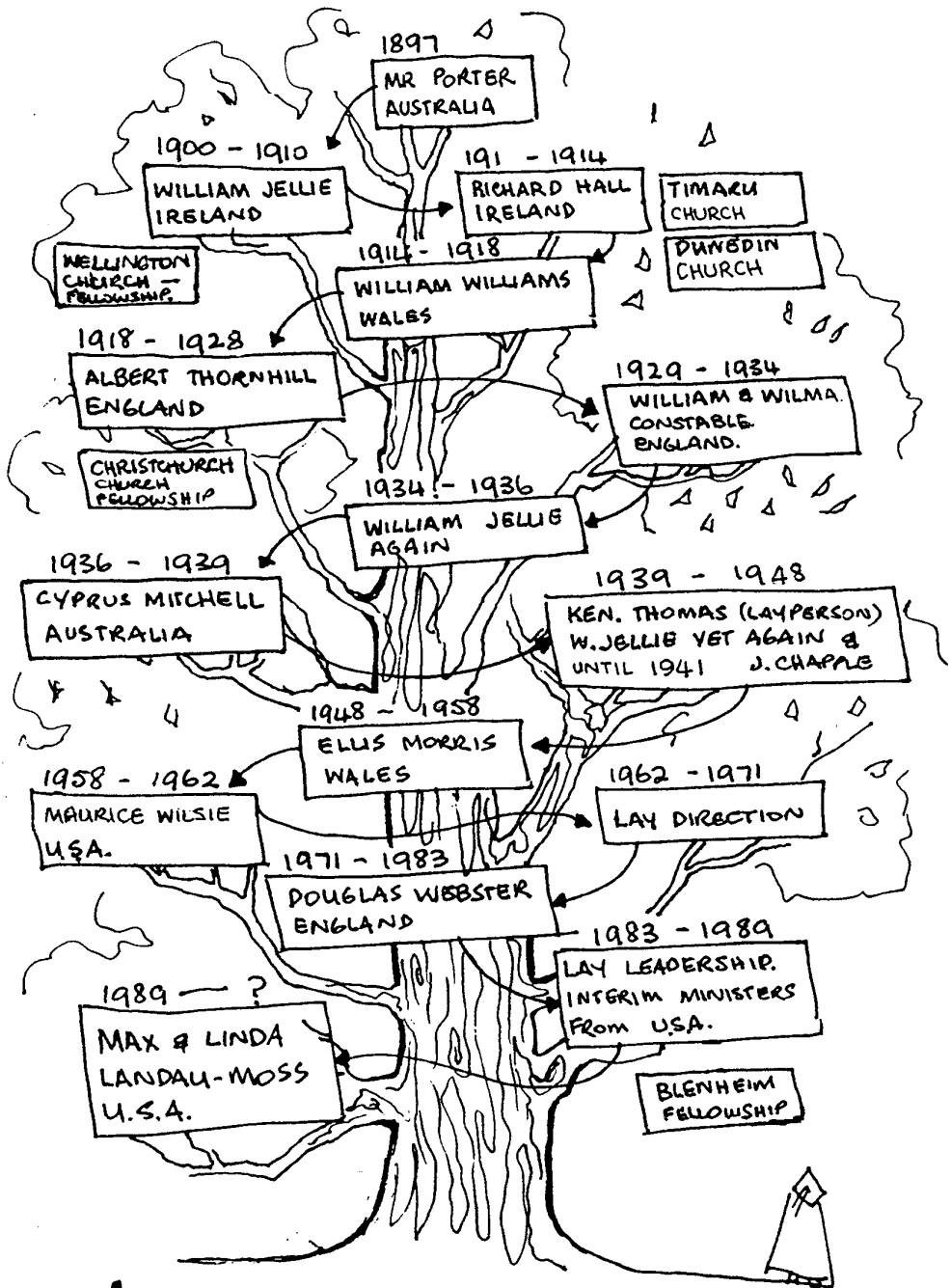
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AUCKLAND UNITARIAN CHURCH.
 MINISTERIAL TREE

Introduction — Who are the Unitarians?

Today's Unitarian (and Unitarian Universalist) churches are unusual because they do not expect members to share common doctrinal beliefs. Members join together because they share common values such as appear in the statement or covenant on page 2, which aimed to sum up the ideals and concerns of the members of the Auckland Church as they saw them in 1989. Such a document provides a basis on which to act and work together. Unitarian churches has no creed.

Unitarians are a small part of the religious scene, sometimes confused with other groups whose names start with Uni-. At least in New Zealand, its time of greatest strength was the early 19th century, with thriving churches in Auckland and Wellington, and churches also in Timaru, Christchurch, and (briefly) Dunedin. A surprising number of the figures who were prominent in public life in the first 100 years of European settlement were Unitarians from the United Kingdom. At the time of writing, the Auckland Church is the only New Zealand Unitarian group that meets regularly. Steps are under way that will allow those who are remote from Auckland to connect together, and with the Auckland Church, via video links.

Because wide in scope, this booklet is inevitably short on much of the detail. It includes summary histories of the Auckland Church, of the wider New Zealand movement, and of allied movements internationally. It describes some of the movement's outstanding personalities, and notes connections with New Zealand history and literature.

Today, easily the largest group with historical Unitarian connections is in the United States, where a 1961 merger with the Universalists created the Unitarian Universalist Association. This has become an important source of influence, and of resources, for the Unitarian movement in Australia and New Zealand. In our modern secular society, the need for places where those of good will can join together for reflection and for mutual support, and for such other purposes as are set out in the covenant shown in the text box.

.....

The “ministerial tree” on the facing page remains where Marge Barley (d.2001) left it. Acknowledgements are on page 61.

WE, THE AUCKLAND UNITARIANS, uniting in a spirit of mutual sympathy, co-operation, tolerance and respect, building upon the religious heritage we have received from those who have gone before us, particularly in the worldwide Unitarian Movement and in our own church, believing that truth is best served where mind and conscience are free, AFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO WORK TOGETHER;

- to promote the spiritual growth of each one of us within an inclusive and creedless community based on our acceptance of one another;
- to join together in the search for truth and meaning;
- to express our shared religious life through worship, celebration and service;
- to build awareness of and respect for the variety of cultures represented within our congregation, in Aotearoa New Zealand, and in the world at large;
- to co-operate as good neighbours with all who share our commitment to such goals as the promotion of peace, freedom, and justice;
- to respect the worth and dignity of all people and to cherish the earth which is our home.

(This statement was prepared and agreed in May 1989, with help from Rev Phillip Hewett, at that time Guest Minister. Such a statement or covenant is open to revision at some future time.)

1 The Several Strands of Unitarian Tradition

Scriptural Christianity, and the book of Nature



Historically, the strongest influence came from those who sought to base their faith and belief directly on the Bible. Those forebears searched the New Testament for the doctrine of the Trinity and did not find it. Along with the Bible, they looked, also, for what they could find of God in the book of Nature. From this point of view it seems altogether appropriate that Servetus, famous as a sixteenth century ‘Unitarian’ martyr, used his book *The Restoration of Christianity* to record his discovery that blood passes through the lungs on its way from the right to the left side of the heart.

The internal evidence of the biblical text, and the influence of science and of German biblical criticism, led to a constant critical re-evaluation of the Bible’s use to establish doctrine. Many modern Unitarians view the Bible as a seminal religious literature that continues to challenge to thought and action. Its different authors all bring their own different perspectives, with evident changes and development in understanding that can and must continue.

Varieties of humanism

Humanism, a critical use of the Christian tradition, and the use of reason, have been central strands in the historical development of Unitarianism. They merge in the biblical humanism that underpins the religious outlook of many of those who follow along with modern biblical scholarship. In New Zealand, the radical Presbyterian, Professor Geering, is the best known scholar in this tradition. The challenge to conventional wisdom offered by Job or by the writer of Ecclesiastes or by Jesus himself is a key part of the biblical message.

Some groups espouse a radical humanism that is atheist in its explicit disavowal of any use of the word God. Radical humanists, who can live happily with those who still find use for more traditional forms of expression, readily find a place.

Transcendentalism

Transcendentalism, with the American literary figure Ralph Waldo Emerson a major influence, vested religious authority in the divine within the human spirit. It emphasized the creative and anarchic powers of the human spirit and the human link with all nature. It welcomed and promoted the new views of the biblical literature and of Christian origins that gained prominence in the eighteenth century. It was a journey in religious understanding rather than a destination. Many transcendentalists resisted organization — fearing that it would constrain the human spirit. The modern successors of the transcendentalists are to be found where there is intellectual and emotional energy, and a willingness to explore.

Insights from many traditions

The hymn verse in the text box that follows emphasizes openness to insights from other traditions. As with liberal Christian and humanist traditions, they must be used critically. Some biblical humanists have found common philosophical ground with Mahayana Buddhism, making it a starting point for approaching Eastern religions.

All creeds, all peoples, every guild,
The universal church must build;
High thoughts shall sermon be and prayer,
And humblest serving, worship there.

(Sung at the opening of the Auckland Church building in 1901)

More recent influences

A particular recent influence is the environmental movement, with its emphasis on oneness with nature, and a deep concern about the danger that human wastefulness poses to the planet.

‘New Age’ is a heading under which may be grouped diverse influences that, especially in North America, have gained a following in recent decades. The descriptions ‘pagan’ and ‘nature-centred’ spirituality gather up further themes.

In reasserting the interdependence of all existence, the "New Age" movement has much to commend it. But in a society where individual consumerism increasingly extends to religion and its substitutes, one should be a prudent and wary shopper among the varied "New Age" books, workshops, ideas, and programmes . . . Without denying the popularity of the message, or the spiritual hunger it represents, we need to be aware, as James Luther Adams puts it, that "nothing is ever quite so salable as egoism wrapped in idealism." . . . But no matter how much we honor the use of reason, and though we are a pluralistic religious community, our faith is not merely an uncritical and eclectic spirituality.

[Buehrens and Church: *Our Chosen Faith*]

The welcoming congregation

Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist Association groups, in all parts of the world, have taken major steps to welcome minority groups, especially those isolated by race, sexual orientation, or disability.

They reject gender role distinctions, seeking to hold what is distinct in male and female perspectives in tension. They aim to use inclusive language. It is thought important that women and men work together to re-examine their conventional roles in society.

2 Unitarianism in New Zealand

Many early New Zealand settlers came from Unitarian backgrounds in the United Kingdom. The Richmonds and Atkinsons are perhaps the best known. For many years C W Richmond, who was a Supreme Court Judge from 1863 until his death in 1895, held Unitarian services in his home, for his own family circle.

In the 1896 census, 375 identified as Unitarians, increasing to 468 in the 1901 census. Of the 468, 283 were males and 185 females, an imbalance between the sexes that was unique to Unitarians.

At one or other time there were Unitarian churches in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Timaru, and Dunedin. Only the Auckland Church has survived. The present Auckland Church commenced in 1898. Its first minister, William Jellie, arrived on February 26 1900.

Early Auckland Unitarian and other meetings

Franklin Bradley, who had been minister at Crediton in England and at Ravara in Ireland, held Unitarian services following his arrival in Auckland in 1863.

UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY

Mr F BRADLEY

Will deliver a course of SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES at the
ODD FELLOWS' HALL
as follows, viz –

- | | |
|--------|--|
| August | 23.—The Gospel of Christ |
| " | 30.—The Father, the only object of worship |
| Sept. | 6.—"Whom say ye that I am?" |
| " | 13.—The Atonement |
| " | 20.—Christ, the mediator |
| " | 27.—Love to God, and love to Man |

Morning Service, at 11 o'clock — Evening, at half-past six o'clock.

(From *The Southern Cross* for Sat. Aug. 22, 1863. An initial meeting had been held on June 11 1863.)

Bradley moved to Albertland in 1865. Meetings continued until 1866. Jellie conducted Bradley's funeral service when he died at Arapohue, a few kilometers south-east of Dargaville, in 1909.

Samuel Edger had been a Baptist minister of advanced and liberal views who came to Auckland as a minister with the Albertlander venture. Edger held 'non-sectarian' services from 1866 to 1882 in Parnell and (later) in other parts of Auckland. These doubtless helped prepare the way for the later Auckland Church. Edger's daughters Marian (Judson) and Eva (Hemus) were active in the Auckland Church from around the time of William Jellie's arrival in February 1900.

The beginnings of the current Auckland Church

In his *Annals*, Castle credits a Mr Porter, a commercial traveller from Australia, with taking initiatives that brought together a group which decided to start public services. Mr Porter soon passed out of the picture. The church minutes tell the story of the first meeting:

At a meeting held in the Tailoress Hall on March 3^d 1898
Convened by the Secty Mr McCready it was resolved by those
present to form themselves into a Church. . . . The first service
was held on March 27/98 and was conducted by the Sect to
a congregation of about 40 and services have been conducted
regularly by Mr McCready with the assistance of Mr & Mrs
Shawcross and Mr & Mrs Newland who have taken occasional
services. . . .

A request was then sent to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association (BFUA) asking them to send out a minister. They appointed Rev R H Lambley of the Melbourne Church to visit Auckland and report on prospects for a continuing church. Lambley's report, though critical of the "mismanagement and misguided zeal" that characterized the fractured fellowship, supported the request.

Following its formation in 1898, and prior to Lambley's visit, the Auckland fellowship received a visit from Rev George Walters, from Sydney. Walters, who had been minister of Sydney Unitarian Church, had a short time earlier left to set up a branch of Charles Strong's "Australian Church." Walters had hoped to persuade the Auckland fellowship to ally itself with that enterprise.

William Jellie takes up the Auckland Church ministry

The response to Lambley's report was to send out William Jellie, who preached his first sermon in Auckland on March 4, 1900. Average church attendance to the end of March 1901 was 26 in the morning, 101 in the evening. Membership had doubled over that time.

Jellie sought to extend the Unitarian cause more widely, in Auckland as well as in other centres. From May 1901 Jellie held quarterly services at Arapohue a few kilometers south-east of Dargaville. Franklin Bradley, who died at Arapohue in 1909, may have attended.

I believe there is an opening not only in Auckland but in other New Zealand cities for a Unitarian operation. The Unitarians have ever struggled for freedom's right and they have also ever been found in the ranks of those who have struggled to uplift humanity.

[Sir Robert Stout, at that time Chief Justice, writing to Jellie shortly after the latter's arrival in New Zealand. Stout apologized that he could not attend the Auckland Church's annual meeting.]

Charles Hargrove's tour

Charles Hargrove's 1904 preaching tour tested interest in starting Unitarian causes in other parts of New Zealand. He spoke several times in each of the four main centres. Stout assisted by meeting Hargrove at the station when he arrived in Wellington and by making arrangements for his visit to Dunedin.

The Rev Charles Hargrove, of Leeds, England, lectured in the Alexandra hall last evening on . . . "Unitarianism". . . . To a Unitarian, revelation was not confined to any place or any time or any person. . . . Revelation was like sunshine, which shone forever and all days, from the beginning and to now. Men saw not according to the amount of light, but according to their situation and capacity. . . . [Unitarians] refused to allow the despotism of scripture, while they revered all good books as partaking of the divine mind. They protested against the right of any man or church or document to overawe the entire freedom of the human mind.

(Lyttelton Times, 7 September 1904.)

Hargrove was a highly regarded British minister. His religious intense Plymouth Brethren family influences had left him, as a young man, oppressed by doubt and religious turmoil. He joined the Dominican order, seeking in an infallible church the certainty that the Brethren use of scripture did not provide for him. In due course, his doubts returned, and he left the order ten years later. After several years spent rebuilding his life and religion on new foundations, he became minister at Mill Hill Chapel in Leeds in 1876.

I have since heard that Mr Jellie is shortly to be married to the daughter of Mr Macky, the leading member and chief benefactor of the congregation. The news . . . may be taken to intimate that the first Unitarian minister in New Zealand has taken up his permanent home there. May he have a long and useful Ministry, and help in the forming of new congregations in that favoured and progressive colony.

(Charles Hargrove writing shortly after leaving New Zealand.)

Wellington

Important ground was laid for the later 1904 Unitarian Society and subsequently Church by the Forward Movement that had been formed in 1893. In the Forward Movement in London, young Oxford and Cambridge graduates lived and worked in Anglican and Congregational foundations that aimed “to promote education and temperance and the general welfare of the community.”

In addition to social work, the Wellington movement promoted lectures that were intended to inform and educate. The lectures largely ceased once Victoria University was established in 1897. Those involved in the Forward Movement included a number who would later join the Unitarian cause — Stout, several members of the Richmond–Atkinson connection, and Ernest Beaglehole who was father of acclaimed New Zealand historian John Cawte Beaglehole.

Hargrove’s 1904 visit led to the formation of the Unitarian Society of Wellington. In 1906, when W Tudor Jones came as minister, the Society became the Unitarian Free Church, with Stout chairing the initial meeting. Tudor Jones was the author of several volumes on the philosophy of religion. For seven years before coming to Wellington, he had been minister at the Unitarian Church in Swansea in South

Wales. His talks and newspaper articles often attracted controversy in the letters sections of newspapers.

Last Sunday evening Sir Robert Stout gave an address before the Unitarian Society, at their usual fortnightly service, in the Masonic Hall, Boulcott-street. The subject was "Theology and the Universe". The immensity of the stellar universe was brought within the comprehension of the audience, and a very natural deduction was drawn that inasmuch as the ancients were unacquainted with these grand facts, it was fair to conclude that they had not said the last word on theology. The lecturer exhorted his hearers to devote their time and abilities to the search after further truths, and the service of humanity. Sir Robert Stout has consented in the near future to give an address before the Unitarian Society on "The Death of Socrates".

[Evening Post, Vol LXX, Issue 117, on the Sunday 12 November 1905 service. Page 49 has further details on Stout's involvements.]]

Foundation members included Stout, Hugh MacKenzie who was Professor of English language and literature at Victoria University, John Gammell who was a former Unitarian minister and had been an Inspector of Schools, and Mary Richmond who was active in a wide range of educational and social service organizations. All four were frequent speakers at services and other Church meetings. John Gammell would be President over 1906-1909, followed by Hugh Mackenzie, and then Stout until his death in 1930.

A church building was opened in April 1909, at what would later be 191 Vivian St. The building was sold in 1926. The Church continued to hold services until at least 1945.

Ernest and Jenny Beaglehole, parents of John Cawte Beaglehole who would later be a renowned New Zealand historian, soon became deeply involved, with Ernest having stints as secretary and treasurer, and Jenny playing the organ as occasion demanded.

Tudor Jones, while an excellent preacher, had problems with the church committee, and especially with those who held overtly rationalist views. He returned to the UK in 1910, where he continued to work as a Unitarian minister, and to write and lecture on the philosophy of religion.

THE NEW BUILDING. OPENING SERVICE. ... Yesterday the handsome new church in Ingestre Street was formally opened. ... The morning and evening services were conducted by Dr Tudor Jones. Special hymns, composed by Dr Jones, Miss Mary E. Richmond, Mr J Gammell, B.A., and Professor Hugh Mackenzie, M.A., were sung at the services. ... At the morning service there was a congregation of about 300. In the evening the church was crowded up to the steps of the pulpit, and many were unable to find accommodation. ... Dr Tudor Jones, at the morning service, traced the rise and progress of the Unitarian Church in Wellington. It had started from small beginnings until to-day it comprised over 200 members. ... The only authority before which its supporters bowed was not that of any priest or tradition, but the authority of conscience. ... It was through grasping the principles of freedom and truth and goodness in their direct bearing on their lives and the light of the world that they could solve, so far as it could be solved at all, the riddle of existence. ... The new building was to be dedicated to the things of the intellect, and more so to the things of the spirit. In conclusion, were quoted Emerson's lines:-

We love the venerable house
Our fathers built of God,
In Heaven are kept their grateful vows,
Their dust endears the sod.

Evening Post, Vol LXXVII, 91, 19 April 1909

Tudor Jones was followed by Jellie (1910-1913), George Hale (1914-1920), Wyndham Heathcote (March to August 1920, and 14 months over 1922-23), and J S Brown (a few months early in 1922). In his history of Victoria University College, John C Beaglehole, who was organist at the time, comments how in 1923 the church, "flourishing for a brief period under the sardonic eloquence of Wyndham Heathcote," was attracting a student following. Not everyone was happy. Heathcote's preaching against prohibition, arguing that the traffic "would be driven below the surface," caused division in the church.

Then followed J G W Ellis (a few months in 1924), and the visitor W Priestley Phillips (six weeks in early 1925). The building was sold in 1926, and after October of that year was no longer available for Unitarian services. Those who took services through until March 1930 included Mr J Rusten Salt, Richard Hall (minister in Auckland: 1911-1914) who was on a world tour, and Wilna Constable from Auckland.

Arthur E Coxon was minister for 11 months from March 1930. Those who spoke at services held over 1931-1934 included one or other of the Constables from Auckland, William J McEldowney, and J R Salt.

Cyprus Michell was minister from February 1934 until September 1935, then moving to be minister in Auckland. The church then continued, at least until the end of 1945, under lay leadership. Edmund C Isaac, a former Congregational minister who was Inspector of Technical Education, was President over 1933-1945, was a frequent speaker over the latter part of this time. No further advertisements of services in the newspaper appeared after the end of 1945.

Subsequently, fellowships were active over 1962-1965 and 1994-2019.

Timaru

The larger than life figure of James Henry George Chapple (1865-1947) now enters our account. In September 1909 Jellie received a letter from Chapple in Timaru:

...I am a Presbyterian minister but have no right in the Church. The Presbytery know of my heterodoxy and tried to shift me two years ago and called a meeting which resulted in 8 voting against me and 200 for me. Anyway I am a square peg in a round hole. Is there any opening in the North for a Unitarian charge?

In 1910 proceedings were brought against Chapple in the Timaru Presbytery. He had chaired the meeting when Joseph McCabe, former priest and leading rationalist, spoke in Timaru in 1910. He had preached in the Unitarian church in Auckland as a candidate. He had made "some disquieting utterances." Chapple was unrepentant:

Slowly, stubbornly, insolently, Theology has fought Truth, step by step, but always retreating, taking refuge behind one subterfuge, then another.

[Quoted in Davidson (1991)]

Chapple resigned and with Jellie's encouragement started a Unitarian Church in Timaru. A March 1911 letter to Jellie pressed for a visit from someone who could speak with authority as a Unitarian. Chapple added

In the meantime I am "paddling my own canoe" and doing my level best to make an uproarious community of heretics and I hope something else.

Mr George Wells paid for the erection of a hall which opened in May 1912. Three other Unitarian ministers were present at the opening — Jellie from Wellington, Richard Hall from Auckland, and W F Kennedy who started a church in Dunedin later that year.

Thy truth shall live eternally,
Majestic, grand, sublime and free
Thy love and goodness shall endure —
Serene and holy, sweet and pure.

(From the hymn composed by Dora, daughter of James Chapple, sung at the opening of the Timaru Church on Sunday 5 May 1912).

Chapple stayed until July 1915. William Jellie was minister over 1923-1925. The Timaru Church continued until at least 1928.

Dunedin

George Wells provided financial assistance for the Unitarian services that W F Kennedy started a short time later in hired premises in Dunedin. Chapple, Jellie and Hall all visited and tried to assist. Meetings lapsed in August 1916.

At the Club House Hall on Sunday the Rev. W. F. Kennedy gave the first of his lectures commemorating the centenary of Unitarian freedom. ... In 1813 the Act of Toleration was extended to Unitarians (and Catholics). Unitarianism was a living movement, and always advanced as the mind opened up to fresh realms of thought. Unitarians could go forward with hope and courage, realising they had for their example all who had lived and died in the cause of truth.

(Evening Star, Issue 15230, 8 July 1913)

Christchurch

On at least two occasions, while still in Timaru, Chapple gave a lecture in Christchurch.

On Sunday night at the Alexandra Hall the Rev J. H. Chapple delivered a lecture on "Unitarian Aims and Ideals." ... The movement aimed at establishing a congregation of tolerant and enlightened thinkers. Another aim was to teach kinder and more modern thoughts of God. ... [A] fellowship was found that was not based on a common creed, hut upon common aims, common ideals and a common spirit. Each member was allowed to think freely his own thoughts. The mind of each and all was thus kept open to fresh and new ideas, recognising there could be no finality or fixity in an evolving universe.

(Star (Christchurch), Issue 10845, 12 August 1913)

Chapple left Timaru in 1915. After two years in California, he returned in 1917 to start Unitarian meetings in Christchurch, with reported attendances of 20 to 60. Castle comments that these became, at times, "noisy political meetings." A November 1923 letter to Jellie indicates the radical Marxist thrust of Chapple's preaching. Chapple visited England in 1924, publishing two books — *The Divine Need of the Rebel* and *The Rebel's Vision Splendid*. Rev Clyde Carr, a former Congregational minister, took charge while he was away.

Chapple left Christchurch in 1925. Clyde Carr then again took over, assisted by Norman Bell. At some point Bell took charge, changing the name to "Free Religious Fellowship." By this time the connection with other Unitarian groups seems to have been lost.

In 1928 Carr became Member of Parliament for Timaru. In an April 1929 letter to Jellie, Carr commented

In other words they are, I suppose one might say, extreme radicals, though probably not quite as extreme as Chapple himself, who was the originator of the movement.

New Zealand Unitarian Associations

A New Zealand Unitarian Missionary Conference was started in 1911, initially centred on the Auckland Church and with the aim of outreach into new areas.

In 1916 the New Zealand Unitarian Missionary Conference was reshaped to become the New Zealand Unitarian Association. A publication, the *New Zealand Unitarian*, appeared in January 1918. Five annual meetings were held between 1916 and 1923.



Ferner, Photo., Auck.]

Delegates — New Zealand Unitarian Conference. 1917

(Front Row) Mr Geo. Wells, Mr C A Cook, Rev J H G Chapple, Mrs Geddis, Rev W E Williams, Rev G E Hale (Sec.), Mr A Chitham

(End of 2nd Row) Mrs Williams, Mr S J Elliott, Mr B C Blakey

(Back Row) Mr J M Geddis, Mr Geo Stevenson (Pres.), Mr T H Macky
Raymond Williams

The delegates of the Unitarian churches of New Zealand in conference assembled hereby affirm their wholehearted allegiance to the principle of non-subscription to dogma as the basis of religious fellowship and the chief hope for lasting reunion of the churches. They rejoice at the evidence of growing tolerance in other communions and send fraternal greetings to all who bear witness to:

1. The essential harmony of religious and scientific truth.
2. The vital value of unfettered enquiry into the origin and meaning of scripture.
3. The urgent need for the practical application of Christian values to the manifold problems of our time.

(Motion passed at the fifth conference of the New Zealand Society of Unitarians, held in November 1923 in Wellington.)

Chapple's determination to press his particular political ideology, against opposition from the Auckland and Wellington Churches, made it difficult for the Association to continue, and it petered out.

A revived Association, and the journal 'Motive'

The New Zealand Unitarian Association was revived in 1958, with 'annual' conferences in 1958, 1959, and 1964. Over 1958-1969 it put out a lively avant-garde quarterly publication, *Motive*. From the third issue Nancy Fox, who was at that time living in Whakatane, took over as editor. Nancy Fox and her co-workers maintained a publication of remarkable quality for the ten years of its operation. The best of the New Zealand material is very good indeed, with much interesting commentary on the great issues of the day.

Nancy Fox and her co-workers maintained a publication of remarkable quality for the ten years of its operation. The best of the New Zealand material is very good indeed, with much interesting commentary on the great issues of the day.

Articles that caught my attention included: Professor Lawden on *The Concept of the Soul*, Ian Pringle on *Religion in Auckland University*, Te Akonga on *Maori Attitudes to Death*, and Bernard Gadd on *The Teachings of Te Whiti o Rongomai*. It printed a series of four talks by Ethel Morris on philosophy, broadcast on the YC network some time previously.

Other frequent contributors included Margaret Dixon, Joan Walsh, Lincoln Gribble, Dorothy Smith, J J de Stigter, Jindra Rutherford, Hone Tuwhare, Eem Sikkema, Colin Gillies and E M B Wilson.

Fellowships — Wellington, Christchurch, and Blenheim

Brief details are included for completeness. Mention has already been made of the Wellington Fellowships that met over 1962-1965 and 1994-2019. All three went into abeyance at some time in 2019. The journal 'Motive' makes brief mention of a Whakatane fellowship. Derek McCullough, while minister with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Christchurch, conducted at least some meetings in Nelson as well as in Blenheim.

In 1988 Elspeth and Arthur Vallance, retired British Unitarian ministers, came to live in Blenheim to be close to their son Stephen. A fellowship group started just before Christmas 1988, initially meeting at the Vallance home.

British and Northern Irish Connections

Mention has been made of the support provided to the New Zealand movement by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association (BFUA). In 1928, the BFUA became part of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, with strong linkages continuing. From time to time, the UK fortnightly magazine *The Inquirer* (see page 39) has carried extensive information on events in New Zealand.

More recently, there have been strong connections with the Unitarian Universalist Association in the United States.

3 The Auckland Church

Early Church activities

At least from the time of Jellie's arrival, there were regular socials and musical events, and annual congregational picnics. Castle speaks of a 24-member choir, supported by an instrumental group led by Jack Parkin who ran a pigeon post between Auckland and Great Barrier Island. William Gribble led the choir. Activities that catered for young people soon started to appear on the Church programme. Jellie started a tradition of lectures on literary topics.



An Early Church Picnic

The Church building — opened 4 December 1901

T H White, a professional architect who had studied in Birmingham and Paris, designed the building. He was Chairman of the Management Committee at the time. Builder W S Smith's tender was accepted on 29 July 1901, the foundation stone was laid on 17 August, and the building was opened for use on 4 December.

Mr. Geo. Fowlds M.H.R. also gave a short address. He said there were some good people in Auckland, who believed it would have been less of a calamity had a public-house instead of a Unitarian church been put on that site. The number of these people, however, was decreasing, and they were destined to decrease still further as the positive side of Unitarianism became better known.

(N Z Herald, December 5 1901, reporting on the church opening.)



The Church Interior, Prior to the Installation of the Organ

The style of the building is austere and simple, with a high-pitched roof. It has excellent acoustics. Its historic and architectural interest has earned it an Historic Places Trust class C classification.

Auckland architect Jeremy Salmond described the style as “American domestic Queen Anne.” Or to quote another expert opinion:

Though of broadly Gothic form, this church . . . has a rather domestic air. Its various idiosyncrasies, however, are in complete harmony, and set it aside from churches of other denominations.

(Architectural historian John Stacpoole O.B.E.)

The organ, given to the church by J C Macky, was installed in 1904. It featured a tubular pneumatic action to a divided instrument, half on each side of the church, with detached console. For some time after its installation monthly organ recitals drew music lovers from the wider city.

An earlier minister's vestry was removed to make room for the organ, and replaced by the small cubicle that is now immediately below the organ on the left wall of the church. In recent years, the repair costs have ballooned, and it is no longer maintained.

The Church youth



The Young Peoples' Society in 1912

(Front row:)	Dorothy Castle	Cassie Gribble	'Dutchie' Ritchardson	Annie Moore	Dahmeh Ansell		
Jessie Castle	Nellie Pitkeithly	Miss C M Guy	Miss Alice McKenzie	Louie Gerrard	Tommy Ellingham		
Vic Piper	Mary Hobson	Claude Moore	Ettie Harrison	'Chick' Parker	Harold LePine	Phyllis Garrett	Pat Hobson
(Back row:)	Edie Darlow	Harold Rhodes	Renie Leech	Horry Gribble	Iris Smith		

Sunday School activities followed the standard pattern — annual examinations, prizes at an annual concert, and an annual picnic.

Among the sources of instruction was Minot J. Savage's *Unitarian Catechism*. In 1904 there were 59 children on the roll, with a branch school of 10 at Northcote.

A Young Peoples' Society started in 1905. A gymnasium group started in 1906, using a newly added church room. Dances were first held in 1909. Several sports groups – mens and women's hockey teams, and a tennis club — started at around the same time. There was and a rambler's club. From 1910 there was a "Free Discussion Society."

The Church library

The May 1900 church calendar announced that "a nucleus of a Church Library, explanatory of our faith, has arrived from England, and will soon be available for use."

Jessie Heywood Library.— There are a number of new accessions to the library, which may be borrowed for 1/- a quarter. The Jessie Heywood library is greatly improved: the floor has been stained, and a square of carpet laid on it; the whole room has been oiled; and the shelving has been remodelled and extended around the room, which is twice the size it was. The photos of the erstwhile ministers have been hung on the walls, the pride of position having been given to the Rev William Jellie, B.A., under whose leadership the building was erected 35 years ago. (From the church newsletter for December 1936. Jessie Heywood was librarian from 1906 through until 1930.)

The first religious books mentioned in the calendar were four volumes by Rev Samuel Edger, given by Edger's daughters Mrs Hemus and Mrs Judson. Later calendars for 1900 mention the arrival or donation of various of Martineau's books. Mr McCready donated Dr Zillman's *Land of the Bunya*. Other less mysterious titles were quickly added. At the time of William Jellie's move to Wellington in 1910, the library held 1000 books and had 50 subscribers, each required to pay one penny per week, or 1/- per quarter. In due course the Sunday School had its own library. The February 1903 calendar noted that "it is hard to satisfy the voracious appetite of our scholars."

The library gained a reputation for its books on liberal ideas and for its classical fiction. Until the sixties there were few public libraries

in Auckland from which such books might be obtained. Well represented topics included radical and liberal theology, nineteenth and early twentieth century debates on the nature of Jesus, the history of liberal thought, science, and the emerging industrial technology. Biographies and autobiographies included Henry Ford on *My Life and Work*. There were numerous sermon collections. The library had a complete set of *The Hibbert Journal*, which from 1901 to 1970 was a vehicle for liberal religious thought.

The present minister's study was constructed in 1936. The front of the church was remodelled to make these changes possible.

Adult education, literature and art

In October 1902 William Jellie started a series of Tuesday evening literary readings. He organized Shakespeare readings for the young people. This began a tradition of involvement with literature and drama. Jellie, William Constable and Ellis Morris all lectured for the Workers Educational Association. In the 1970s the Association used the church hall for classes on a regular basis.

Frederick Sinclair began attending the church while a student of languages and literature at Auckland University, in 1903 or earlier. Jellie took note of his talent and gave him opportunity to preach. After study at Manchester College in Oxford, where he gained a reputation as "one of the more provocative and original personalities," Sinclair became minister at the Melbourne Unitarian Church. There his strongly expressed socialist views created controversy. His tempestuous career took him in due course to Canterbury University as Professor of English literature. Coincidentally he returned to the Anglican Church of his early youth.

The church gets a mention in several Frank Sargeson stories. In an early short story entitled *Chaucerian*, Sargeson comments that "When I was a young man I used to go to the Unitarian church." This would be 1925-1927 or perhaps 1933.

But for all that he was one of those young men, Sargeson felt himself to have been ignorant of life — "I didn't know a thing." The text box has a further Frank Sargeson reference to the church.

In the previous year, when I had been investigating sectarian phenomena, I had attended the Unitarian church and found its plain interior quite in keeping with the austere and perhaps salutary assertion that there is only one God: I had noticed too that worshippers, of whom there might have been somewhere about a dozen, partook of something of the same general austerity — ... since those days additional evidence has suggested to me that the most uncompromising moral rectitude is to be discovered only when one has crossed the borderline into areas of militant unbelief. ...

(Frank Sargeson: *Memoirs of a Peon*, 1965.)

The real life counterpart of *Plumb*, in Maurice Gee's novel of that name, was his grandfather James Chapple whose involvement with the Timaru, Christchurch and Auckland Churches is described elsewhere in this booklet.

In those days it was the thing for quite a number of young men to go to the Unitarian church. It was a way of letting people know they had grown up and had independent minds.

Hone Tuwhare (1922-2008), with a Maori and Scottish background, was one of the leading New Zealand poets of the twentieth century. In the 1950s he was active in the Workers Educational Association housed in the Auckland Unitarian Church. In the 1960s he attended the Auckland Church with his family. His poetry appeared in several issues of the journal *Motive*, a publication of the New Zealand Society of Unitarians. The spring 1962 edition of *Motive* included the first printing of Hone Tuwhare's poem 'Mauri'. Readers were told that 'Mauri' referred to the "material symbol of the hidden principle protecting vitality; talisman, life principle, thymos of man."

The Seven Ages of Women, a set of paintings by the Auckland artist Marge Barley, hung at the front of the church for several years.

War and peace

Some ministers have been strongly pacifist. Richard Hall (1911-1914) was in this tradition. He was a strong opponent of the military training that was then compulsory.

We have made civil and religious freedom a fundamental element in the practical application of our faith. Let us give thanks that, in this time of testing, our nation has manifested a new respect for the individual conscience, and has refused to do violence to sincere moral scruples regarding warfare. Let the spirit of toleration within our fellowship be even higher than this, and let us maintain the unity of our witness for God and righteousness no matter what conscientious difference of opinion may be found among us.

... While no man can rightly refrain from all condemnation of evil and inhumanity, let us remember that war is a potent destroyer of impartial judgement and a prolific breeder of hatred; and let us strive to be true to our faith in mankind, in the ultimate victory of good, and the redemptive power of the spirit of brotherhood and love. ...

(New Year message to Ministers and Congregations of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, reprinted in the church calendar for March 1940.)

In 1918, as World War I drew towards its close, there was a severe shortage of men for conscription. The Wellington minister, along it seems with William Williams in Auckland, gave notice that he would not use his right as a minister of religion to exempt himself from military service.

Chapple, then minister of the Christchurch Unitarian congregation, saw the issue very differently. In a speech in Greymouth in March 1918 he spoke strongly against New Zealand's participation in World War I, was charged with sedition, and spent a year in the Lyttleton and Paparua prisons.

Social service activities

In my judgement, unless the church definitely adopts and seeks to carry into effect a practical programme of economic and social reform, she will be cast on the Almighty's scrap-heap.

(Clyde Carr MP, writing to Jellie, December 1928)

Several Auckland social service organizations were started or revived in the church. Joyce Hopley started the New Zealand branch of the International Friendship League, in which Ethel Morris then took a keen interest. Gwen Harwood revived the CMA (Civilian Maimed

Association) as an outgrowth of the Mental Health Association. During Maurice Wilsie's ministry the church hall served as the CMA's first day centre. In the 1970s CARE (Campaign for Racial Equality) ran homework classes in the church.



Figure 1: Photo taken outside the church, on 8 December 1991, on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the opening of the church building. Max Moss is on the left at the front. The author, with head looking down, is in the back row on the left. Robert Ferguson, who was chairperson at the time, is to his right.

The Church today

The church, and church members as individuals, have been involved in a wide range of social activities. Starting in 1990 the church has worked with the Correlatina refugee organization to help resettle two refugee families. Initiatives are in place that once again are making the church a centre for social, cultural and educational activities.

4 Auckland Church Ministers

William Jellie: 1900-1910; 1934-1936; 1939-1948

William Jellie was born in 1865 in County Down (N Ireland). He received a B.A. from London University, as a start of his training for the ministry at Manchester New College (London) and at the Ipswich Church before coming to Auckland. He arrived on February 26, 1900.

His sermons ranged widely — biblical, theological and devotional topics, sermons from novels, evolution and Genesis, famous personalities, Unitarianism, ethics and morality, and so on. Themes related to evolution and its religious implications recurred frequently.

...So soon as science made it clear that the authority of Scripture was shattered, Unitarians transferred the seat of authority in religious matters to the human mind and soul. A thing had only to be proven true to the satisfaction of our souls, and we were prepared, nay pledged, to adopt it into our religion. And now we are able to see that the Bible of nature is in reality a far larger book of Revelation than the old Bible ever was. We have only exchanged a small book for an infinitely large one; a book of the past for a book of the past, present and future; a book of one race for a book of all humanity, nay of all life and creation. For what is nature? Nature is only a comprehensive name like God, meaning all things that are, and ever have been, and ever will be. The Bible of Nature is the Universe which lies open in all directions for us to read, as we have eyes to see. ...

(William Jellie: *The New Genesis* (printed sermon), pp. 9-10).

The range of church activity in 1910 when Jellie left to move to the Wellington church was impressive. The Sunday School roll had passed the 100 mark about a year earlier. Jellie was able to report that the church had had its most successful year yet. Evening attendances ranged from 100 to 275. The remaining debt had been paid off. Jellie felt, though, that the church would benefit from a visit from an English minister.

After four years in Wellington, Jellie moved to the UK, to the Southport Unitarian Church. In his role as chairperson of a Soldiers' Entertainments Committee he worked for the welfare of the young

men who came to Southport for billeting and training. Among them were members of his former Auckland and Wellington congregations.

Following two years of indifferent health he resigned in 1921, then returning to New Zealand. In 1923 he took charge of the Timaru Unitarian Church. From there he moved in 1925 to Auckland. Over the years that followed the Jellies assisted the church in a remarkable variety of ways — Sunday School, Women's league, tennis parties, discussion groups, visiting, preaching, and further assignments of full ministerial responsibility. William Jellie died in 1963, aged 98. Many of the scholarly works in his extensive library, including his collection on Dante, were donated to the Auckland University library.

Interim ministers: September-December 1910

George Walters, by then back once again as minister of the Sydney Church, took services during September. Frederick Sinclair, formerly from the Auckland congregation who was then minister of the Melbourne Church, took services for four weeks from October 9. In addition he gave four weeknight lectures in the Federal Club Rooms on "The Gospels and Modern Criticism." James Chapple, who had recently resigned from the Presbyterian ministry, then took services until Hall's arrival at New Year.

Richard J. Hall: 1911-1914

If a minister has a bee in his bonnet on a political issue he should first, be sure that it is one which can be properly ventilated in a church service; second, that he has the right answer to the problem (many of these are over-simplified); third, he should take the initiative in obtaining an adequate presentation of the opposing view.

(From Castle's *Annals*. Castle could be intolerant of those who took a stance of which he did not approve.)

Hall was an Irish nationalist and advocate for Irish home rule, a pacifist, a fervent orator, a member of the church's hockey team, and popular with the young people. On one occasion he appeared in the pulpit with a black eye, from the previous day's hockey game.



R J Hall with the Van Mission, by the Auckland Town Hall
A von Gravenwitz L Butterworth H Gribble T Ellingham F W Moore

As a means of spreading the Unitarian message widely in the vicinity of Auckland, Hall started a van mission, modelled on T P Spedding's van missions of which he had had experience in England.

Hall visited the Auckland Church again in 1929, while on a voyage that he took for health reasons. He arrived a month before the Constables arrived to start their ministry, preached on two successive Sundays, and stayed long enough to be present for their induction.

William Williams: 1914-1918

After two Irishmen, a quiet spoken Welshman, who came from Evesham in the English Midlands. During Williams' ministry the First World War broke out. The disruption to the young peoples' activity dealt the church a blow from which it never recovered.

Albert Thornhill: 1918-1928

Albert Thornhill had been a journalist with the 'Manchester Guardian' before studying theology at Oxford and Cambridge. The broadcasting of services started during his time. His series of addresses which surveyed the conclusions of modern biblical criticism drew such large audiences that they were transferred to Scotts' Hall in Symonds St. But the overall trend was for church attendance to decline. A Frank Sargeson short story speaks of attendances of around a dozen at services that he attended, perhaps sometime in 1925-1927. He may have attended the less popular morning services.

Thornhill occupied the Church's first manse, in Grafton. Thornhill went from Auckland to be minister of the Sydney Unitarian Church.

William and Wilna Constable: 1929-1934

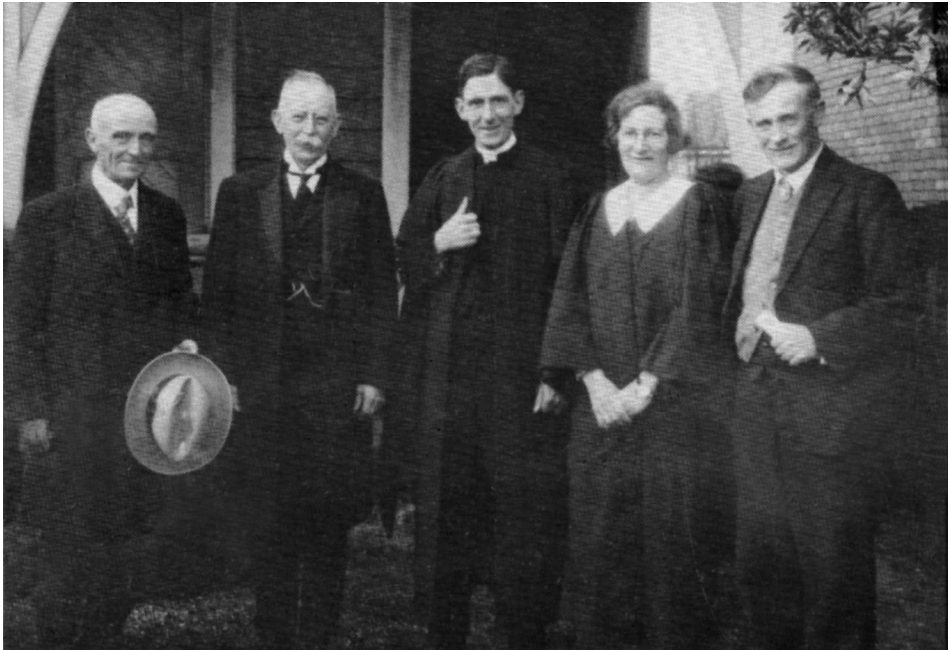


Photo taken at the installation of the Constables, in 1929.

James Chapple, William Jellie, William Constable, Wilna Constable, Richard Hall.

William Jellie organized the induction of the Constables, with James Chapple giving the charge. Richard Hall, who had arrived a month earlier in the course of a world trip and preached on two successive Sundays, was present also. Chapple argued for a “religion of risks” and ended with a plea that the congregation should, with their ministers, embark on “The Great Adventure.”

Wilna Constable was Auckland’s first female minister, aside from Salvation Army officers. Perhaps partly from curiosity, the church was packed on the first occasion when she spoke. William was active as a Workers Educational Association lecturer. Together the Constables took a prominent part in repertory.

In later reports Wilna described visits to Whangerei, Taheke, Rawene, speaking or preaching at all these places. She had been by launch down the Hokianga harbour to visit church members who lived in Judge Maning’s old house, ‘Onoke,’ famous in early New Zealand history. William had visited a number of places South of Auckland — Rotorua, Putaruru, Tirau, Matamata and Hamilton.

Auckland, with its suburbs, has a population of over 200,000; but it stretches over an infinitely greater area than a city three or four times the population in the Old Country. . . . The money spent on tram and bus fares by members of the congregation to come to services and week-night meetings would almost suffice to run a church.

(The Constables, in *The Inquirer* for Sept 28 1929.)

As the effects of the depression deepened, the church’s finances deteriorated to the point where it could no longer afford to pay the Constables. From Auckland they went to Vancouver where William remained as minister until 1937. For the next two years, William Jellie took over as minister.

Cyprus Mitchell: 1936-1939

Cyprus Mitchell was an Australian who came to New Zealand, initially to the Wellington Church (1934-35), after extensive study and work as a minister in the United States and in Australia. He had been a YMCA worker in Russia at the time of the 1918 revolution.

People who do not believe the dogma that two and two are four need not be eliminated by authority or force; they eliminate themselves by practice from any rational association. It is the practical application of two and two make four that is vital. And practice we can manage, in a church or a religious association. We cannot manage dogma satisfactorily. Therefore the Auckland Unitarian Church seeks to establish not a fellowship of dogmatic belief, but to build up a practical communion of work and worship, and invites their fellow-men into a free fellowship of spiritual aspiration and moral endeavour.

(Cyprus Mitchell, Broadcast Service, 1YX, Sunday Dec. 13, 1936.)

William Jellie and Kenneth Thomas: 1939-1948

Initially, William Jellie alternated with James Chapple. Kenneth Thomas, a layman, began by taking occasional services. In September 1940 Thomas was appointed a Lay-Preacher in Charge, though with Jellie taking a large share of the work. Thomas's preaching was not to everyone's liking — Castle suggests that he often failed to develop a coherent theme. His pastoral work was much appreciated.

Ellis Morris: 1948-1957

Ellis Morris had been in India as a missionary for the Calvinist Presbyterian Church of Wales. Contact with the Brahmo Samaj and other Indian religious groups had led to a widening of his outlook and to his becoming a Unitarian. He came after 11 years at the Southport Church in England. He liked to read from the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. He left to become minister of the Coventry Unitarian Church.

Maurice Wilsie: 1958-1962

Maurice Wilsie was a layman, from the United States. He combined his ministry with private work as a psychotherapist. His social concern was evident in his work with Al-anon (a sorority of wives of alcoholics), with Birthright, with the Society for the Protection of Home and Family, and with the Civilian Maimed Association.

Wilsie was active in promoting the Friday night discussion circle and in trying to form Unitarian fellowships in outer areas of Auckland.

1962-1971: Lay direction

There was, over this time, one marvellous initiative that attracted a feature article in the Herald. Once a month, over 1965 and 1966, Noel and Thelma Blyth ran a family service that featured folk-singing, a coffee bar, a children's 25-piece percussion band, and regular discussions. Paintings and photographic studies were placed around the walls. The Blyth services were surely lively occasions.

The revival of youthful church activity was temporary. Resistance from some older members of the congregation put an end, in due course, to their efforts. A report on the condition of the church in 1968 spoke of about 12/15 regular attenders, almost all over 60 years of age. "They are fervent in their Unitarian beliefs (inclining towards the Humanist view) and are miserably conscious of their inability either to attract or hold or to understand the younger generation."

Douglas Webster: 1971-1983

A 1973 Herald article spoke of Douglas Webster as a minister who would perform weddings just about anywhere from a wine cellar to a woolshed. He'd married couples "in hotels, under a makeshift may-pole in an Auckland folk music club, and on the slopes of Mt Eden." Douglas was heavily involved with the Civilian Maimed Association and on his departure for the UK in March 1983 was made a life member. In 1991 he became minister of the Sydney Unitarian Church.

During his ministry the church faced difficult decisions on the future of the building. Eventually it was decided to sell the manse and spend the money on urgently needed church maintenance.

Lay leadership and interim ministers: 1983-1989

For most of this time the church functioned as a fellowship, with Stephen Connelly taking a large role in keeping church affairs in order and in organizing services.

Kenneth Hurto, who came for three months in 1984, was the first in a programme of interim ministers that was set up with help from the Unitarian Universalist Association. His services had a philosophical twist. Perhaps his most important contribution was to help the services committee to organize services under lay leadership.

Then came Bob Kaufmann for four months at the end of 1986. The church had no idea what it was taking on. His more striking sermon titles included: "To Hell with Death," "Gimme that Hot Tub Religion," and "The legal, theological, and moral implications involved in the surgical transplantation of the human soul." Bob had firm ideas on areas in which the church needed to be galvanized into action. If the experience was a little uncomfortable and unsettling, it did help create the flexibility of mind that was needed in looking to the future.

Max Landau Moss followed on in 1988, sharing responsibility with Max Gaebler for three months of this time. Linda Landau Moss's training and experience in religious education was a boon. The Sunday Church School was soon revived. Max Gaebler's experience and counsel helped the church through a difficult time. He prepared the way for a process of goal-setting under the direction of Phillip Hewett from the Vancouver Church, who was visiting minister for the first six months of 1989.

1989-1996: Max and Linda Landau Moss

Following on from the processes that Phillip Hewett oversaw, Max and Linda Landau Moss were appointed as co-ministers from December 1 1989, sharing a part-time ministry. The Mosses provided leadership, and the watching overview of church affairs that is crucial for an effective forward-looking church. Committees were established to take care of services, young people's religious education, the adult education programme, and the library. Max resigned following Linda Moss's death in 1996. Lincoln Gribble came to Auckland as the acting minister and stayed for four months as acting minister, at a time for grief for the congregation and for Max.

1996-2013: Brief details (given for completeness)

1996-2003: Lay leadership was shared with further interim ministers from the USA and the UK.

2003-2006: Roger Pym.

2006-2013: Lay leadership was shared with further interim ministers from the USA and the UK.

2013: Matt Tittle (consulting minister), with lay leadership

2014-present:

Clay Nelson has worked as consulting minister, with a lay leadership. This has been a time of renewal and growth. There has been a substantial growth in membership. At the time of writing, the range of activities that are additional to the Sunday service include: Children's and Adult's Religious Education, Circle groups that meet regularly for discussion in several different parts of the city, a social action group, Dances of Universal Peace events, a little food pantry from which anyone is free to take what they feel they need and/or leave what they can, and Tongan and Samoan Dyslexia Aid projects.

5 Unitarianism — Historical Background

Unitarians are thus named because their antecedents rejected the doctrine of the trinity, in favour of belief in an undivided God. From the time of its explicit formulation in the fourth century, the claim that the earthly Jesus was “of one substance with the Father” challenged understanding and belief. Those who held to a unitarian theology mostly regarded Jesus as in some sense divine, albeit disagreeing about the precise sense.

Opposition to the doctrine gained a new impetus from the humanist and rationalist influences of sixteenth century Europe. A God who was not in any way fragmented was better able to safeguard the unity of all things, and to buttress the new scientific world view. Along with rejection of the traditional view of God went the demand to open all religious belief to rational inquiry. It is on this free and open debate of all religious questions that modern Unitarianism places its emphasis, allowing beliefs to change and develop with time.

Servetus

More than any other figure who suffered death for arguing views that both Protestant and Catholic states agreed were a dangerous heresy, the sixteenth century Spaniard Michael Servetus has caught the imagination of modern Unitarians. Servetus was born in Spain in around 1510, at a time when the Spanish Inquisition was in full swing, with Jews and Muslims the chief targets. Servetus would have been well aware that acceptance of the doctrine of the trinity was a crucial test for any who hoped to escape banishment or death by converting to Christianity.

Servetus wrote his book *On the Errors of the Trinity*, and two related books, when he was around 20. These made him famous and put his life in danger. He changed his name and sought anonymity. He turned his attention first to mathematics and then to medicine. Eventually, however, his fascination with the Bible and with Christian theology led to a further book, *The Restoration of Christianity*. This led to his recognition. He escaped from the French inquisition, but was recognized by Protestant authorities when he stopped and attended

church in Geneva while en route to Naples. Following imprisonment he was burned at the stake in 1553. It is ironic that his views on the doctrine of God now seem remarkably orthodox — his chief objection was to trinitarian language.

Other martyrs from that time have been all but forgotten, such as Katherine Vogel (or Weigel) who in 1539 at age 80 was burned for heresy in Krakow in Poland.

Polish, Romanian, and Hungarian Unitarianism

A break between the Polish Brethren and the the Polish Calvinist Church, with the Polish Brethren adopting a unitarian theology, became final in 1565. The Polish Brethren were expelled from Poland in 1658, going to Prussia, to the Netherlands, and to Transylvania.

A strong influence among the Polish Brethren was Faustus Socinus, born in Italy in 1539, who promoted a unitarian theology from around 1579 when he moved to Poland. His publications, and notably his Racovian catechism, were circulated widely around Europe.

The beginnings of Transylvanian Unitarianism were more or less contemporary with Polish Unitarianism. The Romanian Unitarian Church still survives among the Hungarian speaking peoples of Romania and modern Hungary. Its great figure was Francis David (Ferenc Dávid), the bishop who as the reformation progressed changed from Catholic to Lutheran to Calvinist to a Unitarian belief. The King judged David the winner of a famous debate in which Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists also participated, and appointed David as his court chaplain. In 1568 the king issued a remarkable decree:

No force may be used to compel acceptance or conviction. Congregations are allowed to have each the preacher it wishes. Preachers shall not be molested, nor anyone persecuted, on account of religion; no one is permitted to remove from office, or to imprison anyone, because of his teaching.

With the advent of a new king, a condition of religious toleration for Unitarians was that there should be no further change in Unitarian belief. But Francis David's belief did change, he would not be silenced, and he did not long survive the imprisonment that resulted.

English Unitarianism

The last two martyrs to be burned at the stake in England, in 1612, died for anti-trinitarian views. Many individuals adopted a form of unitarian belief position long before the formation of an explicitly Unitarian Church. Newton, Locke and Milton all wrote treatises, not made public in their lifetimes, in which they urged that the scriptures teach the Supremacy of the Father.

An amusing reminder of Newton's unorthodox views appeared in the science column of the *Economist* for December 1987. It prints (with tongue in cheek) its correspondent's report for the year 1687, when Newton published his remarkable book that set out laws for the movement of the planets:

Others are less enthusiastic about gravitation. ... Were Mr Newton's reputation unblemished, the dangerous nature of his beliefs might be overlooked. But Mr Newton, say some, is not a good Christian... He is said to dispute the divinity of Christ, and to embrace the heretical beliefs of the Arians, who hold that the Trinity is but a fiction, and that there is but one God unipartite. Men also say that he delves in the blackest reaches of alchemy. ...

The mainstream of organized Unitarianism grew from those Dissenters who refused to subscribe to creeds and statements of faith.

Joseph Priestley

The strongest influence in the Unitarian movement that emerged in England in the latter part of the 18th century was Joseph Priestley, a halting preacher whose ample abilities were shared about equally between religion and science. Scientific papers on the history of electricity, on how to make soda water, and on the composition of air, jostle alongside his many religious books and tracts.

Priestley's religious opinions deprived him of the opportunity to accompany Cook on his second voyage of discovery. His liberal political views made him unpopular in the wider community. On the second anniversary of the French revolution in 1791, a rampaging mob burned down his church and sacked his house and laboratory.

Priestley later moved to the United States. There, also, his writings were influential in persuading liberal churchmen to join the emerging Unitarian movement.

Like Francis David, Priestley's theology changed as time progressed. Under the influence of the philosopher David Hartley he became a determinist and adopted a 'materialist' philosophy of science, believing that matter has its own life. A scriptural literalist, he looked for the second coming of Christ to set up a kingdom on earth. Late in life, he came to believe in an eventual universal salvation.

Until 1813, when William Smith who was Florence Nightingale's grandfather steered a law change through Parliament, public statements of unitarian belief were illegal under British law. There were a variety of legal disabilities, often ignored or overridden, that limited the ability of those who were not practising members of the Church of England to participate fully in public life.

English Unitarianism after Priestley

By the mid-nineteenth century, Priestley's rational religion was waning. German biblical criticism undermined the Bible's claim to be an authoritative source of religious doctrine. James Martineau's book *The Seat of Authority in Religion* shifted the seat of religious authority to the human spirit and set high importance on piety and religious emotion. His theology shared strong points of contact with Parker in the USA. Martineau broke less sharply than Parker with traditional expressions of faith, did not attract the same strong reactions, and became the dominating theological force in the British movement over the second half of the eighteenth century.

Under Martineau's influence most English Unitarian churches built after 1850 departed from the earlier plain style of meeting house to adopt a Gothic 'devotional' architecture.

The Inquirer – British and Irish Unitarians and Free Christians

The Inquirer contains Unitarian news, predominantly from within the UK. Founded in 1842, it appears fortnightly.

Heaven and Hell, of course, are two places, opposite in climate and amenities. The clever good go to one, and the stupid bad to the other. Where the other two categories go, I don't know. . . .

(From *The Inquirer and Christian Life*, March 1930.)

Issues for 1929 and 1930 gave extensive information on the New Zealand churches. Richard Hall reported on his visit to the Auckland and Wellington churches and on the welcome given to the Constables in Auckland. Extracts from Mrs Jellie's letters described her work for the British League of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women. Reports from the Constables gave their first impressions and described their visits to Unitarians outside of Auckland. Clearly British readers welcomed news of Unitarians in the Antipodes.

An unusual Welshman

The stonemason Iolo Morganwg, born Edward Williams in Glamorgan in Wales, was an unusual mixture of scholar, flawed genius, and maverick. He was prominent in the South Wales Unitarian Society from its founding in 1802, and wrote many of their hymns. No other Unitarian movement can claim anyone like him. Learned in Welsh literature and language, he was driven by romantic passion to perpetrate his own version of Welsh history and to forge the poetry that the ancient bards had omitted to write. The ceremony of the crowning of the bard that is such a spectacle at Welsh eisteddfods (cultural festivals) was his invention. His politics were radical. He believed fervently in Wales.

Thomas Evans founded the first Welsh Unitarian meeting house, at Cwm Cothi, in 1794. Evans was imprisoned for two years from 1801, allegedly for singing a seditious song. Almost certainly the charge was a result of his religious beliefs.

The Welsh Unitarian movement was a product of many of the same influences that were evident in other parts of the United Kingdom. Welsh language and culture, and the influences of which Iolo Morganwg was part, have given it a special Welsh character.

Irish Unitarianism

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, with 4000 adherents and 34 churches, is part of a Unitarian tradition that extends back to 1725. It emphasizes its liberal Christian heritage. The Auckland Church's first secretary and first two ministers were of Irish extraction.

American Unitarianism

Different schools of Unitarian theology first spread in New England and the mid-Atlantic states. The first congregation to officially accept a Unitarian position was King's Chapel in Boston, where James Freeman began teaching Unitarian doctrine in 1784. He was appointed rector and revised the prayer book along Unitarian lines in 1786. The church still follows its own Anglican/Unitarian hybrid liturgy today.

Strong influences in the nineteenth century movement were the preachers and reformers William Ellery Channing and Theodore Parker, the lecturer and literary figure Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry Bellows who led efforts to mould Unitarianism into a coherent organizational structure.

The defence of human dignity was at the core of Channing's theology, he had a strong social morality and he was a powerful preacher. His 1819 "Baltimore Sermon," entitled "Unitarian Christianity," set out distinctive tenets for the developing Unitarian movement. Channing emphasized the central role of reason in understanding what can be learned of God, both from the Bible and from Nature.

Parker's preaching was radical and dynamic:

Christianity is a simple thing, very simple. It is absolute, pure morality; absolute, pure religion; the love of man; the love of God acting without let or hindrance. The only creed it lays down is the great truth which springs up spontaneous in the holy heart — there is a God.

Emerson was the literary figure where Parker was the scholar. Although Emerson soon left the ministry to pursue a career as a lecturer and literary figure, his influence continued. Emerson's 1838 Divinity School address stirred controversy by offering a religion that was free

of miracles, in which Jesus had no special authority, and in which the ordinary course of nature was endowed with divine significance.

Though a major intellectual force, those who followed in the tradition of Parker and Emerson had little influence as builders of churches and organizers. Pre-eminent among church organizers was Henry Bel-
lows, who followed Channing rather than the transcendentalists. Bel-
lows saw the mid-nineteenth century as a time of crisis of faith and
looked for an organization that would hold Unitarian traditions intact
through this crisis. His efforts led to the formation of the National
Unitarian Conference in 1865.

Objections to a belief commitment that a radically minded mi-
nority saw as overly Christocentric led to the formation of the Free
Religious Association, with Francis Ellingwood Abbot and William
James Potter as leading figures. Emerson addressed its first public
meeting in 1867. The Western Unitarian Conference that had been
formed in 1852 took a similar position, stating in 1886 that it “condi-
tions its fellowship on no dogmatic tests, but welcomes all who wish
to join it to help establish truth, righteousness and love in the world.”
Eventually, at its 1894 meeting, the National Conference agreed to a
broadly similar position.

1. Religion is the effort of Man to perfect himself.
2. The root of religion is universal human nature.
3. Historical religions are all one, in virtue of this one common root.
4. Historical religions are all different, in virtue of their different
historical origin and development.
-
49. The noblest fruit of Christianity is a self-sacrificing love of man for
Jesus' sake. The noblest fruit of Free Religion is a self-sacrificing
love of man for man's own sake.
50. Christianity is the faith of the soul's childhood; Free Religion is
the faith of the soul's manhood. In the gradual growth of mankind
out of Christianity into Free Religion, lies the only hope of the
spiritual perfection of the individual and the spiritual unity of the
race.

From “Truths for the Times [The Index, No. 1]”

Francis Abbot was the first editor of the weekly paper “The In-

dex,” that appeared from 1870 through until 1886, with most issues containing a discourse that was presented as an “Index Tract.” In 1871 Abbot wrote to Charles Darwin, assuring him that he had many supporters in the United States, and enclosing a copy of the pamphlet “Tracts for the Times” that was the first in the series. Darwin wrote back to express surprise and gratification at the news that his own and allied views had received such support, and to add that he agreed with “almost every word” of the pamphlet, a statement that for the following ten years he allowed to appear in “The Index.”

There was a humanist strand in Channing’s writings. Curtis Reese’s address to the 1920 Harvard Summer School of Theology brought humanism into prominence as an explicitly identifiable strand within the American Unitarian movement. A majority of the signatories of the 1933 *Humanist Manifesto* were Unitarian ministers.

Strong religious education programmes have been important to the effectiveness of North American churches. Here Sophia Fahs (1876-1978) was a pioneer, an outstanding experimenter in liberal religious education.

The Universalists — salvation for all

Universalism developed in parallel with Unitarianism, with a similarly long tradition of dissent from the prevailing orthodoxy. George de Benneville, a lay preacher and physician who preached universal salvation in several European countries before moving to Pennsylvania in 1751, was influential in spreading universalist teachings. He formed friendly relationships with American Indians. In France he had been imprisoned and was saved from beheading by the intervention of King Louis XV. John Murray, who emigrated to New Jersey in 1771 and promoted Welshman James Relly’s Universalist form of Methodism, is often called the “Father of American Universalism.” Universalism had its greatest appeal among the poorer sections of society.

In 1961 the Universalist Church of America merged with the American Unitarian Association to form the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The role of women

Two New Zealand Unitarian women – Mary Richmond and Harriet Morison – deserve mention for their prominent role in society and community. Mary Richmond, daughter of C W Richmond who had been a supreme court judge, had a prominent role in the Wellington Church. She preached frequently, was an active member of the Management Committee, and was for two years (1912-1914) chairperson. Her efforts led to the formation of the Wellington Free Kindergarten Union. She represented New Zealand at a 1907 Imperial Education Conference in London, was the first female officeholder of the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board. She was the first president of the Pioneer Club and for nearly 8 years edited the *League of Mothers* magazine.

Robert Stout's wife Anna was a prominent campaigner for the rights of women, and worked closely with Kate Sheppard in the campaign that led up to the 1893 bill that gave voting rights to New Zealand women. Over 1909-1912 while in England where her children were studying, she worked with Emmeline Panckhurst for the suffrage movement there. [See further, page 49.]

Women were prominent in Church management in the early years (1898-1900) of the Auckland Church. Then for the next 17 years (1901-1917) the Management Committee was a male preserve. In 1923 Harriet Morison became the Auckland Church's first woman chairperson, vacating the position following a breakdown in health that preceded her death in 1925. She had been vice-president and secretary in the Tailoresses' Union, a founder member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and an active worker for women's suffrage. Over 1908-1921 she was Officer in Charge of the Women's Employment Bureau of the Department of Labour in Auckland.

Unitarians and (in the USA) Universalists were ahead of other denominations in allowing the ordination of women. Olympia Brown was the first denominationally ordained woman minister in the United States. Wilna Constable appears to have been Auckland's first woman minister (1929-1934), aside from Salvation Army officers. The marriage act was changed in 1933 to allow her to officiate at weddings.

Martha Turner's appointment as minister of the Melbourne Uni-

tarian Church from 1873 to 1883 gives her a special place in Australian church history. Martha Turner was a source of encouragement and inspiration for Catherine Helen Spence — novelist, teacher, journalist, philanthropist, reformer and preacher. From 1878, Spence appeared frequently in the pulpit of the Adelaide Unitarian Church.

Unitarians in national life

Both in the UK and in the USA, Unitarians have contributed to national life out of all proportion to their numbers. Joseph Priestley was an active and outspoken supporter of political reform. Thomas Jefferson, the third American president and a friend of Joseph Priestley, was one of five early presidents who were Unitarians or had strong Unitarian sympathies. Theodore Parker was an outspoken supporter of the abolition of slavery in the mid-nineteenth century.

In modern times Norbert Capek, Unitarian minister in Prague, was put to death in Dachau in 1942 because he publicly opposed the Nazis. In 1965 James Reeb, who had worked to fight poverty, joined civil rights marchers in Selma, Alabama. While leaving a restaurant in a black neighbourhood one evening, he was attacked and killed by four white men wielding baseball bats.

6 The Modern Movements

Numbers are, where available from public sources, given as a rough indication of the strength of the movement in the jurisdictions mentioned. Several times as many may identify themselves as Unitarian or Unitarian Universalist, as are recorded as members. Accurate up to date figures are in most cases not available.

The USA and Canada

The strongest movements are in North America. The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in the USA was formed from the 1961 merger between Unitarians and Universalists. Its 1000+ congregations have around 150,000+ adult members and some 50,000 in religious education. The Canadian Unitarian Council, with 46 congregations, has some 3,800 members.

The North American movement has been a leader in encompassing the open expression of diverse forms of belief and practice. From early years, it has had a sprinkling of ministers, “splendid gadflies and dissenters,” who have sought to chart new directions. Geographically isolated churches and groups of churches may have provided havens in which new ways of thinking could establish themselves.

A 1965 survey gave interesting insights on the direction that Unitarian Universalists saw for the movement. Against 11% who expressed a preference for a move towards either liberal Protestantism or the ecumenical movement, a large majority preferred a movement towards “an emerging universal religion” (37%) or “a distinctive humanistic religion” (52%).

The UUA publishes *World*, an attractive bimonthly magazine. The Auckland Church is now an overseas member of the UUA.

British Unitarianism

The Auckland Church’s historical connections are with the British movement, of which it is a member church. The British movement, with its 170 congregations and 7,000 members, remains an important force in Unitarianism worldwide. (The Non-subscribing Presbyterian

Church has 4000 adherents in its 34 churches in Northern Ireland and Eire.) The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches in the UK, perhaps in part because it sidestepped the controversies that have from time to time shaken the North American movement, has taken much longer than that movement to make the radical changes that may give it relevance into the future. Important moves were the revision of its statement of objectives in 2001, and later revisions of its constitution starting in 2011.

Much of the early activity in New Zealand linked in to the overseas extension work of the British movement.

Romanian and Hungarian Unitarianism

The oldest continuing Unitarian Churches are in the sixteenth century territory of Transylvania, which is today divided between Romania and Hungary. The 2002 Romanian census recorded 65,000+ Unitarians. In 2006, 110 of their churches had ministers; there are in addition a number of fellowships. In 2012 there was a formal 're-unification' of Unitarian Churches in Hungary and Romania.

Other groups

Other substantial groups are in India, and in the Philippines. There are smaller groups (500 members or less) in Czechoslovakia, Australia, Sweden, Japan, South Africa and other countries. The Netherlands has several groups which are inclusive and broadly Unitarian, including the *Nederlandse Protestantenbond* has 60 local branches. This sees itself not as a church but as a universalist association which welcomes everyone who wishes to join.

International Association for Religious Freedom

The International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) was founded in 1900 to bring together liberally minded people of all religious traditions. Its founding was an outcome of the World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 as part of the 400th anniversary celebration of the 'discovery' of America by Columbus.

The seventeen-day ‘Parliament’ made world headlines. A Unitarian minister was secretary of the planning committee. Two notable Unitarian women, Juliet Ward Howe who was author of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” and suffragist Susan B Anthony, sat on the podium at the final session. The IARF’s third world congress in Bangalore (India) in August 1993, which the author attended, was part of the centennial celebration of the 1893 event.

Ministerial training

Two English colleges train Unitarian ministers and lay pastors — Unitarian College Manchester and Harris Manchester College in Oxford. Two members from the Auckland Church, Frederick Sinclair (in 1904) and Lincoln Gribble (in 1952), trained for the Unitarian ministry at Manchester College Oxford.

In the USA, Starr King School for the Ministry and Meadville Lombard Theological School are both affiliated with the UUA. The UUA has a close historic relationship with Harvard Divinity School.

Australasian connections – ANZUA and ANZUUA

The first meeting of what was then the Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Association (ANZUA) was held in 1974. The name was changed to Australia and New Zealand Unitarian Universalist Association (ANZUUA) at the 2007 conference. Conferences are now held every two years. In addition the Association publishes *Quest*, now a quarterly magazine that has news, and articles on issues that are of current interest. For further information on ANZUUA, links to international connections, and access to past issues of *Quest*, go to <http://www.anzuua.org/>.

Church of the Larger Fellowship

The Church of the Larger Fellowship is “A Unitarian Universalist Congregation Without Walls,” one that uses the internet to extend worldwide.

Web link: <https://www.questformeaning.org/clfuu/>

Wherever you are in the world, wherever your truth takes you on your spiritual journey, the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) is there to keep you connected with Unitarian Universalism.

International Council of Unitarians & Universalists

The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists is an umbrella organization that brings together many Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist organizations. The author attended the 1995 founding meeting, held at Essex, Massachusetts.

Web link: <https://icuu.net/>

We do not stand at all, we move

Universalists are often asked to tell where they stand. The only true answer to give to this question is that we do not stand at all . . . we move

Lewis B Fisher, in his book *Which Way?* (1921)

As I write this, New Zealand is 25 days into a lockdown that has been a response to the global Covid-19 pandemic. We are at the start of a long process that will change the world forever. Will it be a kinder, gentler, more peaceful, world? Will world leaders take more seriously, not just the threats that arise from this and other pandemics yet to come, but also (among others) the threats that come from global warming?

At the Auckland church as elsewhere, web based virtual meetings, introduced as a substitute for face to face meetings, have made it possible for those who live remotely to join in. Such outreach is now likely to become, either as an add-on or as an adjunct to face to face meetings, a permanent feature. The changed circumstances bring new opportunities as well as new challenges, both within Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist and allied groups, and within the wider society.

Notes

The Edger Daughters - Marian, Eva, Kate, and Lilian

An Amy Causley letter collection, held in the Auckland Institute and Museum Library, includes letters from members of Marian's and Eva's families that describe the church and their contacts with Mr Jellie.

Two other Edger sisters are better known. Kate graduated in mathematics in 1877, the first woman in the British Empire to be awarded a university degree. Her younger sister Lilian graduated soon afterwards. Lilian had an interest in theosophy, one that she shared which Marian and Eva.

Kate was the first principal of Nelson College for girls when it opened in 1883. In 1890, she married Rev W A Evans who in 1893 resigned his Nelson parish to take the major responsibility for the philanthropic and social work of the Forward Movement. In Wellington, she largely supported her husband (and the movement) by coaching pupils and opening a private school in her home. She, along with her husband, gave lectures for the Forward Movement. This lasted until 1904 when Evans resumed work as a minister, now at the Newtown Congregational Church in Wellington. See Beaglehole (1949, pp. 33-35).

Sir Robert Stout (1844-1930)

Stout's name is prominent in the Wellington church records. He was an occasional speaker. Over 1922-1924 he was Chairman of the Management Committee. Stout had been premier in the Stout-Vogel ministry that ruled from 1884 to 1887. From 1899 until 1926 was Chief Justice. Stout had wide intellectual, social, and religious interests. The last of the three letters from Stout to Jellie that are in the church archives offered the Jellies good wishes for their journey to England in 1913 and complimented Jellie on his work as an apologist for Unitarianism.

In August 1930 *The Truth Seeker* printed extracts from a William Jellie sermon that commented on Stout's religious views. Jellie felt that the extract had not been quite fair. The issue for September 6 1930 then carried a more substantial extract:

Sir Robert Stout was at one time one of the most hated and feared of men among the ecclesiastical bodies and supporters of organized religion. He had the reputation of a Sceptic, when

Scepticism was regarded as Atheism. ... And ... this reputation of early days, this lingering remnant of long dead controversies, still hangs about his memory. ... He wanted Freedom of Thought, freedom from the old religious and theological fences, freedom for expansion of his mind and soul, freedom for the opening up of new paths of human betterment and happiness. He therefore started a Freethought organization in Dunedin and ran it for many years. Its methods were strongly educational and it exercised a profound influence throughout the colony. From that arose his reputation as a Sceptic and as an Atheist. He was only a pioneer. He preached a liberation of ideas which has become almost a commonplace to-day and is echoed even by leaders of the Christian churches. ... I remember my first interview with him, shortly after I came to New Zealand. He said in a challenging way, as if he expected to shock me, "My religion is based on evolution," and when I said straight out, "So is mine, and without a but," we became friends at once. ... And when a Unitarian Church was established in Wellington on the basis of freedom of thought, Sir Robert became a member, after, preaching for it and in it, and of late years was its president. He was a Rationalist. But Rationalism and Unitarianism are not incompatible. I also claim to be Rationalist repudiating any authority for Truth outside of the human spirit and the final court of appeal within myself. I am a Rationalist in religion and not so very far removed from many supporters of the Rationalist movement.

Facer (2018) notes that "The Dunedin Freethought Association included theists, agnostics, Unitarians, pantheists and spiritualists." Stout found this acceptable because

...we have recognised that the deeper questions of life can never be solved by all men alike, and we have united to discuss them freed from creeds and to teach our children their duties to themselves and their fellows.

[Dakin (2001)]

Stout was one of a group of progressive politicians who in 1893 finally succeeded in passing the bill granting voting rights to women through both of the houses of the New Zealand parliament. His wife, Anna Stout, was a committed and resolute campaigner for the rights of women and of the underprivileged. She worked with Kate Sheppard in the campaign that led up to the passing of the 1893 bill

that granted voting rights to women. When in England where her children were studying over 1909-1912, she was a strong supporter of Emmeline Pankhurst in the campaign for women's suffrage in the UK.

When Lord Gregory, who had been Governor in New Zealand of the passing of the 1893 bill, made the claim that the suffrage had "had deplorable results in New Zealand", she wrote to *The Times* countering that claim, then publishing a pamphlet that described in detail the New Zealand experience. [The entry for Anna Stout, at <https://nzhistory.govt.nz>, has a copy of Anna Stout's letter.]

I wish to protest, on behalf of the women and men of New Zealand, against the insulting intimation contained in a letter written by Lord Glasgow to the 'Anti-Women' Suffrage League. . . . Lord Glasgow must have formed an opinion from the opinions of the only people who do not value the suffrage — namely, people who deplore the temperate and moral habits of the people, and who object to giving decent wages to their workpeople.

[Anna Stout, in a letter to *The Times* of London.]

Stout's wide interests are reflected in the Stout pamphlet collection that is held online at Victoria University of Wellington (NZ). Among items held is Anna Stout's pamphlet that described the New Zealand experience. [See further, p. 57]

Chapple's Letters to Jellie; 1923-1929

Chapple's letters were always lively. Here are extracts:

November 1923: Another English missionary! Do they really do any good? It occurs to me that a visitor to England from the wider spaces of the Southern hemisphere could be more appropriate. . . . It seems to me that in the old land they are timid of their own concepts. What a chance we have in this new world for true Unitarianism. To drop for all time the circus trick of riding two horses, i.e. Capitalism and Communism — as Powys says there is an unbridgeable gulf between. Why are Unitarians afraid of delivering the goods? Afraid of their own label? Is Mammon the

cause? ... In the O.T. it was God or Baal — in the N.T. God or Mammon — today God or Capitalism — the world hardens up for the class struggle. Away with expediency and unholy compromise! Did Jesus side with the Plebs or no?

June 1927: For years I have been struggling here in New Zealand, as you know against great odds, tabooed by the orthodox Unitarians.

(Chapple was aggrieved that Thornhill in Auckland, and Hale who was minister in Wellington and then (from 1921) Adelaide, had refused him access to their 'platforms.')

December 1928: As you know my Unitarianism is a Unitarianism with a plus. A plus you seem to be shy of. You love the ... message — God's Fatherhood and man's Brotherhood, and yet seem to be afraid of it, and the man who dares to stand for it without compromise and expediency at all times, even war-times, you hold at a discount. ...

My visit south: I have been loth to detach myself from Unitarianism & for three years here have been lying fallow. ...

June 1929: Kind regards to Mr Hall. Is he retaining his old aggressive spirit? We are all older, but age does not blight and mildew me with conservatism, like Victor Hugo as I age I move steadily to the left. A forward-looker not a backward-looker. A REAL UNITARIAN.

(Chapple was writing in connection with his impending visit to Auckland for the induction of the Constables. The 1927-1929 letters were written from Tauranga.)

Chapple's later contacts with the Auckland Church

Chapple's Russian sympathies led, in 1941, to an incident in which he used the pulpit to express support for the Red Army's 'liberation' of the Finnish, Baltic and Polish peoples. Castle comments:

At this point Chapple advised our chairman that he thought it inadvisable to speak further from our pulpit lest invidious attention be drawn to the church. Privately, we judged that he had had a "moment of truth." But somehow we were sorry to lose him; exasperating as he was we were beginning to develop an affection for him.

Thomas Fyshe Palmer — A travesty of justice

Thomas Fyshe Palmer's story is an interesting footnote to the story of Unitarianism in Australia and New Zealand. Palmer, a Unitarian minister from Scotland, was one of five "Scottish martyrs" who in 1793 were transported to Australia for expressing political views that were judged to be subversive. Palmer's 'crime' was to assist in the writing and printing of a pamphlet that attacked (among other things) the corrupt practices involved in House of Commons elections.

Palmer made no attempt to form a church. The Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Churches all began later, between 1850 and 1855.

Following the end of his sentence, in January 1801, Palmer set out with friends to return to England. Their ship went first to New Zealand, to what is now the Firth of Thames, intending to take on a cargo of timber. It arrived in a damaged condition, forcing a six month delay before starting off again. On stopping at Guam, the ship was taken as a prize in the Anglo-Spanish war of 1796–1808, and Palmer and his party were held prisoners. Palmer died there eighteen months later, of dysentery.

Rev George Walters and the "Australian Church"

Walters' 1898 visit to the Auckland fellowship followed shortly after he had left the Sydney Unitarian Church to set up a branch of the "Australian Church" that Rev Charles Strong had started in Melbourne in 1885. Strong had, in 1883, resigned as minister at Scots Presbyterian Church in Melbourne, following charges of heresy. Walters tried, in the outcome unsuccessfully, to persuade the Auckland fellowship to ally itself with Strong's Australian Church. Disagreement on how to proceed was one source of tension within the fellowship. Walters returned again in 1902 to be minister of the Sydney Unitarian Church.

Walters' 1888 visit was the first of several that he would make to the Auckland Church in the following twelve years.

Personalities in the early Auckland Church

The Irishman Hugh McCready was the first librarian as well as first church secretary. Edward Shawcross, who had been committee chairman, soon moved with his wife to Cambridge, and died in 1899. The Newlands, and Mrs Shawcross after returning from Cambridge, had a continuing large role in the church. Frank Castle senior, and William Moore, were among other early prominent members.

Further names that had appeared by 1991 include Benjamin Blakey (1880-1958, treasurer 1917-1932), Joseph Cochrane Macky (1855-1915), William Gribble who was the first choirmaster, Robert Young (secretary: 1901-1908), Albert Chitham (secretary: 1908-1922) and James Ferner the photographer. Mrs Shawcross became secretary of the Women's Society when it was formed in 1902. She was one of several members who occasionally stood in for William Jellie when he was unavailable to take the pulpit. Charles Newland was treasurer from 1917 to 1932.

Castle (1981) characterizes Blakey as a man of overflowing energy, involved with every aspect of church activity. His wife Mary was active in the Women's League. His daughters Elsie (d. 1986) and Mabel, were actively involved with the church. During the 1940s and 1950s Mabel was active with the young people.

Joseph and Mary Macky drowned in 1915 when a German torpedo sank the *Lusitania* while en route from New York to London. Their contribution to business and civic affairs was acknowledged in a memorial service held in the Town Hall. Joseph's son Thomas Hugh Macky, and his wife Josephine, had the same dedication to the church. Joseph Macky's daughter Ella married William Jellie. She made a large contribution to the Women's League.

Immediate descendants of early families who had a large role in the later story of the church were Frank Moore (d. 1969), who held a variety of church offices, Frank Castle junior (d. 1986) who wrote *The Annals of the Auckland Unitarian Church*, and Muriel Newland (d. 1988) who was church secretary from 1935 to 1959. William Gribble's grandson Lincoln trained at Manchester College Oxford and was minister of the joint pastorate of Wallesley-Chester over 1956-1958, then returning to New Zealand to work as a teacher.

Auckland church property

In 1951 the lease from the council of the land on which the church stands was replaced to give perpetual rights of renewal at the end of each subsequent 21-year term, with the annual rental set at 5% of the land value at the time of renewal. Concerns at possible future large rental increases led, in 1976, to the establishment of the Muriel Newland and Associated Testators trust. A further substantial sum became available following Muriel Newland's death in 1988. This allowed the purchase of the freehold on February 4 1993, with remaining funds available for other purposes.

The first manse, in Grafton, was a gift to the church from the Macky family, a memorial to Joseph and Mary Macky. This was sold in 1936. A later manse, in Wanganui Avenue, was sold in 1983.

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Papers Past (web link)

Items that can be found by searching this archive include notices of meetings, reports of meetings and other activities, and letters to the newspaper.

Go to <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist web links

Auckland Unitarian Church: <http://www.unitarian.org.nz/>

Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Universalist Association:
<http://www.anzuua.org/>

Church of the Larger Fellowship:

<https://www.questformeaning.org/clfu/>

International Council of Unitarians and Universalists:

<https://icuu.net/>

Sources

Unitarianism in Auckland, and in New Zealand

I relied heavily on Castle (Annals, 1981) for the initial 1991 version, consulting primary sources for additional information, or where I had queries. Auckland Church records up to 1976, and very incomplete Timaru and Wellington records, are stored at the Auckland Institute and Museum library. Sources for the first 12 years include Lambley's 1899 report to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, a William Jellie manuscript, and reports in *The Christian Life* for June 22 1901 and June 4 1910. In later years, reports appeared from time to time in *The Inquirer*. Minute books and papers in the church archives include: Management Committee; Women's Society (later the Women's League), 1902-1955; Young Peoples Society, 1907-1911 and 1915-1924; Papers presented to the Free Discussion Society; Social Committee, 1911-1927; Library Committee, 1901-1922; Lawn Tennis Club, 1910-1920; Hockey Club, 1910-1913. These have been little explored. Castle makes no mention of two important innovations in the 1960s — the publication of *Motive*, and the Blyth services.

Castle's references to the wider story of Unitarianism in New Zealand are brief and cryptic. Sources include Hargrove's (1905) travelogue, a 1904 letter from Stout to Jellie, Wellington minute books for 1904-1910, Wellington church calendars for some of the years 1909-1932, a few Timaru calendars for 1911-1913 and 1923-1925, minutes of the NZ Unitarian Missionary Conference for 1911-1917, and minutes of the NZ Unitarian Association for 1916-1926. Church calendars would often note important events in other centres. Letters from Chapple to Jellie span the periods 1909-1911 (seven letters), 1923 (one letter) and 1927-1929.

Hale, Thornhill, and Heathcote worked, at one or other time, for Australian churches. Mitchell was at one time a ministerial candidate for the Sydney Church. Three other Australian ministers — Walters, Lambley, and Sinclair — had or made New Zealand contacts. Scott (1980), Hilliard (1983) and Usher (1989) provide useful information and background.

Additional sources for this new edition

Important sources have been Facer (2018), and Wayne Facer's contributions to the *Dictionary of Unitarian & Universalist Biography*; (<https://uudb.org/>). Newspaper records that can be accessed via Papers Past (<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>) have been an important source of information, notably for the Wellington and South Island churches. Beaglehole (2006) provided highly useful information on the Wellington church, through until 1925.

Acknowledgements

Those who read drafts of the 1991 edition and suggested improvements or pointed out errors included Barbara Holt, Margaret Jellie, Helen Kominik, Andrew Hill (Edinburgh), Phillip Hewett (Victoria, B.C.), and Max Landau Moss. Maurice Gee helped fill out details of James Chapple's movements. Catherine Hawley, at that time Chairperson of the Ponsonby/Herne Bay Community Committee, gave generous help with proofreading. Marge Barley (d. 2001) contributed the line drawings.

The 1991 and 1993 editions used Frank Castle's 1981 "Annals ..." as a starting point for the history of the Auckland Church. For this edition, Wayne Facer's extensive research on New Zealand Unitarian history has been an important source of corrections and of updated information.

For this new edition, I have been grateful for the help and encouragement of Shirin Caldwell. As noted in the introduction, Wayne Facer's extensive research on New Zealand Unitarian history, and Wayne himself, have been important sources of corrections and of updated information.

"A new Church that will have Heaven and Earth for its beams and rafters, and Service for symbol and illustration."—
EMERSON.

May 1912

Unitarian Free Church,

INGESTRE STREET.

Children at 10 a.m.
Services at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

MINISTER:

REV. W. JELLIE, B.A.

SUNDAY EVENING SERMONS.

- 5TH—M. Miss Richmond.
E. Mr. John Gammell, B.A.
2TH—"The Rise and Fall of the Devil."
1TH—"Darwin's Wonderful Story of the Worm."
4TH—"The Power of the Human Will."

AUGUST, 1923.

held in the Scots Hall
on March 3rd 1898

Conference 4 April 1900
H. Tindall Chairman

Friends at a distance may have the Cal-
lenders posted to them every month on payment of
1/- per year.

Rev. ALBERT THORNHILL, M.A.
Beckham Place, Auckland

Chairwoman of Committee:
Miss MORRISON.

asurer: Mr. B. C. BLAKEY
Turama Road, Onehunga.

etary: Mr. P. HUMPHREYS,
Wellpark Avenue, Grey Lynn.

Mr. W. M. GILL

SUNDAY SERVICES:
ing at 11 Evening at 7
School at 3 p.m.

rganist: Prof. C. MOOR
Hellaby's Building

"Good Company and Good Discourse are the
very sinews of virtue."—Isaiah Walton.

SUNDAY EVENINGS, 7 p.m. until April
after which 6.30 p.m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL 3 p.m.

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SUNDAY EVENINGS, 7 p.m. until April
after which 6.30 p.m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL 3 p.m.

FLOWERS. TEA—

The follow-
the month:

- May 6th.—Miss Judson and Miss Hemus.
" 13th.—Miss Porter.
" 20th.—Miss Cheshire.
" 27th.—Miss White.

CHURCH BUILDING FUND.
Stands at £110.

Officers and Committee of the Church.

- CHAIRMAN: Mr. Tindale.
TREASURER: Mr. C. Newland, Brown St. Epsom
SECRETARY: Mr. A. Orr Polley, Upper Pitt St.
WARDENS: Mr. McCready and Mr. Moore.
COMMITTEE: Messrs. T. Read, Sen., G. Read,
R. Murray, F. E. Leith, T. H. White,
Mrs. St. John and Miss Leech.

Women's Society. Meetings for the
month will be held on August 9th and
23rd, from 2 to 4.30.—Jessie Heywood,
secretary.

Church

Blakey and
and Stevens.
and McCready;
Foster. Wardens are all asked to attend
each evening at the Scots Hall services.

Flower: April 29th, Morning, 5th, Miss Leech; 12th,
Miss E. Newman; 15th, Miss M. Bonner.
26th, Mrs. Cottrell.

Library.—Open eve

and evening before
Subscription 1/-
"The Heart of
Norris); "The
(Zane Grey); "The
Buckrose); "Love o
Tynan).—Jessie He

LIBRARY.

A nucleus of a Church Library, chiefly
composed of books explanatory of our faith, has
arrived from England, and will soon be available

Unitarian Church

TIMARU

Services held in the

Foresters' Hall, George Street

MINISTER:

REV. J. H. C. CHAPPLE.

SUNDAY EVENINGS, 7 p.m. until April
after which 6.30 p.m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL 3 p.m.

Two copies of Dr. Zillman's, "Land of the
Bunya" by Mr. H. McCready.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The questioning and scepticism of John Maindonald's childhood response to religiously conservative family and church influences yielded to a conversion experience at age 14, but was never totally suppressed. Following involvements with conservative religious groups that continued through until his late twenties, his religious outlook steadily moved in a more questioning and radical direction. He joined Auckland Unitarian Church in 1984, at a time when it was at a low ebb, soon becoming involved both on the management committee and in speaking from the pulpit. He moved to Australia in 1996, returning to New Zealand to live in Wellington in 2015. From 1994 until 2001, he was President of the Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Association. His working life has been that of a research scientist and lecturer, with his name on numerous academic papers and on two substantial texts. Now living in Wellington, the recent institution of online virtual services is allowing him to participate remotely in services at the Auckland Church.