

# the BEACON



Journal of the  
Melbourne Unitarian  
Peace Memorial  
Church

September 2013  
Price /\$2

SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

## LIES, DAMN LIES AND BREATHTAKING HYPOCRISY

EDITORIAL

**A**s this issue of *Beacon* goes to press, the federal election is yet to be held and the war drums are beating, calling for more direct military intervention in Syria.

The election has been described as a race to the bottom with politicians of both sides trying to 'out tough' each other on boats and budgets, while other rather important issues such as education, infrastructure investment, housing, healthcare, public transport, etc., barely rate a mention.

Whatever the election outcome we can be sure that the fight must continue for human rights, be it for refugees, Indigenous people, workers, or the homeless and unemployed. That fight is not simply a national one but rather international in the spirit of 'a world made fair and all her people one.'

The American Unitarian Edwin Wilson's hymn asked, 'Where is our holy church?' and answered that question with this affirmation: 'A mighty host respond, the people rise in every land to break the captive's bond.'

As we write, the mainstream media is waxing lyrical, quoting John Kerry and David Cameron et al., hand on heart, about the Syrian government 'stepping over the line' of decency with the use of chemical weapons on civilian populations. As Daniel McAdams remarked in an ICH article: 'Somehow we are supposed to believe that within 72 hours after the arrival of a UN chemical weapons inspection team to assess – with the Syrian government's cooperation – the sites of previous claimed chemical weapons attacks, that same Syrian government would launch a chemical weapon attack on civilians just miles from where the UN inspectors are staying. The UN inspectors were there on invitation from the Syrian government and that same government would launch chemicals right into their neighbourhood.'

Reports coming from the pro-government press in Syria say that the rebels have time and time again used

crude chemical agents in their fight to overthrow the government. Such reports are routinely ignored by the same Western media that dutifully reports every utterance from the rebels own mouthpiece, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The United States itself possesses and uses internationally condemned weapons, including white phosphorus, napalm, cluster bombs, and depleted uranium – are there good and bad 'condemned weapons'? The 'weapons of mass destruction' remind us of a well-spun yarn of not too long ago that was used as justification to bomb Iraq back to the Stone Age – remember the non-existent 'mobile chemical labs' and 'Saddam's nukes'? All bare faced lies exposed after the 'shock and awe' invasion had occurred.

We are told that a fourth US warship capable of launching the type of cruise missiles that turned Libya to rubble and paved the way for al-Qaeda affiliates to take control of that country is now rushing to the waters off Syria, ready to unleash destruction.

One commentator described the currently unfolding events in Syria as 'Iraq, the Sequel', a brew of Kosovo, Iraq and Libya all rolled into one, and added that the possibilities in Syria would be an infinitely more toxic conflagration than the devastating 'liberations' of the past. We state categorically that this is another imperial war crime under cover of 'humanitarian intervention' and 'responsibility to protect'.

Perhaps when describing both our election and the nature of imperialism, the words of Dresden James ring true:

*'When a well-packaged web of lies has been sold gradually to the masses over generations, the truth will seem utterly preposterous and its speaker a raving lunatic.'*

Welcome to the asylum. ■

# EDWARD SNOWDEN

## PART TWO

by William Blum ([williamblum.org](http://williamblum.org))

In the course of his professional life in the world of national security Edward Snowden must have gone through numerous probing interviews, lie detector examinations, and exceedingly detailed background checks, as well as filling out endless forms carefully designed to catch any kind of falsehood or inconsistency. The *Washington Post* (June 10) reported that 'several officials said the CIA will now undoubtedly begin reviewing the process by which Snowden may have been hired, seeking to determine whether there were any missed signs that he might one day betray national secrets.'

Yes, there was a sign they missed – Edward Snowden had something inside him shaped like a conscience, just waiting for a cause.

It was the same with me. I went to work at the State Department, planning to become a Foreign Service Officer, with the best, the most patriotic of intentions, going to do my best to slay the beast of the international communist conspiracy. But then the horror, on a daily basis, of what the United States was doing to the people of Vietnam was brought home to me in every form of media; it was making me sick at heart. My conscience had found its cause, and nothing that I could have been asked in a pre-employment interview would have alerted my interrogators of the possible danger I posed because I didn't know of the danger myself. No questioning of my friends and relatives could have turned up the slightest hint of the radical anti-war activist I was to become. My friends and relatives were to be as surprised as I was to be. There was simply no way for the State Department security office to know that I should not be hired and given a Secret Clearance.<sup>1</sup>

So, what is a poor National Security State to do? Well, they might consider behaving themselves. Stop doing all the terrible things that grieve people like me, and Edward Snowden, and Bradley Manning, and so many others. Stop the bombings, the invasions, the endless wars, the torture, the sanctions, the overthrows, the support of dictatorships, the unmitigated support of Israel; stop all the things that make the United States so hated, that create all the anti-American terrorists, that compel the National Security State in pure self-defence – to spy on the entire world.

### Eavesdropping on the planet

The above is the title of an essay that I wrote in 2000 that appeared as a chapter in my book *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*. Here are some excerpts that may help to put the current revelations surrounding

Edward Snowden into perspective ...

Can people in the 21st century imagine a greater invasion of privacy on all of earth, in all of history? If so, they merely have to wait for technology to catch up with their imagination.

Like a mammoth vacuum cleaner in the sky, the National Security Agency (NSA) sucks it all up: home phone, office phone, cellular phone, email, fax, telex ... satellite transmissions, fibre-optic communications traffic, microwave links ... voice, text, images ... captured by satellites continuously orbiting the earth, then processed by high-powered computers ... if it runs on electromagnetic energy, NSA is there, with high high tech. Twenty-four hours a day. Perhaps billions of messages sucked up each day. No one escapes. Not presidents, prime ministers, the UN Secretary-General, the pope, the Queen of England, embassies, transnational corporation CEOs, friend, foe, your Aunt Lena ... if God has a phone, it's being monitored ... maybe your dog isn't being tapped. The oceans will not protect you. American submarines have been attaching tapping pods to deep underwater cables for decades.

Under a system code named ECHELON, launched in the 1970s, the NSA and its junior partners in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada operate a network of massive, highly automated interception stations, covering the globe amongst them. Any of the partners can ask any of the others to intercept its own domestic communications. It can then truthfully say it does not spy on its own citizens.

Apart from specifically targeted individuals and institutions, the ECHELON system works by indiscriminately intercepting huge quantities of communications and using computers to identify and extract messages of interest from the mass of unwanted ones. Every intercepted message – all the embassy cables, the business deals, the sex talk, the birthday greetings – is searched for keywords, which could be anything the searchers think might be of interest. All it takes to flag a communication is for one of the parties to use a couple or so of the key words in the ECHELON 'dictionary' – 'He lives in a lovely old **white house** on **Bush Street**, right near me. I can **shoot** over there in two minutes.' Within limitations, computers can 'listen' to telephone calls and recognise when keywords are spoken. Those calls are extracted and recorded separately, to be listened to in full by humans. The list of specific targets at any given time is undoubtedly wide ranging, at one point including the likes of Amnesty International and Christian Aid.

ECHELON is carried out without official acknowledgment of its existence, let alone any democratic oversight or public or legislative debate as to whether it serves a decent purpose. The extensiveness of the ECHELON global network is a product of decades of intense Cold War activity. Yet with the end of the Cold War, its budget – far from being greatly reduced – was increased, and the network has grown in both power and reach; yet another piece of evidence that the Cold War was not a battle against something called ‘the international communist conspiracy’.

The European Parliament in the late 1990s began to wake up to this intrusion into the continent’s affairs. The parliament’s Civil Liberties Committee commissioned a report that appeared in 1998 and recommended a variety of measures for dealing with the increasing power of the technologies of surveillance. It bluntly advised: ‘The European Parliament should reject proposals from the United States for making private messages via the global communications network [Internet] accessible to US intelligence agencies.’ The report denounced Britain’s role as a double agent, spying on its own European partners.

Despite these concerns, the US has continued to expand ECHELON surveillance in Europe, partly because of heightened interest in commercial espionage – to uncover industrial information that would provide American corporations with an advantage over foreign rivals.

German security experts discovered several years ago that ECHELON was engaged in heavy commercial spying in Europe. Victims included such German firms as the wind generator manufacturer Enercon. In 1998, Enercon developed what it thought was a secret invention, enabling it to generate electricity from wind power at a far cheaper rate than before. However, when the company tried to market its invention in the United States, it was confronted by its American rival Kenetech, which announced that it had already patented a near-identical development. Kenetech then brought a court order against Enercon to ban the sale of its equipment in the US. In a rare public disclosure, an NSA employee, who refused to be named, agreed to appear in silhouette on German television to reveal how he had stolen Enercon’s secrets by tapping the telephone and computer link lines that ran between Enercon’s research laboratory and its production unit some 12 miles away. Detailed plans of the company’s invention were then passed on to Kenetech.

In 1994, Thomson SA, located in Paris, and Airbus Industrie, based in Blagnac Cedex, France, also lost lucrative contracts, snatched away by American rivals aided by information covertly collected by NSA and CIA. The same agencies also eavesdropped on Japanese representatives during negotiations with the United States in 1995 over auto parts trade.

German industry has complained that it is in a particularly vulnerable position because the government forbids its security services from conducting similar industrial espionage. ‘German politicians still support the rather naive idea that political allies should not spy on each other’s businesses. The Americans and the British do not have such illusions,’ said journalist Udo Ulfkotte, a

specialist in European industrial espionage, in 1999.

That same year, Germany demanded that the United States recall three CIA operatives for their activities in Germany involving economic espionage. The news report stated that the Germans ‘have long been suspicious of the eavesdropping capabilities of the enormous US radar and communications complex at Bad Aibling, near Munich’, which is in fact an NSA intercept station. ‘The Americans tell us it is used solely to monitor communications by potential enemies, but how can we be entirely sure that they are not picking up pieces of information that we think should remain completely secret?’ asked a senior German official. Japanese officials most likely have been told a similar story by Washington about the more than a dozen signals intelligence bases which Japan has allowed to be located on its territory.

In their quest to gain access to more and more private information, the NSA, the FBI, and other components of the US national security establishment have been engaged for years in a campaign to require American telecommunications manufacturers and carriers to design their equipment and networks to optimise the authorities’ wiretapping ability. Some industry insiders say they believe that some US machines approved for export contain NSA ‘back doors’ (also called ‘trap doors’).

The United States has been trying to persuade European Union countries as well to allow it ‘back door’ access to encryption programs, claiming that this was to serve the needs of law enforcement agencies. However, a report released by the European Parliament in May 1999 asserted that Washington’s plans for controlling encryption software in Europe had nothing to do with law enforcement and everything to do with US industrial espionage. The NSA has also dispatched FBI agents on break-in missions to snatch codebooks from foreign facilities in the United States, and CIA officers to recruit foreign communications clerks abroad and buy their code secrets, according to veteran intelligence officials.

For decades, beginning in the 1950s, the Swiss company Crypto AG sold the world’s most sophisticated and secure encryption technology. The firm staked its reputation and the security concerns of its clients on its neutrality in the Cold War or any other war. The purchasing nations, some 120 of them – including prime US intelligence targets such as Iran, Iraq, Libya and Yugoslavia – confided that their communications were protected, sent messages from their capitals to their embassies, military missions, trade offices, and espionage dens around the world, via telex, radio, and fax. And all the while, because of a secret agreement between the company and NSA, these governments might as well have been hand delivering the messages to Washington, uncoded. For their Crypto AG machines had been rigged before being sold to them, so that when they used them the random encryption key could be automatically and clandestinely transmitted along with the enciphered message. NSA analysts could read the messages as easily as they could the morning newspaper.

In 1986, because of US public statements concerning the La Belle disco bombing in West Berlin, the Libyans began to suspect that something was rotten with Crypto AG’s machines and switched to another Swiss firm, Gretag

Data Systems AG. But it appears that NSA had that base covered as well. In 1992, after a series of suspicious circumstances over the previous few years, Iran came to a conclusion similar to Libya's, and arrested a Crypto AG employee who was in Iran on a business trip. He was eventually ransomed, but the incident became well known and the scam began to unravel in earnest.

In September 1999, it was revealed that NSA had arranged with Microsoft to insert special 'keys' into Windows software, in all versions from 95-OSR2 onwards. An American computer scientist, Andrew Fernandez of Cryptonym in North Carolina, had disassembled parts of the Windows instruction code and found the smoking gun – Microsoft's developers had failed to remove the debugging symbols used to test this software before they released it. Inside the code were the labels for two keys. One was called 'KEY'. The other was called 'NSAKEY'. Fernandez presented his finding at a conference at which some Windows developers were also in attendance. The developers did not deny that the NSA key was built into their software, but they refused to talk about what the key did, or why it had been put there without users' knowledge. Fernandez says that NSA's 'back door' in the world's most commonly used operating system makes its 'orders of magnitude easier for the US government to access your computer.'

In February 2000, it was disclosed that the Strategic Affairs Delegation (DAS), the intelligence arm of the French Defence Ministry, had prepared a report in 1999 that also asserted that NSA had helped to install secret programs in Microsoft software. According to the DAS report, 'it would seem that the creation of Microsoft was largely supported, not least financially, by the NSA, and that IBM was made to accept the [Microsoft] MS-DOS operating system by the same administration.' The report stated that there had been a 'strong suspicion of a lack of security fed by insistent rumours about the existence of spy programs on Microsoft, and by the presence of NSA personnel in Bill Gates' development teams.' The Pentagon, said the report, was Microsoft's biggest client in the world.

Recent years have seen disclosures that in the countdown to their invasion of Iraq in 2003, the United States had listened in on UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, UN weapons inspectors in Iraq, and all the members of the UN Security Council during a period when they were deliberating about what action to take in Iraq.

It's as if the American national security establishment feels that it has an inalienable right to listen in; as if there had been a constitutional amendment, applicable to the entire world, stating that 'Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of the government to intercept the personal communications of anyone.' And the Fourth Amendment had been changed to read: 'Persons shall be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects,

against unreasonable searches and seizures, except in cases of national security, real or alleged.'<sup>2</sup>

## The leading whistleblower of all time: Philip Agee

Before there was Edward Snowden, William Binney and Thomas Drake ... before there was Bradley Manning, Sibel Edmonds and Jesselyn Radack ... there was Philip Agee. What Agee revealed is still the most startling and important information about US foreign policy that any American government whistleblower has ever revealed.

Philip Agee spent 12 years (1957–69) as a CIA case officer, most of it in Latin America. His first book, *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*, published in 1974 – a pioneering work on the Agency's methods and their devastating consequences – appeared in about 30 languages around the world and was a bestseller in many countries; it included a 23-page appendix with the names of hundreds of undercover Agency operatives and organisations.

Under CIA manipulation, direction and, usually, their payroll, were past and present presidents of Mexico, Colombia, Uruguay, and Costa Rica, 'our minister of labour', 'our vice-president', 'my police', journalists, labour leaders, student leaders, diplomats, and many others. If the Agency wished to disseminate anti-communist propaganda, cause dissension in leftist ranks, or have communist embassy personnel expelled, it need only prepare some phoney documents, present them to the appropriate government ministers and journalists, and – presto! – instant scandal.

Agee's goal in naming all these individuals, quite simply, was to make it as difficult as he could for the CIA to continue doing its dirty work.

A common Agency tactic was writing editorials and phoney news stories to be knowingly published by Latin American media with no indication of the CIA authorship or CIA payment to the media. The propaganda value of such a 'news' item might be multiplied by being picked up by other CIA stations in Latin America who would disseminate it through a CIA-owned news agency or a CIA-owned radio station. Some of these stories made their way back to the United States to be read or heard by unknowing North Americans.

Wooing the working class came in for special treatment. Labour organisations by the dozen, sometimes hardly more than names on stationery were created, altered, combined, liquidated, and new ones created again, in an almost frenzied attempt to find the right combination to compete with existing left-oriented unions and take national leadership away from them.

In 1975, these revelations were new and shocking; for many readers it was the first hint that American foreign policy was not quite what their high-school textbooks had told them nor what the *New York Times* had reported.

**TUNE INTO THE  
Unitarian Half Hour**  
EVERY SATURDAY AT 10.30 AM  
3CR • 855 AM • COMMUNITY RADIO

**Increase our Circulation:**  
Nominate potential subscribers for  
three free monthly copies without  
ongoing obligation! (Try before you buy)

'As complete an account of spy work as is likely to be published anywhere, an authentic account of how an ordinary American or British "case officer" operates ... All of it ... presented with deadly accuracy,' wrote Miles Copeland, a former CIA station chief, and ardent foe of Agee. (There's no former CIA officer more hated by members of the intelligence establishment than Agee; no one's even close; due in part to his travelling to Cuba and having long-term contact with Cuban intelligence.)

In contrast to Agee, WikiLeaks withheld the names of hundreds of informants from the nearly 400,000 Iraq war documents it released.

In 1969, Agee resigned from the CIA (and colleagues who 'long ago ceased to believe in what they are doing').

While on the run from the CIA as he was writing *Inside the Company* – at times literally running for his life – Agee was expelled from, or refused admittance to – Italy, Britain, France, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway. (West Germany eventually gave him asylum because his wife was a leading ballerina in the country.) Agee's account of his period on the run can be found detailed in his book *On the Run* (1987). It's an exciting read. ■

#### Notes

1. To read about my State Department and other adventures, see my book *West-Bloc Dissident: A Cold War Memoir* (2002)
2. See *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, Chapter 21, for the notes for the **above**.

# The bombing of NAGASAKI

9 August 1945

**The uncensored version**

*By Dr Gary G Kohls*

Sixty-eight years ago, at 11:02 am on 9 August 1945, an all-Christian bomber crew dropped a plutonium bomb, on Nagasaki, Japan. That bomb was the second and last atomic weapon that had as its target a civilian city. Somewhat ironically, as will be elaborated upon later in this essay, Nagasaki was the most Christian city in Japan and ground zero was the largest cathedral in the Orient.

**T**hese baptised and confirmed airmen did their job efficiently, and they accomplished the mission with military pride. There was no way that the crew could not have known that what they were participating in met the definition of an international war crime (according to the Nuremberg Principles that were very soon to be used to justify the execution of many German Nazis).

It had been only 3 days since the August 6th bomb, a uranium bomb, had decimated Hiroshima. The Nagasaki bomb was dropped amidst considerable chaos and confusion in Tokyo, where the fascist military government had been searching for months for a way to honourably end the war. The only obstacle to surrender had been the Roosevelt/Truman administration's insistence on unconditional surrender, which meant that the Emperor Hirohito, whom the Japanese regarded as a deity, would be removed from his figurehead position in Japan – an intolerable demand for the Japanese that prolonged the war and kept Japan from surrendering months earlier.

The Russian army had declared war against Japan on

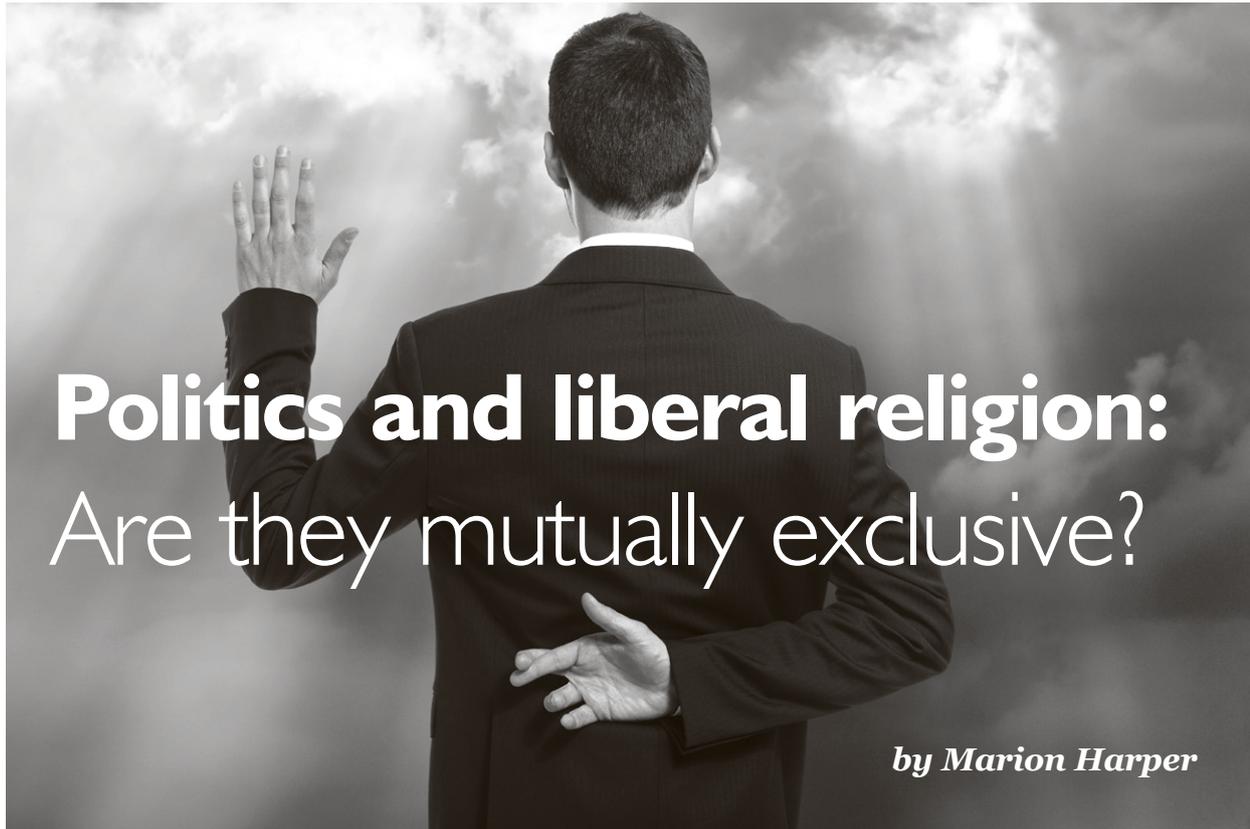
August 8, hoping to regain territories lost to Japan in the disastrous Russo-Japanese war 40 years earlier, and Stalin's army was advancing across Manchuria. Russia's entry into the war represented a powerful incentive for Japan to end the war quickly and they much preferred surrendering to the US rather than to Russia. A quick end to the war was important to the US as well. It did not want to divide any of the spoils of war with Russia.

The Target Committee in Washington DC had made a list of relatively un-damaged Japanese cities that were to be excluded from the conventional fire-bombing (using napalm) campaigns that had burned to the ground 60+ major Japanese cities during the first half of 1945. That list of protected cities included, at one time or another Hiroshima, Niigata, Kokura, Kyoto and Nagasaki. These relatively undamaged cities were off-limits from incendiary terror bombings but were to be preserved as possible targets for the new 'gimmick' weapons of mass destruction.

Scientific curiosity was a motivation in choosing the targeted cities. The military and the scientists needed to know what would happen to intact buildings – and their living inhabitants – when atomic weapons were exploded overhead. Ironically, prior to August 6 and 9, the residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki considered themselves lucky for not having been bombed as much as other cities. Little did they know.

Early in the morning of 9 August 1945, a B-29 Superfortress that had been christened Bock's Car, took off from Tinian Island in the South Pacific, with the prayers and blessings of its Lutheran and Catholic chaplains, and headed for Kokura, the primary target. Bock's Car's plutonium bomb was in the bomb bay, code-named 'Fat Man', after Winston Churchill.

**Cont'd page 10**



# Politics and liberal religion: Are they mutually exclusive?

*by Marion Harper*

It has been said in this church that we should not care for presentations from this rostrum which are solely dedicated to political issues that do not refer to our liberal religious tradition; and that strictly social and political discussion should be confined to organisations called 'political parties', where one's contributions are far more useful and effective. I firmly differ from this position and make no apology to members and visitors for my addresses, in which I always try to raise important political issues in the context of the role of this unique church.

**P**erhaps we should define our interpretation of religious liberalism. There are many definitions and this is one: 'A religious liberal is someone who is flexible about theological or ideological matters, who instead is more concerned with living out his or her values in the wider world, and who is willing to make adjustments to his or her theology in order to make the world a better place.' This is the concept of religion we have always embraced in this church.

In fact, our liberal religious tradition is and always has been one of social and political expression and action, because as reasoning, intelligent beings we know it is almost impossible to think of an issue that concerns our church community that isn't political. There is a vast difference, however, between what is political and what is party political. I want to stress this point. We talk here about politics, not party politics. Nothing is non political. If we want to talk about peace, the environment, Aboriginals, education, healthcare, homelessness, even the weather, every one of these issues is political.

So, when we talk about poverty, struggle, wars of aggression, global warming, attacks on the right to join a union or take strike action, the need for a better form of society, this is the fundamental role of a genuine

liberal religious church. This church has always put a political position on important issues, but that is not party politics and to suggest otherwise is quite misleading. It is something we need to think seriously about. We need to look at our historical traditions and decide if this is the kind of church we want. We also need to understand that our liberal religious tradition is vastly different to other churches around, however progressive they may claim to be.

That is not to say that maintaining the historical role of the church should occur just because it always has. Nothing should continue for that reason. Perhaps we all need to articulate what brought us to this church when there are so many other conformist churches around us. Historically, we have had many ministers of this church who have demonstrated their liberal religion integrated with their commitment to their community and their world, and I do not just refer to the ministries of William Bottomley and Victor James, who are well known to most of us, but ministries going back to the beginning of our church in Melbourne.

For example, Frederick Sinclair (1881–1954) was such a minister: Unitarian, socialist, critic and professor. Sinclair was a forthright socialist with wide-ranging intellectual

interests and in 1907 he accepted an appointment to the Eastern Hill Unitarian Church, Melbourne. In Melbourne, Sinclair startled some of his congregation by challenging Tom Mann to a debate on socialism. He became the first minister of religion to join the Victorian Socialist Party and he contributed to its journal, the *Socialist*. His unorthodox sermons attracted a sprinkling of left-wing intellectuals, including Bernard O'Dowd, Frank Wilmot, Nettie Higgins and Louis Esson. Sinclair became secretary of the newly formed Fabian Society in 1908.

Our church, because of its principled position, is the best-known Unitarian church in Australia. It is respected for its courageous outspokenness, its commitment to seeking the truth in world affairs, its fearlessness in tackling the powerful, and its refusal to allow its detractors to silence it. Sometimes, we forget to recognise the widespread impact our church has had and continues to have on so many. For example, those of you who read the church newsletter in the current *Beacon* would have read the little story about Michael Leunig, my favourite cartoonist, who when asked if we could print an article of his in *Beacon* said, 'You can print anything of mine. I am a great admirer of your church.' He has become a new *Beacon* reader. And Peter Cundall, who said *Beacon* and this church saved his reason when he was at his lowest ebb after his service in the armed forces.

George N Marshall, a religious liberal, in his book *Challenge of a Liberal Faith* written in 1975 said, 'The present day is fraught with danger on many fronts, personal values, old ideas, national and international relations, the menaces of war and annihilation, the tensions of race and under-privilege, the growing threat of violence at home and abroad all indicate that a new orientation or faith is needed. Unitarianism is that faith because it alone proclaims the sacredness of life, the right of all life to the highest possible material, moral and spiritual development ... Religion must point to injustice wherever it is; it must help to inform and it must urge us to work together for the greatest amount of happiness for people everywhere.' George Marshall was an American Unitarian.

In our services, we often quote American Unitarian Universalists, but not so often British Unitarians, which is a great pity, because it tends to overlook the work carried out by British Unitarians who made an inspirational contribution to politics and social justice. British Unitarians have had an immense impact on the world. We should also remember that this church is not a Unitarian Universalist church, as some have claimed. We are a Unitarian church. In ANZUUA, our parent body, only the Canberra and Brisbane Fellowships have adopted the US title of Unitarian Universalist – all other Australian and NZ churches follow the British tradition and call themselves Unitarian.

To return to British Unitarianism, in Raymond V Holt's book *A Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England*, he began with this statement, 'Unitarians believed in toleration at a time when hardly anyone else did. They believed that truth mattered supremely, that men and women should use their reason to discover it and that without freedom of thought this was not possible.' This is a concept that most in our church have striven for over many years.

Holt concluded his book with this statement, which I read in part: 'The nineteenth century almost to its close was a century of hope ... They even dreamed of a world in which the satisfaction of men's common needs by trade would lead to co-operation and not antagonism and make an end of war ... These hopes crashed after 1919. Men and women in the 20th century will try to solve their problems in their own way, but if they abandon those ideals of truth, liberty, humanity and democracy which animated the best minds of the 19th century, the time may come when historians of the future will look back with longing on that century as in some ways a little oasis in the history of man, and as later generations painfully take up again the work of striving to create a society in which the head is held high and the mind is free, they will wonder why those who came before them lost their nerve and threw away the gains of centuries'. This church must never lose its nerve.

And we need to answer Holt's question, Have we gone backwards? Has this been a century of hope? It is my view that the answers to these questions are clear. Yes, we have gone backwards, and no, this has not been a time of hope. Indeed, some would say it has been a time of wars, degradation and despair. Today, we have something called democracy, but what has changed for the mass of the people? How democratic is today's democracy? For a democracy to work, we need to be properly informed, we need to have some control over our lives and our society. We need genuine, accurate information so that we can make informed decisions. However, in our society we receive information in sound bites, which serves only to create false public opinion and limits our ability to examine attacks on our democratic rights and prevents us from fighting back.

As British historian ER Thompson so aptly said, 'The foulest damage to our political life comes not from the "secrets" which they hide from us, but from the little bits of half-truth and disinformation which they do tell us. These are already pre-digested, and then are sicked up as little gobbets of authorised spew. The columns of defence correspondents in the establishment sheets serve as the spittoons.'

The little gobbets of authorised spew fill our newspapers and airwaves. For example, we are told daily that the wars we are fighting are for democracy. We have, in fact, become exporters of this democracy. Our military travels across the world to bring this democracy to others by force of arms. We are involved in illegal wars. What other church or political party tells us this as our church does?

We are told that Muslims are trying to take over the world. We are never told that Israel is illegally occupying territory that belongs to the Palestinians. We are never told that fundamentalist Christians in the US support the gun lobby, and oppose a universal healthcare system. No other church or political party tells us this – our church does.

The little gobbets of authorised spew tell us that to make our country economically sound we have to undermine the wages and conditions of those who create all wealth, the working class. We are told there is no real global warming, so we continue to destroy the planet for profit. Who tells the truth about these issues? Our church does.

Those whose wealth and power depend on us believing them are the very same people who own the media. Who sells these little gobbets of authorised spew? Politicians, media owners and, sometimes, mainstream churches ... our church doesn't.

As Unitarians, we have a responsibility. We must move out of our comfort zone and remove *the mote from our eye in order to help others do the same. We must never allow our church to become another conformist church.* We are consistently told to blame the unions, blame the poor, blame greedy workers, blame unwed mothers, blame terrorists, blame anyone except the real culprits responsible for the world's misery – those who control the world's wealth and own the world's standing armies.

We know we have to seek the truth and that is why most of us have come to this church. But how do we determine the truth? How do we determine who is right and who is wrong, who to believe, and worse, do we even stop to ask? Such investigation takes time, honesty, determination and a genuine desire for justice and peace. Do we have time for this or do our other priorities get in the way? These are the questions Unitarians must ask themselves.

When we read or listen to the media, how do we tell if it is the truth? I know when I read *The Age* these days, I assume that most of it is untrue. The only page I trust is the letters page and some opinion pieces, and on these I make my assessment in line with my personal views, my life experiences, an analysis of events around the world, and trusting those whose political examination of world events I have learned have been generally politically correct in the past.

We do know that hospital beds are closing, jobs are being lost offshore, teachers are under attack, poverty is endemic, homelessness is on the rise and we all know that there is enormous corruption throughout this society. While governments publicly squabble about nonsense, they are quietly spending our tax money on subsidising private profit and selling off our valuable assets.

Governments refuse to force the mining companies and other wealthy industries to return some of the obscene wealth derived from our minerals and our labour in our own land yet penalise single parents by cutting their income. We know this is true.

This is a peace church: we have always lobbied against, opposed, and exposed wars and fought for world peace. However, in order to lobby and fight we have to be correctly informed, and then use that information to build public opinion because ultimately, it is only the people that can prevent wars. It is only the people who have nothing to gain and everything to lose. It is ordinary people who die in wars of profit and expansion under the flag of patriotism.

Just as this church played a leading role in exposing the Vietnam War and was proven so correct, we have a responsibility to do the same today with wars taking place around the world. We must ask ourselves questions and seek answers. Are they simply the result of Western governments' concerns for the democratic rights of the people of other countries, and if this is so, why are our main allies in these wars Saudi Arabia and Qatar, where democratic rights don't exist.

What and who are terrorists and how do we define terrorism? When are they terrorists, when are they fighters for freedom? Because it is true that those some consider terrorists, others consider freedom fighters. Does it depend on where they operate, why they operate, who is reporting on their operations and in whose interests they operate? If you asked the Israelis, for example, about the Stern Gang which operated in Israel in 1940, and murdered people, blew up buildings and committed many atrocities, they would say they were freedom fighters, fighting for a Jewish state. Many agree with this. So why then does the same principle not apply to Palestinian freedom fighters? After all, they are fighting for a Palestinian state. If it is OK for Israel to have atomic weapons, why isn't it OK for Iran? Who determines the answers to these questions and in whose interests? I believe we should. ■

## DID YOU KNOW...

### MY HOT CHILLI PEPPERS

Chemical giant Syngenta is spicing things up in the intellectual property arena, with a claim on insect-resistant chilli plants, fruits and seeds.

The No Patents on Seeds coalition reports that the European Patent Office (EPO) has granted Syngenta rights, despite the fact that the firm used conventional breeding methods, based on crossing and selection, which should not be patentable under European law.

Campaigner Christophe Then claims that the EPO consistently misinterprets the European Patent Convention, which should only protect biotechnological inventions. 'You can draw a clear distinction between genetic engineering and conventional breeding, which is essentially a biological process,' explains Then.

It is not the biotech industry's first proprietary move on nature's own. Past patent attempts include pigs, broccoli and melons.

### GREECE

Precious bailout cash to the tune of \$528 million was snatched from Greece's rather bare coffers in May 2012 by US tax exile Kenneth Dart, who runs his vulture fund Dart Management from the Cayman Islands. While Greece won its bailout on condition of pushing through hugely unpopular austerity measures, the vultures got their millions from coolly buying up chunks of the roughly five per cent of Greek debt that hasn't been renegotiated. While most of Greece's creditors took a 50 per cent haircut on their loans under bailout terms, the vultures are making hay. That's because the debts they've bought up are covered by English law. So the Greek government remains powerless to ask for a haircut and must continue to pay.

Source: *New Internationalist* July/August 2013

PETER HITCHENS:

## We set Syria ablaze ... Now we're hurling in explosives

Imagine this: newspapers and broadcasters in China suddenly start to denounce the British Government.

They call it a 'regime'. They say that its treatment of its Muslim minority is cruel and unjust.

Soon, their views are echoed by the Chinese foreign minister, who in a speech at the United Nations says that Britain's treatment of its minorities is a disgrace, and calls for sanctions against this country. The Chinese ambassador turns up as an 'observer' at an Islamist demonstration in Birmingham.

Some protesters are injured. Carefully edited footage of the occasion is shown on global TV stations, in which the police are made to look brutal and the provocations against them are not shown. Soon after this, armed attacks are made on police stations and on army barracks. People begin to notice the presence in British cities of foreign-looking men, sometimes armed.

Within a matter of months, the country is plunged into a civil war. A place known for stability, order and prosperity descends with amazing speed into a violent, rubble-strewn chaos, complete with refugees, plumes of oily smoke and soup kitchens.

The bewildered inhabitants shrug with hopeless bafflement when they read foreign accounts of events, encouraging the rebels, even though nobody really knows who they are. They just long for the fighting to be over.

All the time, foreign media report in a wholly one-sided way, credulously trumpeting British Government 'atrocities' without verification. And then all the major countries in the world agree to permit the direct supply of weapons to the rebels.

Absurd? Wait and see. Something quite like this actually happened on a small scale in Northern Ireland, where American individuals helped buy guns and bombs for the IRA, and the US government put huge pressure on us to give in to the terrorists.

And China, on the verge of becoming a global power, is watching carefully all the precedents we set, in Yugoslavia, in Iraq and now in Syria.

I apologise to the real Chinese ambassador for inventing this particular story. But the events I imagine here are based on the actual behaviour of Western powers in Syria. And what nations do to others is usually, in the end, done to them in turn.

I do not like the Syrian government. Why should I? It is not much different from most Middle Eastern nations,

in that it stays in power by fear. The same is true of countries we support, such as Saudi Arabia, recently honoured with a lengthy visit by Prince Charles.

In fact, Saudi Arabia is so repressive that it makes Assad's Syria look like Switzerland. And don't forget the places we liberated earlier – Iraq, Libya – which are now sinks of violence and chaos.

So many high ideals, so much misery and destruction. My old foe Mehdi Hasan (who understands the Muslim world better than most British journalists) rightly pointed out on Question Time on Thursday that our policy of backing the Syrian rebels is clinically mad.

These are the very same Islamists against whom – if they are on British soil – Government Ministers posture and froth, demanding that they are deported, silenced, put under surveillance and the rest.

But when we meet the same people in Syria, we want to give them advanced weapons. One of these 'activists', a gentleman called Abu Sakkar, recently publicly sank his teeth into the bleeding heart of a freshly slain government soldier.

I confess that I used to think highly of William Hague. I now freely admit that I was hopelessly wrong.

The man has no judgment, no common sense, and is one of the worst Foreign Secretaries we have ever had, which is saying something.

His policies – disgracefully egged on by a BBC that has lost all sense of impartiality – are crazily creating war where there was peace.

Syria for all its faults was the last place in the region where Arab Christians were safe. Now it never will be again. Who benefits from this? Not Britain, for certain.

Now, Mr Hague's strange zeal for lifting the EU arms embargo has caused Moscow to promise a delivery of advanced anti-aircraft missiles to Syria. Israel has threatened to destroy them if deployed. Syria has said it will respond with force.

This is exactly how major wars start. Mr Hague is not just pouring petrol into a blazing house full of screaming people. He is hurling in high explosives as well. It may even be that some people actually want such a war, with Iran as its true target.

They know that 'weapons of mass destruction' will not work again as propaganda. So they claim to be fighting for 'democracy' in Syria.

It is a grisly lie. Unless this stupidity is brought to an end, the world may be about to take another major step down the stairway that leads to barbarism.

This business is now so urgent that I beg you to ask your MPs what they propose to do to halt this wilful slither into a war almost nobody wants, and which could easily ruin the civilised world. ■

### Read more:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2334411/PETER-HITCHENS-We-set-Syria-ablaze--Now-hurling-explosives.html#ixzz2VDmIWLiW>

### Follow us:

@MailOnline on Twitter | DailyMail on Facebook

The only field test (blasphemously code-named 'Trinity') of a nuclear weapon had occurred just three weeks earlier (16 July 1945) at Alamogordo, New Mexico. The molten lava rock that resulted from the heat of that blast (twice the temperature of the sun) can still be found at the site today. It is called trinitite.

The reality of what had happened at Hiroshima was only slowly becoming apparent to the fascist military leaders in Tokyo. It took 2–3 days after Hiroshima was incinerated before Japan's Supreme War Council was able to even partially comprehend what had happened there, to make rational decisions and to discuss again the possibility of surrender.

But it was already too late, because by the time the War Council was meeting that morning in Tokyo, Bock's Car and the rest of the armada of B-29s was already approaching Japan – under radio silence. The dropping of the second bomb had initially been planned for August 11, but bad weather had been forecast, and the mission was moved up to August 9.

With instructions to drop the bomb only on visual sighting, Bock's Car arrived at the primary target, but Kokura was clouded over. So, after futilely circling over the city three times, there was no break in the clouds, and, running seriously low on fuel in the process, the plane headed for its secondary target, Nagasaki.

### The history of Nagasaki Christianity

Nagasaki is famous in the history of Japanese Christianity. Not only was it the site of the largest Catholic church in the Orient, St Mary's Cathedral (completed in 1917), but it also had the largest concentration of baptised Christians in all of Japan. It was the mega-church of its time, with 12,000 baptised members.

Nagasaki was the location where the legendary Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier, established a mission church in 1549. The Christian community survived and prospered for several generations. However, soon after Xavier's planting of the church in Japan, it became obvious to the Japanese rulers that Portuguese and Spanish commercial interests were exploiting Japan, and it didn't take too long for all Europeans to be expelled from the country – as well as their foreign religion. All aspects of Christianity, including the new Japanese converts, became the target of brutal persecutions.

By 1600, being a Christian was a capital crime in Japan. The Japanese Christians who refused to recant of their new religion suffered torture and even crucifixions similar to the Roman persecutions in the first three centuries of Christianity. After the reign of terror was over, it

appeared to all observers that Japanese Christianity was extinct.

However, 250 years later, in the 1850s, after the coercive gunboat diplomacy of Commodore Perry forced open an offshore island for American trade purposes, it was discovered that there were thousands of baptised Christians in Nagasaki, living their faith in a catacomb existence, completely unknown to the government – which immediately started another purge. But because of international pressure, the persecutions were soon stopped, and Nagasaki Christianity came up from the underground. And by 1917, with no help from the government, the growing Japanese Christian community had built the massive Urakami Cathedral, in the Urakami River district of Nagasaki.

Now it turned out, in the mystery of good and evil, that the massive Cathedral was one of two Nagasaki landmarks that the Bock's Car bombardier had been briefed on, and looking through his bomb site 31,000 feet overhead, he identified the cathedral through a break in the clouds and ordered the drop.

At 11:02 am, during morning mass, Nagasaki Christianity was boiled, evaporated and carbonised in a scorching radioactive fireball that exploded 500 meters above the cathedral. Ground Zero was the persecuted, vibrant, surviving centre of Japanese Christianity.

### The Nagasaki Christian death count

Since the Cathedral was the epicentre of the blast, most Nagasaki Christians did not survive. Six thousand of them died instantly, including all who were at confession that morning. Of the 12,000 church members, 8,500 died as a direct result of the bomb. Three orders of nuns and a Christian girl's school disappeared into black smoke or chunks of charred remains. Tens of thousands of innocent Shinto and Buddhist Japanese also died instantly and hundreds of thousands were mortally wounded, some of whose progeny are still in the process of slowly dying from the trans-generational malignancies and immune deficiencies caused by the deadly plutonium.

What the Japanese Imperial government could not do in over 200 years of persecution, destroy Japanese Christianity, American Christians did in 9 seconds. Even today, those who are members of Christian churches in Japan represent a fraction of 1% of the population, and the average attendance at Christian worship services is 30. Surely, the decimation of Nagasaki at the end of the war crippled what at one time was a thriving church. ■

Copyright © 2013 Global Research

Our church is a public and usable asset with portable seating and excellent conference, meeting and function facilities. We welcome its use by those who support our motto 'Seek the Truth and Serve Humanity'. Interested individuals or groups can contact the church office – we would be delighted to speak to you. A donation is payable.

### PAYPAL ACCOUNT

The church has now opened a PayPal account. If you have access to PayPal – all you need do is log on and the church's PayPal address is [admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au](mailto:admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au) Visit our web page and click on the link. You will be able to pay your subscription and make donations.

# from our readers



## **Dear Secretary**

Enclosed is a cheque for \$11 being membership renewal for Sonja & John Rutherford which is due by 30 June 2013.

I might add that the layout of the 'Keeping in touch newsletter' is very readable, and keep up the excellent selection of speakers for the Unitarian Church services.

Yours sincerely

**J Rutherford, Vic**

## **Dear Editor**

We need to act to protect many of our stressed wilderness habitats and wildlife.

When will we learn that to endangered species it is vital to protect our remaining forests and other wilderness habitats. The remarkable Tarkine region of Tasmania, a pristine tract of temperate rainforest, coastline, sand dunes and river systems, is under threat from big businesses that want to establish open cut mines in the area.

The wild region contains over 60 species of threatened, rare or endangered animals – including the Tasmanian Devil, the wedged-tailed eagle and the world's largest freshwater crustacean. Habitat loss is the main danger to many endangered species. The protected Tasmanian Devil is struggling to survive a fatal facial cancer, the Devil facial tumour disease, which has decimated the population, with about 12,000 Devils remaining in the wild today. One of the few disease-free areas of Tasmania left is the remote Tarkine region. Allowing mining and other development would be another major threat to the continued existence of the endangered Tasmania Devil.

These proposed operations, roads and other infrastructure would drastically damage its biodiversity and the habitats the native wildlife need to survive, and ultimately the whole ecosystem would be devastated. We must act to save this special place from being destroyed. The only way to conserve plants and animals from extinction is to preserve these unique, essential, wild habitats.

**Steven Katsineris, Vic**

## **Dear Sir**

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$50 for your great publication of the *Beacon*. It is a great edition to read, especially the report of the Tony Abbott amendments he will bring in.

Yours faithfully

**Council of Retired Union Members Association  
(CRUMA), NSW**

## **Dear Peter**

I wish to purchase a copy of Marion Harper's book *Shining a light – Beacon*.

Enclosed is a cheque for \$15. If more is needed for postage, please inform me re the extra.

My wife and I belong to the UU Fellowship at Kirribilli, Sydney, and we both, as well as our sons, look forward to the monthly copy of the *Beacon* – to read of issues not fully reported in the general press.

Best wishes

**C Whatmough, NSW**

## **Dear Editors**

Thanks as always for your interesting articles. I love my *Beacon*.

**Ann Jurrjens, Qld**

## **Dear Sir/Madam**

Enclosed are a subscription and a small donation for another year of thought-provoking and enlightening reading.

We always make sure this wonderful magazine reaches as many of our friends who are willing to pass it on.

If only we lived closer to the city, we would attend your wonderful concerts more often. Keep the exciting articles flowing.

**K Coupe, Vic**

## **The Editor**

Thank you for another copy of the *Beacon*, which as usual conveys information that enables people to see through the lies and misinformation that powerful forces inflict on an anxious public, in these uncertain and distressing times. Your articles on the evil drones, on climate change and the gross rewriting of history on Palestine, along with others of note in the August issue of the *Beacon*, are like oxygen to a person in distress.

I am enclosing a cheque for \$40 for the purpose of renewing my subscription and for a subscription for my friend, requesting that the August issue be sent to her.

Yours sincerely

**K McEwan, ACT**

## **Dear friends**

In our busy life, some things slip us by as instanced in the back page from our readers and the protest from the Australians for Palestine by Sonja Karkar. Many people would be unaware of this historical fact and we commend the representation to Australia Post. We will send our objection to them and tell others about the protest which points out the real facts.

Thank you to the *Beacon* for alerting/printing the letter from Australians for Palestine.

Keep up the enlightenment on these important issues.

Best wishes

**T & A McDonald, NSW**

# MELBOURNE UNITARIAN PEACE MEMORIAL CHURCH

‘SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY’

Tel: 03 9417 4178 (10 am to 3 pm weekdays) Fax and Answering machine: 03 9417 4178  
110 Grey Street, East Melbourne (opposite the Mercy Hospital)  
Services, Sunday 11 am

## IN THIS ISSUE:

### Editorial

#### Edward Snowden Part 2

#### The bombing of Nagasaki 9 August 1945

#### Politics and liberal religion: Are they mutually exclusive?

#### Peter Hitchens: We set Syria ablaze ... Now we're hurling in explosives

## Beacon Editorial Board

Peter Abrehart  
Marion Harper  
Donna Sensi  
Julie Stafford

**The Editorial opinions expressed are those of the Editorial Board.**

Opinions expressed in the editorial, articles, letters, etc., in the *Beacon* are those of the writers themselves and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Melbourne Unitarian Church or any other organisation to which a particular writer is affiliated. Titles and affiliations are used for individual identification purposes only.

## MELBOURNE UNITARIAN PEACE MEMORIAL CHURCH

110 Grey Street, East Melbourne 3002  
Email: [admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au](mailto:admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au)  
Website: [www.melbourneunitarian.org.au](http://www.melbourneunitarian.org.au)

Monthly Journal of the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church  
Est. 1852

Registered by Australia Post

Post Print Approved  
100003043

SURFACE  
MAIL

POSTAGE  
PAID  
E. Melbourne  
Victoria  
Australia  
3002

Simply cut out this form, fill in the details, and forward it along with your subscription. Why not do it now? If you are already a subscriber, send one to a friend.

To: The Editor, **The Beacon**, Melbourne Unitarian Church  
110 Grey Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002 Australia  
Please forward a copy of **The Beacon** every month. Enclosed is \$20.00 for twelve months subscription. (A\$20 Overseas and \$10 concession)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Also send a copy to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

## A GIFT THAT SAYS YOU CARE

A Gift Subscription to **The Beacon**, the ideal gift that lasts a whole year.  
Please enter my gift subscription to the following:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Enter payment of \$20.00 (A\$20 Overseas, \$10 Concession) for one year's subscription to the Editor, **Beacon**, Melbourne Unitarian Church, 110 Grey Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002 Australia. Cheques payable to Melbourne Unitarian Church.