

# Theosophy

in Australia

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## *Freedom of Thought*

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none of which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H.P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

*Resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (1924)*

## *Freedom of the Society*

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organisation entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title, 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organisation.

*Resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (1949)*

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**The Theosophical Society** welcomes students or seekers, belonging to any religion or to none, who are in sympathy with its Objects. The motto of the Society is 'There is no Religion higher than Truth'. The word Religion in this statement is a translation of the Sanskrit *dharma*, which among other things means practice; way; virtue; teaching; law; inherent nature; religion; and that which is steadfast or firm. The word Truth in the motto is a translation of the Sanskrit *satya*, meaning among other things, true, real and actual. It derives from the root *sat*, sometimes translated as boundless unconditioned existence.

**Theosophy** is not defined in the Constitution of the Theosophical Society, or in any official document. It literally means divine wisdom, *theosophia*, but members of the Society are left to discover what it is for themselves, taking as guides whatever religions or philosophies they wish.

## The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

- I. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
- ~
- II. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.
- ~
- III. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being.

*From the  
International President  
- The Illumined Mind*

Tim Boyd



**W**e have descended, we have ‘involved’ ourselves into matter, and now we are at a juncture where something is changing. I am going to try to focus on where we find ourselves now, and pick it up from that point of the arc. What does that mean, and how do we respond to this particular stage in the cycle? Part of my title is about illumination; often we think of it as a specific moment when something occurs and suddenly we find ourselves, like a light-bulb, illumined. That is accurate. However, it is also a process that brings us to this particular moment of awakening. Often in theosophical terms we think of human transformation as a sudden instant, which, again, is correct, but there is also a process that is involved in arriving at this time.

Where do we find ourselves now? What is our situation? When I was younger I would listen to my father or uncles tell a story and, after they were just a few words into it, I would realise this was the same story I had been hearing all of my life. I would have to pretend as if the story was brand new, even though from the start I would know where it was going to end. As time goes on, they say that we become our parents. In my theosophical thinking I find myself arriving at a place that seems to have great importance for me, that until I can grasp this particular point, everything else around it

seems to be just information. This information may be interesting, or metaphysical, and if you say it in the right place you may impress somebody and they will think you are profound. But, beyond all that, it is just more information until we find the context that gives it meaning.

For us as human beings there is an essential problem. If we could resolve it, then all other things would fall into place. It begins with something that H.P. Blavatsky talked about in her three fundamental Propositions. She spoke about the pilgrim soul and an obligatory pilgrimage that must be made. It is through reincarnation – the repetitive cycles of birth, death and rebirth – that this pilgrim soul evolves. The process is where we lose our way. The attempt to provide some direction in this process is the basis for all of the world’s religions, for the profound teachings of Theosophy. What do we do to interrupt this cycle of repetitive births and rebirths, of different varieties of suffering in this life, different bodies in which we put so much effort into figuring out ways to cause harm to ourselves and others?

The process begins for us when a soul comes into a body. Some of us may be familiar with the Egyptian story of the coffin that Seth built for Osiris. It fitted Osiris’ body exactly. Seth tricked the god Osiris to enter into the coffin, closed it around him, and removed him

from the royal house. On one level the story describes the soul's entrance into a body. Once we enter, it is very much like entering into a coffin in the sense that we become cut off from something – the Divine, our spiritual Source. Life after life we find ourselves incarnating in this way, but what happens thereafter is where we become perplexed. The problem we face as spiritual beings working through a material body is one of false identity. In this process of birth we take on not just one, but multiple false identities.

A soul is without gender, nationality, political party, or religion, but at the time of incarnation the first thing that is declared is the gender. 'It's a boy', or 'It's a girl.' From that moment forward there is an expectation for a limited range of self-expression, and if you want to try to act differently, in whatever culture you are from, you will face severe restrictions. Thus incarnation has its consequences. We take on, and then accept, a variety of identities.

The good part about it is that this ever-expanding 'I' has certain limitations. There will necessarily come a time for every person when an intense dissatisfaction becomes the characterising frame of mind that plagues the heart. This is a good thing because out of that dissatisfaction comes the necessary next stage where we now find ourselves. We become seekers for happiness, for Truth, for something that we call by many names.

In the initial stages, what we are really seeking is something to fill our sense of emptiness that will stop the feeling of dissatisfaction. Often it expresses itself as a desire for freedom. What begins as a 'freedom from', grows into another sense of freedom, a 'freedom to'. This becomes the experience in normal human living – a freedom to love, to be kind, to be open; these are the ones that seem to have some lasting meaning.

One of the fundamental ideas of Buddhism is that every sentient being is searching for happiness, whether it is an ant or a mountain lion. We all are. There are some things that give very short inputs, not lasting, but as we

mature and develop we start to realise that there are certain experiences which lead to a happiness which can be repeated.

In 2011 the Dalai Lama visited us in Chicago. One thing he said impressed me. He made the comment that one of the results of his training and practice is that now, most of the time, he is quite happy. To me, this statement was remarkable in its simplicity. To be happy most of the time does not seem like such a demanding goal. Here we have something we can attain. This happiness can be repeated as we embrace certain ways of being. We recognise that it is our state of mind and behaviours that bring it about.

What is a human being? As defined by H.P. Blavatsky, it is highest spirit and lowest matter, linked by the mind. This is simple, but profoundly important. If we ever gain some understanding of this definition, then it becomes clear where it is that our work in this life must take place. It takes place in the linking ground – the mind. This bridge of mind linking the poles of spirit and matter is what makes us human.

In the countless details that we call our life, we should try to never lose sight of the fact that there is something much more profound lying on the other side of that. The problem for us is we cannot reach it unless we attend to these details properly. The only thing I would do is to encourage you, as I encourage myself daily, to remember what lies beyond. Everybody has seen it, and felt it, just remember. That is enough.

**The above is an extract from an article in the August 2014 issue of *The Theosophist*. The full article can be read at: <http://www.ts-adyar.org/node/307>**



## From the National President



Linda Oliveira



When putting together the items in this magazine, a definite theme emerged and consequently this could be designated the 'mind issue'. To begin with, our International President, Tim Boyd, explores the meaning of the 'Illumined Mind'. One article deals with the question, 'Is Theosophy an Ideology?' Another, on the subject of Good and Evil, leads to the question: Is Evil a product of the human mind? Then again, perhaps one of the most difficult challenges is to *train* the mind, a subject which is also explored by one of our members. Added to these are my Annual Report, which I encourage members to read, as well as several regular items.

Recently, a journalist who visited the National Headquarters asked a number of questions. These included, 'How does the TS see its role today?' The short answer is that the TS does not have an official viewpoint about its role today; in fact, it has precious few official views or statements. Members will be familiar with our three Objects, the Freedom of Thought and Freedom of the Society resolutions (see page 97, as well as the inside front cover). A sequence of thought using these three, along with our motto and some observations of society today, assisted in my formulation of some personal views on the question which are shared here:

- To promote increasing awareness of the fundamental Unity of life which translates practically into less judgmental, more tolerant and synthesised thinking, as well as more selfless relationships with the kingdoms of Nature including all people, regardless of distinctions. The emergence of our Unity Sense is both essential and

a moral imperative considering the major global conflicts which are currently consuming precious human resources, emotional energy and untold time.

- To make Theosophy better known through our meetings, our literature and electronically, employing a considered and non-dogmatic approach; this being in part an attempt to provide a perspective on, and counteract the extremes of, the excesses of materialism in the twenty-first century. As part of this, to provide carefully curated resources on Theosophy and the TS for members, enquirers and researchers, e.g. general literature, libraries and, increasingly, online resources.
- To provide meeting places which convey a tangible sense of the Sacred and which enable programmes and dialogue on a broad range of subjects pertaining to Theosophy such as holistic Spiritual living (classes on meditation come to mind), what makes us human, current world issues, religion, philosophy, science, and enquiry into our latent powers; places in which people can derive benefit emotionally, mentally and spiritually through direct interaction with other seekers for Truth, and in which they can also contribute meaningfully to the life of the Society.

Much more can be said about this. Perhaps readers have some views to share.

**Comments of up to 200 words on anything in this issue are welcome and may be published. Email: [pres@austheos.org.au](mailto:pres@austheos.org.au)**

## Is Theosophy an Ideology?

Pedro Oliveira



**T**he *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines ideology as ‘a form of social or political philosophy in which practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones. It is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it’. The purpose of this article is to investigate whether Theosophy has become an ideology for a number of its students, and over a long period of time.

Ideological nuances invade every form of human activity. The whole field of advertisement, for example, is based on the ideological principle of persuasion by repetition in different settings (television, magazines, websites, Facebook, et cetera). An American economist once said that when the need for a new product did not exist it could be invented!

Ideological currents also pervade the world of religions, through which in many cases adherents are cajoled into staying in the fold in order to protect themselves from an ‘evil’ world. Very often religious ideology attempts to sell a sense of belief-based security as well as a protective community.

In modern philosophical circles ideology makes itself present in overemphasised discourse whenever reality is interpreted. A sophisticated linguistic apparatus is sometimes used to explain the world of everyday life while remaining disconnected from the real world of all too human experiences.

### The Possibility of an HPB Sect

Even before Madame Blavatsky died, in May 1891, Colonel Olcott was concerned with what he called the possibility of an ‘HPB sect’ within the Theosophical Society. But it was in 1892 that his concern took a concrete form:

It will have been seen from what is written in previous chapters how much my mind was exercised about the evident probability of a new sect springing up around the memory of HPB and her literature. From week to week things seemed to be going from bad to worse: some of my most fanatical colleagues would go about with an air “of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit; as who should say, *I am Sir Oracle, and, when I open my lips, let no dog bark!*” One would have thought that HPB had laid upon their shoulders the burden of the whole Himalayan Mysteries; and when one ventured to challenge the reasonableness of some thing which they were quoting, they would answer with a sort of restraint of the breath: “But, you know, she said so” – as if that closed the debate. Of course they meant no harm, and, perhaps, to a certain extent, were really expressing their awe of the departed teacher; but all the same it was a most pernicious tendency, and, if unchecked, was calculated to drag us into a sectarian pitfall.<sup>1</sup>

However, Colonel Olcott also saw another danger:

But let no one suppose that this vicious tendency towards hero-worship has been rooted out from our natures, for a new idol is being fashioned in the form of that dear, unselfish, modest woman, Annie Besant. If the walls around our Society

were less resistant, her blind admirers would be already digging out a niche in which to place the idol for worship. Needless to say, one has only to be familiar with Mrs. Besant's speeches and writings to have overwhelming proofs that such an attitude towards her is most distasteful. Many years ago she deliberately sacrificed the world to work for her fellow-men, and from the first moment until now she has begged her hearers to regard the thought, and not the speaker. <sup>2</sup>

As we shall see, it was the attributed authority, centred around the teachings of HPB, that may have led several generations of students to build the notion of Theosophy as a Blavatskyan-centred ideology that does not admit questioning and which regards the teachings from several other writers as less authoritative, if not positively wrong. A central element in this ideology seems to be related to the fact that HPB was a direct agent of the Masters. Curiously, whenever she addressed the members of the TS, it was not the authority of her Teachers which she emphasised, not even her own authority, as we shall see, but the vital truths inherent in Theosophy as a living Wisdom.

## No Ideological Authority

Madame Blavatsky wrote in 1889:

In its capacity of an abstract body, the Society does not believe in anything, does not accept anything, and does not teach anything. The Society *per se* cannot and should not have any one religion. Cults, after all, are merely vehicles, more or less material forms, containing a lesser or greater degree of the essence of Truth, which is One and universal. <sup>3</sup>

Her statement is entirely consistent with what was written in the Preamble to the Bylaws of the TS when it was formed in 1875: 'Whatever may be the private opinions of its members, the Society has *no dogmas to enforce, no creed to disseminate.*' This clearly means that the TS does not have an official, enforceable teaching although it encourages a search for Truth and Wisdom among its members. In her above-mentioned statement HPB implies that the position of an *official* Theosophical teacher was declared vacant from the early beginnings of the TS!

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The Mahatma Letters also present a similar testimony of non-dogmatism and non-sectarianism in TS work:

We wish the London Society should preserve its harmony in division like the Indian Branches, where the representatives of all the different schools of Hinduism seek to study Esoteric Sciences and the Wisdom of old, without necessarily giving up for it their respective beliefs. Each Branch, often members of the same Branch – Christian converts included in some cases – study esoteric philosophy each in his own way, yet always knitting together brotherly hands for the furtherance of the common objects of the Society. <sup>4</sup>

They also reaffirmed, in strong words, the complete and irreversible non-existence, within the Theosophical Society, of any ideological authority:

It is a universally admitted fact that the marvellous success of the Theosophical Society in India is due entirely to its principle of wise and respectful toleration of each other's opinions and beliefs. Not even the President-Founder has the right directly or indirectly to interfere with the freedom of thought of the humblest member, least of all to seek to influence his personal opinion. It is only in the absence of this generous consideration, that even the faintest shadow of difference arms seekers after the same truth, otherwise earnest and sincere, with the scorpion-whip of hatred against their brothers, equally sincere and earnest. Deluded victims of distorted truth, they forget, or never knew, that discord is the harmony of the Universe. <sup>5</sup>



## Splits within the Theosophical Society

The first significant split within the Theosophical Society came about in 1895 when William Quan Judge, a close co-worker with HPB and one of the original founders of the TS, decided to leave the TS and form The Theosophical Society in America. From that time onwards a school of thought was created which maintained – and still maintains – that real Theosophy can only be found in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, W.Q. Judge and in the Mahatma Letters. Such a school of thought rejected the writings of Annie Besant, C.W. Leadbeater and others in the TS (Adyar) as ‘Neo-Theosophy’ for not conforming to the so-called original teachings of Theosophy. In some of the writings of representatives of such a school of thought, the view of Theosophy as an ideology, authority-based, becomes self-evident.

Robert Crosbie, a staunch student of Mr Judge’s writings and HPB’s, who was also the originator of the United Lodge of Theosophists in 1919, stated:

Theosophy does not emanate from any society nor from any living persons. So far as the world and all Theosophists are concerned, Theosophy comes from H.P.B. and W.Q.J., or rather, through them. So, to avoid misconceptions, we get back of living persons to the Message and the Messengers. <sup>6</sup>

The unassailable basis for union among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is SIMILARITY OF AIM, PURPOSE, AND TEACHING. The acceptance of this principle by all Theosophists would at once remove all barriers. A beginning must be made by those *whose minds have become plastic by the buffetings of experience*. An agreement between such is necessary; an assembling together in this spirit. <sup>7</sup>

However, such a view was not – and is not – limited to those belonging to other organisations dedicated to the study of Theosophy. It has also found representatives in well-known members of the TS (Adyar), like the late Geoffrey Farthing, a former General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in England and noted theosophical author. Commenting on the well-known passage in *The Key to Theosophy*, which says the TS ‘was formed to assist in showing to



men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities’, Mr Farthing says: ‘This established Theosophy as something specific and the paragraph constitutes virtually a fourth object for the Society. Could there be a worthier one?’

When considered carefully, the words used by HPB in the passage just mentioned – ‘assist’ and ‘help them’ – suggest that Theosophical students could become facilitators in the presentation of Theosophical teachings, rather than self-styled teachers who speak from a position of authority and transmit a teaching which is set in concrete.

Although Mr Farthing had submitted his views to the General Council of the TS at Adyar in 1996, as part of his manifesto, the Council did not adopt them. Included in his manifesto was the following statement:

All beliefs concerning Theosophy and the Theosophical Society ought seriously to be questioned against what can easily be discovered of the original teachings and intentions for the Society. ... The Society has its own special message to promulgate. This message only exists in the writings of H.P.B. and in the Mahatma Letters.

This message in its completeness (as far as it was given out) is unique.<sup>8</sup>

The following was the General Council's reply to Mr Farthing's manifesto:

The consensus was that freedom of thought necessarily implies a wide horizon of thought and perception. Belief that the writings of H.P.B. and the Mahatma Letters constitute the only source of the message the T.S. should promulgate cannot be imposed on members, as such limitation goes against the grain of that freedom of thought. Each one must have the freedom to decide what best helps understanding of oneself and provides inspiration to work for the ideal of human progression and perfection.<sup>9</sup>

When a young theosophist in Brazil, I had the opportunity to ask our then International President, John Coats, why there are such clashes within the TS, including ideological ones. His reply was illuminating: 'Because the Society is composed of individuals who think for themselves. We are not a bunch of sheep.'

The freedom the TS extends to its members includes the freedom to hold on to views, even when this occurs tenaciously and sometimes to the detriment of mutual harmony and goodwill. However, in the Resolution on Freedom of Thought it is also stated that we should 'exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.' This can hardly be achieved when we tell our fellow-members that the book or books they are studying are rubbish because we do not accept the ideas of the author or authors of those books.

However diverse may be the views about Theosophy, the different schools of thought apparently agree that it is essentially Wisdom, and not merely knowledge. Therefore, it is not an ideology. And Wisdom concerns life and living, not just ideas and views. It is possible that there is a dimension of Theosophy which, when contacted, may illumine the purpose of life and existence in a way in which second-hand knowledge cannot. Hugh Shearman may have pointed to this in the following passage:

The future of the Theosophical Society must depend, not upon a body of literature, but upon

Theosophists. And Theosophists are of value, not for their opinions or their ontological structures, but for the extent to which they can embody something that is beyond and greater than all systems or descriptions. Indeed our various Theosophical ontologies are deeply united in one teaching. They all, in various fashions, declare that the principle or aspect of human nature which alone gives us value and significance is beyond that mind in us which creates systems, which depends upon other people's descriptions or is concerned with comparing one teaching disadvantageously with another. Though we are still only momentarily conscious of it here, that which unites humanity is one Life which lives through all things. Theosophy is discovered by letting that Life consciously and expressively take over our lives. ...<sup>10</sup>

### Endnotes:

1. Olcott, H. S., *Old Diary Leaves*, Fourth Series, The Theosophical Publishing Society, London, 1910, p. 425.
2. *ibid.*, p. 426.
3. Blavatsky, H. P., 'The New Cycle', *La Revue Theosophique*, Paris, Vol I, no. 1, March 21, 1889, pp. 3-13. Translated from the French original.
4. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* in chronological sequence, Arranged and Edited by Vicente Hao Chin, Jr., Theosophical Publishing House, Metro Manila, Philippines, 1993, pp.412-413.
5. *ibid.*, p. 412.
6. Crosbie, Robert, *The Friendly Philosopher*, The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, 1945, p. 369.
7. *ibid.*, p. 410.
8. Farthing, Geoffrey, *The Theosophical Society and its Future Manifesto 1996*. Privately printed by the author.
9. Annual Report of the Theosophical Society, 1996, p.71.
10. Shearman, Hugh, 'Theosophical Ontologies', *The Theosophist*, October 1971, p.19.



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## Training the Mind

Jane Wilson



### The following short talk was given at the 2014 School of Theosophy at which Ed Abdill led study classes on the theme, *The Secret Gateway to Our Inner Self*:

Ed Abdill has written in his book, *The Secret Gateway*:

The path is dangerous, psychologically dangerous. As St. Augustine put it, 'There is no greater sorrow than being no longer the old Adam, but not yet the new Christ.' Although we are bound to meet our dangerous psychological demons on the road to self-discovery, we can conquer them if, in spite of all failures, we continue to try. Every success brings us closer to the ultimate goal, and every failure reveals one more dead end in the maze we are travelling. (p.205)

Ed has mentioned several times that to progress on the Path we must put in our own effort. The teachings and the teachers present the knowledge and point the way. However, through our own efforts, we try again and again to understand the teachings, to find some experience of them, and so we have the potential to attain great insight. It is through effort that we attain this insight.

James Allen wrote a text called *As a Man Thinketh*. He mentioned: 'A man literally is *what he thinks*, his character being the complete sum of all his thoughts.' Further, 'the mind is the master-weaver, both of the inner garment of character and the outer garment of circumstance'.

During these insightful talks Ed has mentioned that behaviour is the bottom line – our ethics,

morals and values. If we consider our own behaviour, we can probably see that indeed man is Lord of his own thoughts and therefore shaper of his own destiny. We have to decide how we want to live, how we want to be, who we want to be, and then make the effort to direct ourselves on this chosen path. Again, it is our effort that moves us; it is the force that guides us. Ed spoke on day one about motion – its causes and effects – so we must question our motivations and aspirations. Does our behaviour align with them? Or not? What is it that sets us in motion? What is it that drives us?

So we become mindful of our thoughts and develop the discipline to guide those thoughts towards our chosen path.

We are always keen to improve our circumstances but far less willing to improve ourselves, and so we can remain bound. By taking responsibility for our own character and our circumstances we can then, perhaps, recognise the need for training the mind in order to proceed towards those higher aspirations. It is a path of sacrifice requiring a great deal of effort, persistence and will. It is a mindful process of self-analysis and self-correction in every moment – a relentless task of keeping our intentions and practice in check.

You become your own source of examination, critique, change and justice – there is no place to hide when you examine yourself; you cannot wear a mask to *that* table! It is confronting,

challenging – even demoralising at times – but the rewarding part (I imagine) is when you reveal the truth of who you are and then have the courage to choose who you will be, as you set about fulfilling your chosen purpose.

The Delphic Injunction, ‘Man, Know Thyself’, is an instruction to examine our motivations, reasons and beliefs – to review our qualities, virtues and vices. We seek to know ourselves so that we can change ourselves. If we know who we are, we can change who we are. This change occurs by directing our thoughts towards who we want to be. Consider, though. Are you changing the way you think? Or are you just rearranging your prejudices?

So training the mind means we become the director of our life. Ed mentioned several times that we must take the knowledge presented to us and take it inside of ourselves to truly *know* it, to understand it so it is no longer an ideal or concept written on paper, but an experience we have within. By going within we shape our character, beliefs and our circumstances.

Patience, practice and ceaseless effort are required to develop the discipline to direct one’s thoughts towards altering one’s character and circumstances.

Each of us is where we are by the law of our being. The thoughts which we have built into our character have brought us here. The very nature of who we are and who we are becoming will contribute to the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Karma is not a system of punishment – it is cause and effect in motion, creating and directing the very nature of who we are and where we are.

All that we achieve and all that we fail to achieve is the direct result of our thoughts – and so we are to take responsibility for our thoughts. James Allen wrote: ‘the soul attracts that which it secretly harbours; that which it loves, and

also that which it fears’. Our circumstances are designed to be useful and purposeful – not so much to please us! Our circumstances reveal ourselves to ourselves.

Ed has said to us that another does not make us angry; rather, we react and become angry. We must cease to accuse others of being the cause of our conditions and build our own character through noble thoughts.

It is not for us to judge another, nor to judge the status of another on the Path. We each have our lessons to learn; and our circumstances and character facilitate these lessons. We are not made privy to the lifetimes of causes and effects we have set in motion and so we are unable to draw a conclusion of any kind about ourselves, never mind another.

If a person is able to radically alter their thoughts then they may be astonished at their rapid transformation.

‘As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.’  
Who are you becoming?

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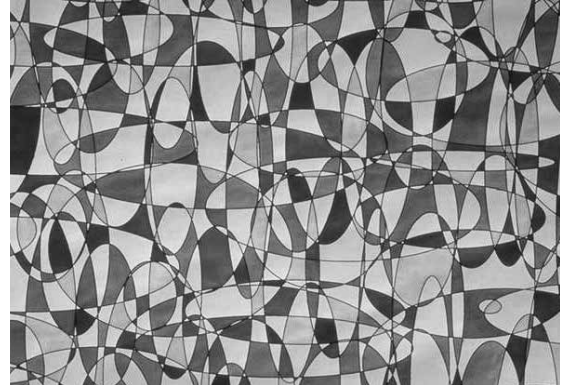
[james-allen.in1woord.nl](http://james-allen.in1woord.nl)



**Jane Wilson is a member of  
Newcastle Lodge.**

## Good and Evil

Janet Harding



### Good and Evil. Do they exist? And, if so, why do they exist?

Just lately there have been dreadful killings, by fathers, of their children; and, of course, because it was Anzac Day recently, we have heard again about the awful things that happen during War. Good things happen too, but are not so often reported.

There is no doubt that both Good and bad (Evil) exist. But why must we have both? Why not just have Good?

Annie Besant said that no attribute, that is, no thing, can live without its opposite. (Examples of opposites are light and shadow, front and back, spirit and matter, et cetera). Annie Besant went on to say that a pair (of opposites) manifests simultaneously. In other words, in order for there to be balance in the physical world, there needs to be the polarity of opposites which arise in creation at the same time.

And so it is with Good and Evil. They are two polarities; they balance each other. We cannot have Good without Evil.

We all think that Evil or bad things that happen are wrong but maybe it's all in our perception. Maybe Good and Evil just *are*. For example, we sometimes have terrible bushfires in this country.

Houses get burnt down and people get killed. Awful! But looked at another way, is it? Have you noticed how the gum trees flourish after the fires? How quickly the little green shoots pop out of the burnt tree's trunk and branches. We have far too many kangaroos here and they have to be culled sometimes. Bush fires do this for us. It sounds cruel, but maybe bush fires are part of Nature's balancing act and also – maybe we shouldn't build houses in the middle of the bush!

I mentioned the boys killed by their fathers recently. The mother of one of those boys has now – right away – started an organisation to help victims of domestic violence. So that awful killing – that Evil act – has led to something very good happening, balancing it out perhaps. Or maybe it is a kind of karma. Maybe, in fact, Good always comes out of Evil; it is just that we can't see it.

Madame Blavatsky talked about things which can be both good and bad. She said that poisons can be used for Good or Evil depending on how they are used and the intent of the user – whether, she says, he is a Brother of Light or a Brother of Darkness. This made me think of homeopathic medicine and of vaccinations. In both cases a little bit of the vital essence can be very beneficial but a large dose can kill or maim. In the Mahatma Letters KH (Mahatma Koot Hoomi) said, and I quote:



Evil has no existence *per se* and is but the absence of good and exists but for him who is made its victim. It proceeds from two causes, and no more than good is it an independent cause in nature. Nature is destitute of goodness or malice; she follows only immutable laws when she either gives life and joy, or sends suffering [and] death, and destroys what she has created. (p.273)

He says that the real Evil is caused by human beings. This is either as a result of people wanting power or possessions; or through religion when priests force great poverty on their parishioners by exacting much of their money; or also through different religions cutting each other's throats in the name of, and for the greater glory of, their myths.

So I think we can rightly say that Good and Evil exist. They are one of the polarities of life; one of the balancing acts of the manifested physical world.

To us Evil appears to be so wrong, so unnecessary, but I suggest that there may be different ways of looking at Evil, that in some instances we can see it actually leading to good things happening. In other instances, maybe there is some sort of karmic link at work which we simply don't know.

Just as there would be no night without day, without Evil there would be no Good. They are a pair, they are opposite ends of a continuum. As I quoted before, KH said 'Nature is destitute of goodness or malice, she follows only immutable laws.'

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**Janet Harding is a long-time member of the TS and belongs to Brisbane Lodge. She gave this talk during the 2014 School of Theosophy.**





## The Salt Doll

Once a salt doll went to measure  
the depth of the ocean.  
No sooner was it in the water,  
than it melted.  
Now who was left to tell the depth?

There is a sign  
of Perfect Knowledge.  
The seeker becomes silent  
when It is attained.

Then the 'I',  
which may be likened to the salt doll,  
melts in the Ocean of  
Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute,  
and becomes one with It.  
Not the slightest trace of distinction is left.

Sri Ramakrishna

The September event at Canyonleigh on *The Mahatma Letters*, led by former National President Beverley Champion, was greatly appreciated by the participants.

Above right: Enjoying Spring weather in the highlands at the stone amphitheatre during a morning tea break.



Right: Beverley Champion and Dr Helen Lambert



# National President's Annual Report

1 September 2013 to  
31 August 2014

Linda Oliveira

**Once again, it is a pleasure to present an annual report of the activities in our Section, both national and local. This report shows in summary form the extent of the activities around this country and I encourage members to read it. It has been a particularly eventful twelve month period at the national and international levels.**

## Preamble

To begin with, acknowledgement must be made of the passing of the Society's International President, Radha Burnier, on 31 October 2013 during the year under review. She had held this office continuously since 17 July 1980, visiting the Australian Section a number of times. A strong and steady leader of the Society, she possessed a fine understanding of deeper aspects of Theosophy. At the end of the election period for a new International President, Tim Boyd from the USA was declared elected to this office (see p.36, June 2014 *T in A*). On behalf of the members of this Section, I sent him a message of congratulations and good wishes after his election.

A number of highlights in the Australian Section during the year are worthy of mention:

- The unforeseen commencement of the process of sale of Theosophy House in Sydney.
- The purchase of a new home for the National Headquarters on the Sydney city fringe.
- The near completion of the Section's new website.
- Commencement of e-Bulletins which are now sent out to several hundred members by the National Headquarters, in addition to the printed national magazine.
- The commencement of a Facebook page for the Section.
- The approval of a set of 19 Notices of Motion to amend the Section's Rules.

More detail about each of these points is provided further on.

## NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

### National President

During the year under review, I visited nearly all TS centres around the Section. This always provides an excellent opportunity to meet members as well as speak personally with officers and committee members about any issues of concern. I wrote a letter to all newly elected Lodge/Branch *Presidents*, primarily to remind them of the support available from the National Headquarters and their connection with the Section.

My attendance at the international General Council meeting at Adyar in December occurred at a historically significant time for the TS, during the nomination period for candidates for the office of *International President*. (See also item on Support for International Headquarters.) In early November I also represented the Section at the Indo-Pacific Conference in Bali. A good contingent of Australian members was present. John Vorstermans from New Zealand was re-elected as *President* of the Federation for a further term of three years. I gave a presentation at the Conference, as did the Acting *Education Coordinator* Pedro Oliveira and *National Lecturer* Dianne Kynaston.

My main duties otherwise included organising and overseeing the Annual Convention in Sydney; developing presentations; reviewing and suggesting National Council policies or amendments; organising the National Speakers schedule; organising an event in Canyonleigh as well as the annual School of Theosophy at Springbrook; co-presenting afternoon training sessions at the School of Theosophy; editing and production of the national magazine; writing regular e-Bulletins for email distribution to members in consultation with the members of the Electronic Media Committee; member of the National Council; member and *Chair* of the national Executive Committee; Director and *Chair* of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust; Director of The Theosophical Foundation; membership of several smaller committees; overseeing the redesigning of the new website; and answering correspondence.

### National Council

The National Council met in January in Sydney and in June at the National Headquarters in Sydney. As at 31 August 2014 the National Council comprised

three ex officio members (the *National President*, the *National Secretary* and the *National Treasurer*), along with six elected *State Representatives*, each of whom may serve up to three two-year terms:

Denise Frost – Tasmania

Franco Guazzelli – Western Australia

Phillipa Rooke – Queensland

Travis James – South Australia/Northern Territory

Dianne Kynaston – New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory

Kari Torgersen – Victoria

The time and energy given voluntarily by the *State Representatives* during the year has been greatly appreciated. This included several days of National Council meetings.

The following appointments were made by the National Council for a twelve month period in January 2014:

*Chair* of the National Council and *Vice-President* until January 2015 – Denise Frost.

Executive Committee – see next item.

We are extremely fortunate that the Section's *Assistant Treasurer*, Beatrice Malka, consented in June to an appointment by the National Council as Hon. *National Treasurer* of the Theosophical Society in Australia. Her many years of professional experience as an accountant/financial controller, combined with Beatrice's dedication to the Theosophical Society, help make her exceedingly well qualified for this role.

### National Executive Committee

The national Executive Committee is concerned with the day to day administration of the Section. With the exception of January, it met monthly during the year under review. As at 31 August its members included three ex officio members, the *National President*, *National Secretary* and *National Treasurer*, as well as the following members who were appointed by the National Council in January: Dai Trandang, Ken Edwards, Marlene Bell and Dianne Kynaston. Two members commute to Sydney for meetings from Melbourne and Adelaide every second month.

The members of the national Executive Committee are also required to be Directors of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust, which is responsible for the Section's properties except for Theosophy House in Sydney.

In December, the national Executive Committee appointed Linda Oliveira as the *Editor* of *Theosophy in Australia*. At the same meeting, the Executive Committee also appointed several working committees: Rules, Finance, Electronic Media, and Education and Training.

### Headquarters Staff and Volunteers

As a result of two decisions by the National Council, officers appointed by the Council will have their positions reviewed every three years. Also, the first two-yearly review of the other staff members took place prior to the mid-year National Council meeting. By all accounts, this was useful and helpful to staff, as well as to the *National Secretary* and the then *Assistant Treasurer*, who undertook the reviews.

Sincere thanks go to all members of staff, with whom it is a pleasure to work, as well as to all volunteers who are part of our immediate and extended National Headquarters team, for their dedication to this Society. The main tasks performed by each during the year were:

Dara Tatray, *National Secretary*: initiating and seeing through to completion the purchase of a new property for The Australian Section Theosophical Trust (the new National Headquarters); managing the sale of Theosophy House and conducting all necessary negotiations on behalf of The Theosophical Foundation. Engaging a new lawyer to act on behalf of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust and The Theosophical Foundation on these matters; liaising with the lawyer on all aspects of the two contracts. Managing the relocation of the National Headquarters with the services of The Relocation Planning Company; organising the fit-out of the new premises, with the services of Danks Design Group and in consultation with the *National President*. Managing the tenants of Theosophy House. Reporting to the national Executive Committee, the National Council, The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd, and The Australian Section Theosophical Trust on matters pertaining to the properties owned by the Trust or Foundation, matters pertaining to the Rules and matters pertaining specifically to administration and personnel; taking care of all routine business for these four entities; writing and distributing their Minutes and Agendas; ensuring that all their statutory requirements are met. Paying insurance and ensuring that premiums are at an appropriate level for all the component Lodges/Branches that make up the TS in Australia.



Overseeing the payment of wages, and paying all bills for the Foundation and the TS in Australia. Producing and distributing quarterly investment trust reports to members of the Foundation and to its investment partners. Overseeing the monthly financial reports to the Trust and the national Executive, with the guidance of the *National Treasurer*. Working on the Budget and end of year financial statements with the *National Treasurer*. Reviewing the regular expenses of the National Headquarters, cutting costs where possible.

Jennifer Hissey: entering data for the Online Public Access Catalogue; handling enquiries for material in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives as well as cataloguing work; networking with other libraries in Australia; liaising with Softlink in order to improve OPAC; *Convention Secretary*.

Gil Murdoch: Webmaster for the Australian Section's website; learning WordPress software and transferring a large amount of material from the existing website to the new site; maintaining sound equipment and data projectors; updating the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals*; indexing the *Brahmavidya* journal; assisting in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives; making audio recordings at the National Convention; distribution of Convention CDs and DVDs.

Pedro Oliveira, *Education Coordinator*: programming and giving presentations at the annual School of Theosophy and a seminar at Canyonleigh; presentations to TS centres; development of modules for the Resources Package; development and maintenance of the Section's Facebook page; responding to requests for educational material and general educational matters; responsible for the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives; member of Education and Training and Electronic Media committees; assistance to the *National President*; ordering and sale of books and study courses.

Richard Larkin, *Membership Secretary*: preparing membership reports; maintaining the membership database; banking; responding to orders for DVDs and courses; general office duties; assistance to the *National President* and the *National Secretary*; *National Lecturer*; OPAC data entry.

Kay Schiefelbein: *Caretaker*, Springbrook Centre and caterer for some Springbrook TS events.

Beatrice Malka: volunteer – *Assistant Treasurer* until June, *National Treasurer* thereafter; member of the national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust; Director of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd.

Dai Trandang: volunteer – organising the quarterly mail out of *Theosophy in Australia*; work on the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals*, member of the national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust; Director of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd.

Marlene Bell and Ken Edwards: volunteers – members of the national Executive Committee and Directors of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust.

Dianne Kynaston: volunteer – member of national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust; Director of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd., *National Lecturer*; member of Editorial Committee; *State Representative*.

Geoff Harrod: volunteer – *State Representative* and *National Vice-President* until late 2013, editing of Convention videos.

Denise Frost: volunteer – *State Representative* and *National Vice-President* as from January.

Franco Guazzelli, Travis James, Kari Torgersen: volunteers - *State Representatives*.

Janice Scarabottolo, Dr Olga Gostin and Patricia Ossenberg: volunteers – members of Editorial Committee.

Barry Bowden, Simon O'Rourke, Dr Brian Harding: volunteers – *National Lecturers*.

Jef Ladbrook-Sloan: volunteer – calligrapher, Membership Diplomas for new members, until December 2013.

Kay Schiefelbein, Marie Bertelle, Barry Bowden, Gayle Thomas and Vianna Manning – volunteer caterers for the School of Theosophy at Springbrook.

Tony Buzek: volunteer – videoing of Convention sessions and School of Theosophy sessions.

## MEMBERSHIP

### *Theosophy in Australia*

Four issues of the magazine were produced in September, November, March and June. I am very grateful to the members of the Editorial Committee for the time they have given during the year to review articles submitted for possible publication. As a result of the change to Section Rule 9 which



was voted on and announced at the 2014 Convention Business Meeting, as from the first issue in 2015 the receipt by members of a hard copy of this magazine will become optional with a new, two-tier membership system. The magazine will also be decreased somewhat to a handy A5 size. (See March 2014 *Theosophy in Australia*, p.31.)

### National Members

All National Members were sent a letter from Acting *Education Coordinator* during the year which included mention of the many educational resources available for them from the National Headquarters. This includes the Media Library for members, study courses, study papers, the National Members' Lending Library and the Mentoring Studies Programme.

### Membership Issue

In my last report, I mentioned that the National Council had taken action at its mid-year 2013 meeting to terminate the membership of one individual. Soon after that, however, the person concerned resigned from the TS. An application by him to rejoin the TS was declined by the national Executive Committee in April.

### Exit Surveys

Some members who have resigned, or else whose membership has lapsed, completed and returned exit surveys sent to them by the National Headquarters. These surveys provide useful information. In most cases the reasons are routine; in other cases, they may be followed up.

## 2014 CONVENTION

The Annual Convention was held in Sydney during January. As usual, it brought together members from near and far for a week of activities and good company. Conventions are an excellent way to begin the TS year together, helping provide renewed energy for the year ahead. The well organised and friendly assistance given by a number of volunteer members of Blavatsky Lodge, our host Lodge, both before and during the Convention, was greatly appreciated.

## EDUCATION

### Education Coordinator

There was one applicant for the position of *Education Coordinator*, which was advertised in the March issue of *Theosophy in Australia*. Pedro Oliveira was

subsequently appointed by the National Council at its mid-year meeting as *Education Coordinator* of the Section.

Our educational work at the national level comprises various activities which are summarised under the subheadings below, as well as events at the national TS centres. (See also item on National Centres.)

### Education and Training Committee

The Education and Training Committee initiated the development of a Resources Package for Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups two years ago. Individual modules are distributed to Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups as they are completed. During the year, a new Resources module, *An Introduction to the Key to Theosophy*, was prepared by the Acting *Education Coordinator* and duly sent out. So far this has been taken up by several TS Centres and has proved a well-received addition to our supply of courses at the Headquarters. Work on a new module, 'Understanding the Psychic World', also commenced.

Copies of a set of DVD presentations by Pablo Sender from the USA on *The Secret Doctrine – Esoteric Insights and Spiritual Practice*, Parts 1-8, were sent to all Lodges/Branches and also made available in the Resources library.

### Resources

During the year our educational resources at the National Headquarters were further augmented. These included new DVDs, books and study course material as well as much additional electronic information (see [www.austheos.org.au/resources](http://www.austheos.org.au/resources)).

### Current Website

The Section's comprehensive website is an excellent resource, with an average of 13,000 visits each month. Gil Murdoch, our webmaster, regularly updates the web pages of Lodges/ Branches and Groups, as well as the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals*. The largest number of recent visits from outside Australia came from Germany, China, the European Union, Brazil and the Russian Federation.

### New Website

At the end of the year under review, work was proceeding apace towards the finalisation of work on the Section's new website. We had anticipated

that it would be online earlier. However, after the development and basic population of the new site by the company concerned, because of the large amount of material on the existing site, a considerable amount of content still had to be copied across. This in-house work was largely completed. The home page slideshow, clickable calendar, gallery of paintings by TS member Rona Scott, and other features, will present a fresh image to members and public alike, improving our digital profile.

### **Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives**

A number of researchers used the Library's collection during the past year. New titles in recent months were *The Secret Doctrine Würzburg Manuscript*, edited by David and Nancy Reigle; the Adyar Library 125th Anniversary issue of *Brahmavidya*, the *Adyar Library Bulletin*, Volumes 74-75; *Madame Blavatsky – Mother of Modern Spirituality* by Gary Lachman; *Yearning for the New Age: Laura Holloway-Langford and the Late Victorian Spirituality* by Diane Sasson; and *Mrs. Holloway and the Mahatmas* by Daniel H. Caldwell.

### **National Speakers Schedule**

Lodges/Branches and Certified Groups benefit from the provision of a variety of speakers by the National Headquarters. The National Speakers schedule is updated regularly on the website. At its mid-year meeting the National Council appointed the following as *National Lecturers* for 2015, subject to their agreement: Barry Bowden, Dr Brian Harding, Dianne Kynaston, Richard Larkin [who later declined], Simon O'Rourke and Dr Dara Tatray. They bring a wide variety of backgrounds and interests to their presentations. In addition to the *National Lecturers*, the *National President*, the *Acting Education Coordinator* and international speaker Ed Abdill toured different parts of the Section.

During the year under review, a total of **34** lectures were organised around the Section by the National Headquarters, as well as one study class. We provided speakers for seminars in Perth and Adelaide, and a seminar in Launceston was programmed by the National Headquarters. Each seminar included a number of presentations – in two out of three cases, over a two day period.

### **International Lecturers**

The tour of seven Lodges/Branches during April and May by Ed Abdill, international speaker and

*Vice-President* of the American Section, was highly successful and excellent feedback was received. Members of the public were attracted to his talks, with a very good attendance in Melbourne. The tour included his classes at the week-long School of Theosophy (see also item under National Centres). Ed was accompanied by his wife, Mary, who also presented a workshop and a talk at the School, and a bonus talk during the visit to Perth Branch.

### **Book Depot, National Headquarters**

The small book depot at the National Headquarters is producing regular sales and clearly fulfilling a need. We plan to expand this with more selected titles after moving to our new location.

### **Universities**

Our Section continues to award the John Cooper Memorial Prize annually to Studies in Religion, the University of Sydney. \$1500 per year is offered, half for an undergraduate prize and half for a postgraduate prize. The 2013 undergraduate prize went to James Thorpe for an essay, 'Christians and Amulets in Early Medieval Byzantium'. The 2013 postgraduate prize went to Dominique Wilson for her Doctor of Philosophy thesis on 'Shaman, Sage, Priest, Prophet and Magician: Exploring the Architecture of the Religious Wise Man'. Copies of both have been lodged in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library at the National Headquarters office. I am grateful to the *State Representative* for NSW/ACT, Dianne Kynaston, who presented these awards in my place at the Prizes Ceremony as I was at the School of Theosophy in Queensland during the week concerned.

In my last annual report, I mentioned that the offer of a prize for research into any aspect of the Perennial Philosophy in its Eastern and Western traditions had been accepted by the Head of Studies in Religion at the University of Queensland. Subsequently, advice was received that the University Senate was interested in formally sanctioning the TS prize if it conforms to the Senate's conditions. This would enable students to include the prize on their academic record and would also help make the TS better known. At the time of writing this report, the Senate award conditions concerned had not yet been clarified. Therefore the possibility of the TS providing this prize is still pending, subject to our eventual agreement of the University Senate's award conditions.

### Planned Publication of Anthology: Theosophy-Science

Astrophysicist, Dr Hugh Murdoch, was for many years the *National Treasurer* of this Section. A number of his articles were selected by the Acting *Education Coordinator*, typed up by Richard Larkin and sent to the International Headquarters to be compiled into an anthology, with publication costs to be covered by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar.

### NATIONAL EVENTS

#### Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre, Springbrook, Queensland

The School of Theosophy ran from 25 April – 1 May with morning classes presented by Ed Abdill. The theme was ‘The Secret Gateway to Our Inner Self’ and the School attracted an almost full complement of students from around the country. Classes dealt with universal principles discoverable in our own nature.

#### Canyonleigh Centre

This Centre is an excellent place to spend time for a few days with likeminded people and enjoy the surrounding forest in the peaceful countryside of the Southern Highlands. A popular event, ‘Gnosticism and Esoteric Christianity’, was held at Canyonleigh at the beginning of the year under review, the presenters being Acting *Education Coordinator* Pedro Oliveira and *National Lecturer* Richard Larkin.

‘Healing and Transformation: an Exploration Through Dialogue and Practice’ was the theme of an extremely well received event held at Canyonleigh with *National Secretary* Dara Tatrav, and TS member and tai chi instructor, Horacio Paz, as presenters. It included a pleasing mix of Qigong and talks/discussion, about half of the attendees being non-members.

During the year, at the instigation of the *State Representative* for NSW/ACT, plans were commenced for a one day event at Canyonleigh in late 2014.

#### Seminar in Launceston

As a result of a suggestion by the *State Representative* for Tasmania, an event was programmed by the National Headquarters for a seminar in Launceston in late May/early June, to mark the 125th anniversary of Hobart Branch. Due to the sudden passing of a

family member, the Acting *Education Coordinator* and I were unable to be present. However, we were both able to email our presentations just prior to the opening of the seminar, with a request that local members read them out to those present in Launceston, and afterwards at Hobart Branch. It was reported subsequently that members willingly rallied, ensuring the great success of the Launceston seminar.

### PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

See also previous items: Website and New Website.

#### Facebook Page

Members and friends are invited to view the Section’s Facebook page, which was designed and launched by the Acting *Education Coordinator* in March. New information is added regularly and the page can be accessed at: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/austheos>. At this time, and with electronic communications being ever more prevalent, a solid online presence by organisations such as ours is essential. This page is an excellent way of promoting the Society. It features quotations, advice about upcoming events, pictures, information about books, as well as various pieces of general interest. At the end of the year, the page had been liked by 293 people from many countries around the world.

#### e-Bulletin

Encouraging comments have been received about the e-Bulletins now sent from the National Headquarters, and which also commenced during the year. To date four have been produced. These are proving useful and convenient for communicating with members. They include reminders about events, information, quotations, pictures, updates about our Facebook page, a ‘Did you know?’ section, and information about the TS. These Bulletins seem to be gathering more registrants for our events, with our distribution list of several hundred. When the new website is launched, members of the public will also be able to sign up to receive them free of charge.

#### OPAC

Our Online Public Access Catalogue continues to grow and evolve. A striking archival photo of the original Adyar Library in India was added to the home page. At the end of the year under review the number of electronic records for each of the following libraries were: Adelaide Lodge – 3166, Brisbane Lodge – 2947, Launceston Lodge – 672, Melbourne

Lodge – 5238, and the Campbell Theosophical Research Library, National Headquarters – 2404. The total number of records was 14,427 at 31 August. Some new lists were added and some headings updated.

For those not familiar with OPAC, it is well worth a look and can be accessed at:

[www.austheos.org.au/resources/library/catalogue](http://www.austheos.org.au/resources/library/catalogue)

## FINANCE

### Finance Committee

The *Finance Committee* met late in 2013 with our financial managers, Maple-Brown Abbott. An adjustment was made to our portfolio balance with an alteration to the investment allocation guidelines established in the 1980s, which had stood us in good stead until now. Our allocation of shares has been increased slightly, with the weighting of liquidity and bonds reduced accordingly.

### Annual Fund

Donations to the Annual Fund, no matter how small, are appreciated very much and carefully managed. During the year the major project was the Section's new website, with the design and development work outsourced to a professional company. It is due to go online before the end of 2014. Two other projects were the production and postage to Lodges/Branches of the DVDs on *The Secret Doctrine* by Dr Pablo Sender (see also the item on the Education and Training Committee) and the design of the new e-Bulletin.

## SUPPORT

### Support for TS Centres by National Headquarters

See:

Education and Training Committee; National Speakers Schedule; International Lecturers and OPAC.

### Support to the International Headquarters

Over time a number of donations to the International Headquarters by the Australian Section have accumulated and not been used. They have been held in Australia in the Adyar Security Fund. In mid-2013, the National Council approved in principle a proposal I made that interest accruing from the Adyar Security Fund be transferred annually to the International TS Treasury, to help augment wages at Adyar. This proposal was also quite enthusiastically agreed to by the General Council. After considering

current and projected interest rates, our Section's Finance Committee recommended that an amount of A\$7,000 be transferred to the International Headquarters for the next three years commencing in April 2014, with a review of the amount in early 2017. I am happy to report that, as a result of the first instalment transferred to the International Headquarters during the year, an across-the-board monthly increase was given to each of the hundred and thirty salaried workers who are at Adyar, as from April.

Also, during the year, the Acting *Education Coordinator* conducted a course at the School of the Wisdom on 'The Way of Self-Preparation: Studies in *Light on the Path*'. The Australian Section made a 50% contribution towards his air fare as a gesture of support for this activity in Adyar.

## SALE OF THEOSOPIHY HOUSE AND A NEW NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

As mentioned in the September issue of the magazine, Theosophy House, the home of Blavatsky Lodge and the National Headquarters since 1985, was sold, and the Australian Section has purchased a new property, Lots 6 and 7 at 162 Goulburn Street, Sydney. The National Headquarters is due to move to its new office in the second half of November. As you can imagine, the sale of the building has involved quite a lot of work and a lot of rethinking on the part of the Lodge and the Section, both of whom are looking forward to the time ahead. The contract for the sale of our property provides for a lease to Blavatsky Lodge for Level 3, and a licence to them for the exclusive use of two car spaces, for a period of twelve months, with an option to renew twice. The purchaser had also kindly offered Blavatsky Lodge the use of Level 2 for its meetings on Wednesdays and Sundays, at a reasonable rate yet to be determined. This arrangement is highly favourable to Blavatsky Lodge, and very generous on the part of the purchaser.

## RULES

### Rule Changes

**Lodges/Branches:** A number of routine changes to Lodge/Branch Rules were approved by the national Executive Committee during the year according to Section Rule 6(2), after considering recommendations made by the Rules Committee.

**Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia:** In accordance with Section Rule 13, nineteen Notices of Motion to change the Rules of the TS in Australia were circulated to Lodges/Branches in September, to vote on at their Convention meetings. These dealt with a range of matters in order to correct inconsistencies, bring the Rules up to date or bring them into line with practices which have changed over time. This is probably the most substantial set of changes we have made since the current Rules were adopted some twenty-five years ago when the Section's governance was restructured. Lodges/Branches voted in favour of all Notices of Motion, with the exception of Perth Branch which voted against Motion 4 (concerning the slight increase in the dues). At the end of the year under review, work on redrafting the Rules was completed and ready for checking.

### Elections

**International President:** See Preamble to this report.

**National President:** A call for nominations for the office of National President was issued in accordance with Rule 20(2) of the Section Rules. One valid nomination was received. This report was written during the voting period.

**State Representatives:** In November, the results of the election for State Representatives for the Electoral States of Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia/Northern Territory were announced. In order, they were Phillipa Rooke, Denise Frost and Travis James. In June a Call for Nominations was made for *State Representatives* for the Electoral States of New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and Western Australia. At the time of writing this report, the nomination period had almost finished.

## REPORTS FROM LODGES/BRANCHES

### Hobart Branch, TAS (chartered 1889)

Our oldest Branch celebrated its 125th anniversary during the year, which is a tremendous achievement and seems to have helped result in some growth in membership. Events included talks, a slide show about the history of Hobart Branch prepared by the Acting *Education Coordinator*, as well as an open day and past members' reunion. The celebration also included the annual mid-year weekend seminar for Tasmanian members programmed by the National Headquarters. This was held in Launceston, and shared with Launceston Lodge. Regular public meetings were held weekly on a week night and once a

month on a weekend. The *National President* and Ed and Mary Abdill, from the American Section, visited. A qualified Librarian assisted with cataloguing many recently donated books and assessing the current library stock. An active TOS group met occasionally.

### Melbourne Lodge, VIC (chartered 1890)

Some of the groups held during the year in Melbourne Lodge were 'Astrology'; 'Study of Religion, Philosophy, Science, Cultures'; 'Healing'; 'Meditation' and 'Yoga for Everyone'. The *National President* and Ed Abdill both visited, each presenting seminars which were well attended. Highlights mentioned in the Lodge's Annual Report included the first seven sessions of the *Introduction to The Key to Theosophy* course, with various presenters. The Lodge's library is open three days a week, one day with the Lodge's *Librarian* and the other two days with volunteers. The number of staff in the TS bookshop had to be reduced; however it is still operating six days per week and is economically more viable. The TOS group held two workshops and a picnic in the Botanical Gardens.

### Adelaide Lodge, SA (chartered 1891)

The Lodge's radio programme continued on Sunday mornings, with a team of some eight volunteers. The library and bookshop continued to be effectively managed. The bookshop now sends out electronic newsletters and has a Facebook page. A website was established, attracting much interest in the programme. Long awaited alterations to the upstairs area of the building were completed. Also, group activity was very strong during the year and included 'The Mahatma Letters'; members' meetings; 'Theosophy/Religion/Spiritual Growth'; the Theosophy Science group; a DVD discussion group; 'The Key to Theosophy'; and 'Theosophy Watch Airing and Sharing Group'. A course was run on 'An Introduction to Theosophy', based on John Algeo's book, as well as two retreats. Ed Abdill, the *National President* and the *National Secretary* all visited, the latter conducting a weekend seminar.

### Brisbane Lodge, QLD (chartered 1895)

Two silent meditation retreats were held during the year at the Springbrook Centre. Visiting speakers included Ed Abdill, the *National President*, and *National Lecturers* Dianne Kynaston and Barry Bowden, as well as Brian Parry from Melbourne. Postcards to publicise the library have been made and were picked up by the public in various locations.



Group study included 'Introduction to Theosophy', 'Krishnamurti', 'Gnosis' and 'Bhagavad Gita'. A meditation group and a science group met. Some building maintenance and security issues were dealt with as well. Among other activities, the energetic TOS group ran a successful fundraising concert and started a healing circle.

#### **Perth Branch, WA (chartered 1897)**

During the year, a motion to sell the Mt. Helena Centre was defeated and a working group was formed to keep it operational. The well-attended annual Easter weekend was held at the Branch's main premises in Perth, rather than the Mt. Helena Centre which was temporarily closed. A working bee and members' weekend were both held at the Centre. Improvements to the bookshop and library included new shelving, a database update and the sorting of new and donated books. The several highlights mentioned included the visit by Ed and Mary Abdill, with Ed conducting a number of sessions during the Branch's Easter weekend. Members' meetings during the year were well attended; there are no regular public meetings. Four ongoing study/discussion groups were held on HPB's *Collected Writings*, *Science*, *A Study in Consciousness* and *Practical Theosophy*. Allied activities included yoga classes and various social activities.

#### **Launceston Lodge, TAS (chartered 1901)**

Programme highlights during the year which were mentioned in this Lodge's report included the Tasmanian weekend seminar mentioned previously, 'Is it a Rope or is it a Snake?' by Ed Abdill, 'Oh Hidden Light, Oh Hidden Love' by the *State Representative* Denise Frost and 'The Way of the Warrior: from War to Peace' by the *National President*. Regular public meetings were held. Extensive remedial work to the Lodge building commenced just before the end of the year under review, library activities having been curtailed for some time with the pending building work. Study/discussion groups included, among others, 'Mindfulness Techniques', 'Introduction to *The Key to Theosophy*', 'Comparative Religion' and discussions on articles from *Theosophy in Australia* magazine.

#### **Blavatsky Lodge, NSW (chartered 1922)**

This Lodge's Executive Committee had been considering plans to reduce activities from two floors to one floor of the building, by letting out one floor. However, these plans were shelved in

view of the unexpected sale of Theosophy House. A comprehensive training programme for library volunteers covered many aspects of library work, and second-hand books were sold in the library. Visiting speakers included Ed Abdill, *National Lecturer* Barry Bowden and George Wester from Perth. The Lodge had a diverse programme during the year. The monthly members' circle continued with the format of talk/ afternoon tea/ discussion. The well-attended 'Last Sunday of the month' events continued to be successful. Study groups included 'The Art of Tarot', 'The Voice of the Silence', 'The Bhagavad Gita', 'The Mahatma Letters', group discussion based on a variety of monthly themes, and several book study groups. The TOS held a public meeting once a month as well.

#### **Newcastle Lodge, NSW (chartered 1941)**

During the year Newcastle Lodge shifted its public meetings to a new venue in a busier and more visible location. The DVD library of talks continued to grow due to the generosity of one member who films Lodge presentations. Visitors included the *Education Coordinator* Pedro Oliveira and *National Lecturer* Richard Larkin. They each gave a weekend seminar during the year, the subjects being 'The Bhagavad Gita' and 'The Gospel of Mary Magdalene' respectively. Study groups took place on 'A Study in Consciousness' and 'The Key to Theosophy'. Also, a Christmas social was held on the theme 'Vision for a Better Future'.

#### **Atherton Lodge, QLD (chartered 1950)**

During 2014 Atherton Lodge's Committee focussed on the provision of presentations which had a practical, everyday living component. It also publicised TS members' only events at its meetings, to encourage non-members to join the TS. A well-attended additional meeting was organised by the Lodge in Cairns in June. Visiting speakers included *National Lecturer* Dr Brian Harding and Perth Branch *President* Tina Hentisz. Programme highlights included, among others, 'Science and Religion Working Together', 'Practical Cosmic Consciousness' and 'Blavatsky: the Later Years'.

#### **Canberra Branch, ACT (chartered 1971)**

*National Lecturers* Richard Larkin and Dianne Kynaston visited during the year. Evening public meetings were not held during the very cold Winter nights in Canberra. Public monthly discussion groups were held at faculty rooms in the ANU

campus on subjects such as ‘Music and Spirituality’; ‘Was Canberra designed on theosophical lines?’; and ‘The Theosophical Web’. Topics for public meetings included ‘Perspectives from Vivekenanada and Dharmapala’, ‘In the Footsteps of St. Paul’ and ‘The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene’. There was also an open discussion on vegetarianism. The small TOS group met throughout the year to discuss theosophical principles, commencing each meeting with a short meditation. It also arranged occasional social activities.

#### **Sunshine Coast Lodge, QLD (chartered 2004)**

This Lodge has two venues at Buderim and Noosa/Tewantin. As well as weekly meetings at Buderim, the second venue now has monthly formal meetings and some social meetings. Study groups are being developed. Subjects for group study have included ‘Age of Transition’ and ‘Meditation’. Some of the visiting speakers were the *National President*, *National Lecturer* Dianne Kynaston and the *State Representative* for Queensland, Phillipa Rooke. Also, four full day members’ meetings were held on weekends throughout the year on subjects such as ‘To Higher States of Consciousness’ and ‘A Theosophy Day, the Future of Humanity’.

### **REPORTS FROM CERTIFIED GROUPS**

#### **Blue Mountains Group, NSW**

This Group West of Sydney met once a month and held additional regular study meetings on *The Secret Doctrine*. One TS member gave a short talk once a month, followed by discussion; other members have also given talks followed by discussion. Topics included ‘Travels to Tibet’ and ‘Enoch, Did Giants Exist?’ In addition, there were some informal interactive meetings between members of the Group.

#### **Gosford Group, NSW**

A number of members travelled from Sydney to speak to this group on the Central Coast including, among others, two national officers and *National Lecturer* Dianne Kynaston. An ‘Introduction to Theosophy’ group is run by the *Coordinator* as well as a book study group. The subjects of some of the meetings during the year under review were: ‘What is Parapsychology?’, ‘History of the Holy Grail’ and ‘Theosophical Views on Death and Dying’.

#### **Northern Beaches Group, NSW**

This Group continued to meet in private homes, although monthly meetings were not always

possible. The *Education Coordinator* visited and spoke during the year. Titles of sessions included ‘How Big is the Universe?’ and ‘HPB’s Diagram of Meditation’. Also, there was a showing of *The River*, a film which featured classical Indian dancing by former *International President* Radha Burnier when she was young.

#### **Toowoomba Group, QLD**

The Toowoomba Group organised a weekend retreat at the Springbrook Centre during July, led by its *Coordinator* and *National Lecturer*, Barry Bowden. A regular study group on *The Key to Theosophy* was held and meetings continued twice a month, with one meeting on a weekday and another held on a weekend.

#### **Mornington Peninsula Group, VIC**

Monthly meetings were held during the year except for January. Eleven members of this twelve member Group attended the Mornington Peninsula Interfaith Festival in June, enabling the TS to have a strong presence there. Visiting speakers included the *National President*, former *National President* Beverley Champion and former *Supporting Lecturer* Brian Parry. Titles of programmes held during the year included ‘Working with the Wisdom, a Living Power’, ‘Oh my God, What Have we Done to the Twenty-first Century?’, and ‘Heart, Soul and Spirit, Enlightenment for Everyday’.

#### **Wodonga-Albury Group, VIC**

This small Group, which occupies shopfront premises, continued to keep its library open for four hours a day between Monday and Friday each week, an impressive effort. Regular groups included a Meditation group, a discussion and study group, and a monthly Perennial Philosophy group. Also, *National Lecturer* Richard Larkin visited during the year.

### **THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE**

The report sent in by the *National Coordinator* stressed the importance of compassion to those less fortunate than ourselves. This was evident in the immediate response when the call went out for urgent donations to the Philippines, as a result of the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan. An amount of \$5000 was forwarded to Vicente Hao Chin, Jr., and his team within forty-eight hours, with a follow-up donation of \$6,676. TS and TOS members worked

side by side for many weeks, getting aid to those most vulnerable.

This year, at the TOS AGM, members endorsed the following projects supporting education for our annual sponsorships:

- (a) Continuing support for the Pakistan Home Schools (providing 31 scholarships)
- (b) Supporting two new projects – The Olcott Memorial High School and The Golden Link College in the Philippines.

The total donations for the financial year 2013/2014 were \$16,500. This amount included a generous donation from the financial managers of the TS in Australia, Maple-Brown Abbott, donations from our various groups plus interest from our investments.

TOS publishes three national newsletters annually, sharing ideas and promoting a sound basis for networking. Coordinators from the nine groups now send information on their specific events via

the Internet to other groups, which has been most successful in energising the TOS and creating a sense of unity of purpose.

### CONCLUSION

Clearly, it has been a very productive year. Special thanks go to the many members who have volunteered their service to our Lodges and Branches, which form the backbone of our Section. Gratitude is also extended to the members who give generously of their time to our Certified Groups. Members help in so many ways, and often quietly, to assist with the work of the TS in Australia. And in relation to this, it is somehow fitting that a special plaque at our International Headquarters is dedicated ‘to those Unknown members of The Theosophical Society throughout the world whose silence loyalty and sacrifice ensures to it the Masters’ constant blessing’.

### Annual Membership Analysis of Lodge/Branch Membership as at 31/08/2014

Lodge/Branch	Members 31-Aug-13	Trans in	New	Rejoin	<b>Total in</b>	Resign	Lapse	Dec	Trans out	<b>Total Out</b>	Members 31-Aug-14	Diff
Adelaide	94	1	10	2	13	2	13	3	0	18	89	-5
Atherton	19	0	2	0	2	0	5	0	0	5	16	-3
Blavatsky	215	1	10	6	17	8	19	2	2	31	201	-14
Brisbane	73	0	5	2	7	2	11	2	0	15	65	-8
Canberra	19	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	18	-1
Hobart	19	0	1	4	5	2	1	1	0	4	20	1
Launceston	26	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	4	22	-4
Melbourne	160	1	11	6	18	5	19	5	2	31	147	-13
Newcastle	15	0	3	0	3	1	1	2	0	4	14	-1
Perth	141	0	17	3	20	5	11	1	3	20	141	0
Sunshine Coast	79	0	12	0	12	12	8	1	2	23	68	-11
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>-59</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>-3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>-62</b>

## National Calendar of Events...



Springbrook Centre, 2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook QLD  
 Thurs 23 April – Wednesday 29 April 2015  
**2015 SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY**  
**For Members Only**  
**Theme: Exploring Buddhist Wisdom - Philosophy and Practice**



A definite connection between Buddhism and the TS existed at the time of the Society's inception, although it in no way limited the Society's broad mandate, then or now. The inner Founders of the TS were Buddhists, as were its principal Founders H.P. Blavatsky and Col. H.S. Olcott. During this School we will explore together a little of this historical nexus, the principal schools of Buddhism, a number of outstanding philosophical Buddhist teachings, and ways in which some of these can be incorporated as daily practices. References will include some of the writings of Christmas Humphreys – prominent Theosophist, author of a number of works on Buddhism, founder of the London Buddhist Society and latterly a Judge at the Old Bailey.

### Presenters:

**Linda Oliveira** (National President), **Pedro Oliveira** (Education Coordinator),

**Rod Bucknell** (retired Assoc. Professor of Eastern Religions, University of Queensland, and former Buddhist monk) and **Phillipa Rooke** (State Representative, Queensland).

**Cost: \$250** (includes accommodation, all sessions, meals and \$10 non-refundable registration fee)

### 2015 ANNUAL CONVENTION

**Sat 24 Jan (arrivals) – Sat 31 Jan (departures)**

**Theme: 'Science, Society and Soul Wisdom'**

**Key Speakers: Associate Professor Victor Gostin**, earth scientist, and **Dr Olga Gostin**, anthropologist. Both are long-time TS members.

**Full programme:** See page 122.

**Registration Fee (non-refundable):** \$40 per person for day and live-in registrants

**Registration Forms:** At [www.austheos.org.au/what's on](http://www.austheos.org.au/what's%20on) and available from Lodges/Branches.

**Cost:** \$95 per night including all meals, as well as morning and afternoon teas

**Deadline for full payment, live-in registrants:** Monday 1 December, preferably sooner

**Further Enquiries:** Jennifer Hissey, Convention Secretary, TS National Headquarters  
 tel. 02 9264 7056 (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9.00 – 3.30pm)



**Registration forms for Springbrook and Canyonleigh events:** available from the National Headquarters (02 9264 7056) and at [www.austheos.org.au/what's on](http://www.austheos.org.au/what's%20on)  
 The next Canyonleigh event will be advertised in the March 2015 magazine.



# 2015 Convention Programme

Theme: 'Science, Society and Soul Wisdom'

24-31 January, St. Mark's College, Adelaide

## Sat 24 January

- 7.30pm Welcome, Introduction – Key Speakers, Workshops  
Greetings to the Convention  
Reception – Light Refreshments

## Sun 25 January

- 6.30am Qigong  
7.30am Morning Attunement  
9.15am Official Opening of Convention  
**ANNUAL CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING OF  
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA**  
Roll Call of Voting Delegates and Proxies  
Confirmation of Minutes of 2014 Convention Business Meeting  
National President's Report for the Year Ended 31 August 2014  
National Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 31 August 2014  
Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 31 August 2014,  
and Auditor's Report thereon  
Budget for the Year Ending 31 August 2015  
Appointment of Auditor  
Announcement of Newly Appointed Officers and National Council Members  
Announcement of Ballot Results:  
- New South Wales / A.C.T., Victoria and Western Australia  
Announcement of Elected National President  
Notices of Motion  
Place and Time of Next Convention  
Resolutions of Goodwill  
Any Other Business  
**INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION SESSION**  
2.00pm The Theosophical Order of Service  
'Adventures in Service - TOS National Council': Travis James, Carolyn Harrod and Jean Carroll  
4.00pm 'Human Impacts on Planet Earth: the Anthropocene Period'  
**PUBLIC TALK - KEY SPEAKER: Dr Victor Gostin**  
7.30pm New DVD: The Science and Clinical Applications of Meditation

## Mon 26 January

- 6.30am Qigong  
7.30am Morning Attunement  
9.15am Short Talks:  
'The Good Life: Dream or Reality?' - Linda Oliveira  
'A Synthesis of Science, Religion and Spirituality' - Dr David Allan



- 11.00am 'What was it all About? Reflections on Anthropological Fieldwork amongst the Kuni of Papua'  
KEY SPEAKER: Dr Olga Gostin
- 4.00pm Workshops  
Shirley Ingham: 'Science, Society and Soul Wisdom: How do I balance my self with my Self?'  
Edward Sinclair: 'The Wisdom of the Ages and Patanjali Yoga Sutras'  
Dianne Kynaston: 'The Ancient Wisdom and Science Fiction'
- 7.30pm 'A Pictorial Journey through the Manifested Universe'- Kevin Davey

### Tues 27 January

- 6.30am Qigong  
7.30am Attunement  
9.15am 'From Determinism to Infinite Potential with Still a Long Way to Go'- Dr Dara Tatraj  
11.00am China - Old and New: pictures, Tad Philips  
4.00pm 'Reincarnation: a Review of the Scientific Evidence'  
Dr Brian Harding  
7.30pm 'Science, Wisdom and Compassion: the Dalai Lama Speaks'  
- slide show, Pedro Oliveira

### Wed 28 January

- 7.30am Attunement  
OUTING AND PICNIC LUNCH  
7.30pm 'Vox Angelica'- Emma Horwood, acclaimed harpist and soprano

### Thurs 29 January

- 6.30am Qigong  
7.30am Attunement  
9.15am 'Menticulture: a Key to Understanding Aboriginal Spirituality'  
KEY SPEAKER: Dr Olga Gostin  
11.00am Q and A  
Harry Bayens, Jean Carroll, Nancy Inkster and Ilze Gorell  
2.00pm The Theosophical Order of Service: AGM  
4.00pm Workshops  
Lynette Muller: 'Platonism and Neoplatonism'  
Georgina Fode: 'Creating Mandala Art'  
Marlene Bell: 'Theosophy and the TS: A Fresh Look at *The Key to Theosophy*'  
7.30pm 'Nurturing the Soul in a Fast Society: a Conversation'  
Pedro Oliveira (moderator) with Beverley Champion, Pamela Peterson and Carolyn Harrod

### Fri 30 January

- 6.30am Qigong  
7.30am Attunement  
9.15am Short Talks  
Phillipa Rooke - 'Shiftings Towards the Flowering of Unity'  
Tad Philips - 'Ancient Wisdom and Modern Social Sciences'  
11.00am 'Lost Continents in Human History: Cyclic Patterns and Catastrophic Events'  
KEY SPEAKER: Dr Victor Gostin  
4.00pm Perspectives on the Convention  
Invitation to 2016 Convention, Perth  
Closing of Convention (National President)  
7.30pm 'Shanti Sound Collective' – traditional culture meets contemporary musical styles

### Sat 31 January Departures

## Results – Election of National President

As announced in the March 2014 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*, and in accordance with Rule 20(2) of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia, the National Secretary called for nominations for the office of National President. One valid nomination was received by 25 July 2014.

As there was only one nomination I did not call an election, but instead sent out voting slips affording each eligible member the opportunity to register a vote for or against the candidate. Deadline for receipt of those voting papers having passed on 26 September, the votes were duly counted by the Treasurer and the Membership Secretary. The results were as follows: of the 736 members eligible to vote, 316 were in favour; 7 against.

I therefore declare that **Linda Oliveira** has been re-elected National President for a term of three years, commencing at the Convention Business Meeting to be held in Adelaide in January 2015, in accordance with Rule 20(2).

Dara Tatray, National Secretary

## Results – Election of State Representatives

As announced in the June 2014 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*, nominations were called for one State Representative for each of the Electoral States of New South Wales/ACT, Victoria and Western Australia.

As there was only one candidate for each of the Electoral States of New South Wales/ACT, Victoria and Western Australia, the following were re-elected unopposed:

**New South Wales/ACT – Dianne Kynaston**

**Victoria – Kari Torgersen**

**Western Australia – Franco Guazzelli**

The term of office for the State Representatives is for a period of two years from the date of declaration of these election results. The State Representatives will represent the Lodges (Branches), Groups and Members in the State in all meetings and affairs of the National Council. They shall also liaise with all Lodges (Branches), Groups and National Members in their Electoral State and shall represent their views to the National Council and to the National Society Officers, as appropriate. As well, they shall receive and deal with representations from individual Members within their Electoral State, and shall refer the representations where requested or deemed necessary.

## Theosophical Order of Service



Annie Besant founded the TOS in 1908 with the goal of promoting an opportunity to express the first Object of the Theosophical Society, ‘to form a nucleus of The Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, cast or colour’, and to make Theosophy practical.

The practical side of Theosophy may be expressed as action, the action of service. Service evolves as culture evolves. Today in this technological age many of our members play a part in service without leaving their homes, by participating in social activism on the Internet. Service can be physical, or service may be in the finer upper realms. Being aware of our thoughts, not giving negative thoughts energy, may also be considered as service. Fear abounds currently in our culture and it is important for us to be aware of staying positive given the extent to which we are bombarded by memes, slogans and catch phrases. These evoke gut reaction rather than deep-seated reflection from the heart and mind. This action of reflection is also service to the greater good of our communities.


At our Annual General Meeting held in Sydney this year, members approved a motion to endeavour to make stronger links with the Theosophical Society at their local level and to also reach out into their local communities. I

am pleased to report that this is happening. Almost all of our groups have presented talks this year at TS public meetings as part of this initiative. The TOS thanks the various TS committees for this inclusion. Individuals continue to reach out into many different community based groups, both near and far.

These photos show how the TOS reaches out both here and abroad – Kaz Shakespeare is seen at a meeting this year in Siem Reap with young executives from Free to Shine Cambodia, being one of the charities that the TOS Sunshine Coast supports. The second photograph is of Anne Bowers, Perth TOS Treasurer (left), and Rhonda Phillips, Perth TOS Chairperson (right), after being presented with a gift as a thank you at the Pakistan Independence Day celebrations in Perth earlier this year. Thank you all, coordinators and supporters, for your inspiring efforts

If you are interested in compassionate action to help those less fortunate than yourself, please check the TOS at any of the following web addresses:

TOS Australia - [www.australia.theoservice.org](http://www.australia.theoservice.org)  
Our nine groups are listed on this site.

 [www.facebook.com/tos.oz](http://www.facebook.com/tos.oz)

National Coordinator Jean Carroll  
– [tos.australia@gmail.com](mailto:tos.australia@gmail.com).

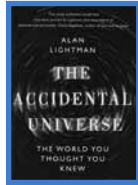


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## Reviews

***The Accidental Universe: the World You Thought You Knew*, Alan Lightman, Constable & Robinson, London, 2014**



Developments in cosmology now suggest that our universe is only one of an infinity of universes, popularly called ‘the multiverse’. This also may explain why our universe is ‘just right’ for us to inhabit – what Paul Davies called ‘the Goldilocks enigma’. The only other common suggestion is that our universe was made by an Intelligent Designer, *a deus ex machina*, as we find, for example, in Christian theism. (There is a need here for Theosophists to shout louder, I think.)

The subject of the multiverse is discussed in the first chapter of Alan Lightman’s book, *The Accidental Universe: the World You Thought You Knew*. This book is actually a collection of essays by Lightman, a theoretical physicist and writer, who has worked at Harvard University and MIT (Boston, USA).

These essays, which appeared over a couple of years in various US magazines, deal not just with modern discoveries such as the Higgs boson, but also their emotional and social impact on our society, including the ongoing arguments between science and religion.

Subjects covered, in addition to the multiverse, include the impermanence of things, the spiritual universe, the importance of symmetry and law in science, and the impact on our society and relationships of modern technology. Lightman’s discussion under the title ‘The Spiritual Universe’ will be of particular interest. His quotation from Owen Gingerich, Professor Emeritus at Harvard, took my attention. Gingerich says, ‘I believe that our physical universe is somehow wrapped within a broader and deeper spiritual universe ...’.

Lightman himself claims to be an atheist but he tells of a personal experience that may cause a

degree of doubt about that, unless he is using ‘atheist’ in its strict meaning of ‘non-theist’. He further writes, ‘I am impatient with people who, like Richard Dawkins, try to disprove the existence of God with scientific arguments. Science can never prove or disprove the existence of God ...’. And logically, he says ‘falsifying the arguments put forward to support a proposition does not falsify the proposition’.

There is very little in the way of technical material in the book which is written in an easy-going, readable style. This makes it accessible to complete non-scientists (and doubtless also it will offend purists!). I found this book in part useful revision and in part a source of thought-provoking ideas and suggestions.

***A Little History of Science* William Bynum, Yale University Press, 2013**



If you want a once-over-lightly history of science, this is the book for you. William Bynum, Emeritus Professor of the History of Medicine, University College, London, begins with the Babylonians and ends with the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, Geneva, all in 250 pages.

Bynum is a good story-teller, adding little snippets of personal information that make this book fun. Did you know, for example, that Paracelsus ‘was always badly dressed’ and ‘liked to drink in bars or pubs with ordinary ... people’. Or that Napoleonic scientist Pierre Simon Laplace (1749-1827) described a version of what we now call the Big Bang? Or that Charles Darwin was a failure at medicine because he couldn’t watch an operation – a bit like Doc Martin? Or that one of the pioneer cell biologists also helped to excavate Homer’s Troy?

I haven’t space to go on. As the fly leaf says, ‘with delightful illustrations and a warm, accessible style, this is a volume for young and old.’

both reviews by Dr Brian Harding



## News & Notes

### Appointment of National Lecturers

The following members have been appointed by the National Council as National Lecturers of the Australian Section in 2015:

Barry Bowden  
Dr Brian Harding  
Dianne Kynaston  
Simon O'Rourke  
Dr Dara Tatray

If Lodges, Branches or Certified Groups are interested in any particular speakers please contact the National President, who arranges the National Speakers' schedule directly. Requests will be fitted in where possible, taking into account the spread of speakers around the Section.

### National Headquarters – New Address

A reminder that the September issue included explanatory information about the impending move of the National Headquarters, which is scheduled to take place in November after almost thirty years in our current location. That issue can also be read online at:  
<http://www.austheos.org.au/articles>

**Please note that our new address as from mid-November will be:**

**Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street  
Surry Hills  
NSW 2010**

### Theosophy in Australia – Changes

This is the last issue of *Theosophy in Australia* in this size and format, signalling the end of another era, as well as the beginning of a new one. As from March next year readers will become familiar with the new, handy sized smaller format magazine. From 2015 onwards, as advised in the March 2014 issue (p.31), receipt by members of a hard copy of the magazine will become optional.

### 2014 Financial Statements

Due to the impending move of the National Headquarters, we regret that it will not be

possible to post the annual accounts of the Section with this magazine as usual. They will be posted as soon as possible to all members.

### Electronic Media

Members not already receiving the e-Bulletin from the National Headquarters (about six issues per year) are welcome to have their email addresses added to our distribution list. Please email Gil Murdoch at the National Headquarters: [web@austheos.org.au](mailto:web@austheos.org.au)

Also, the national Facebook page is steadily growing in usage and is updated regularly. You do not have to be a member of Facebook to view it at: <https://www.facebook.com/austheos>

### Theosophy-Science Group

A recent event held at the Springbrook Centre by the Theosophy-Science Group had the theme 'Mind Over Matter' and was very successful. Speakers brought different specialties to the gathering and some of the sessions were:

Prof. Richard Silberstein – 'The Nexus between Bioelectric Fields and Past Life Memories'  
Victor MacGill – 'Mind through Matter: Focussing on Embodied Cognition'  
Dr Olga Gostin – 'Menticulture: a Key to Understanding Aboriginal Cultures'  
Assoc. Prof. Victor Gostin – 'Noosphere: the Reality of a Mental World'  
Kevin Davey – 'The Proem and Modern Cosmology – an Opportunity to Stretch the Mind'

Surplus funds from the symposium were subsequently donated to the Theosophical Order of Service.

Members who are interested in connecting with the Theosophy-Science group can contact Victor Gostin at: [victor.gostin@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:victor.gostin@adelaide.edu.au)

Groups are currently active in Brisbane and Adelaide.

**The use of one gender to cover both genders is avoided as far as possible in this magazine. However, quotations from writings in which one gender is used in this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.**

## Section Directory

### Australian Section National Headquarters

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 0163 / 9264 6404  
Fax: 02 9264 5857  
www.austheos.org.au  
Campbell Theosophical Research Library:  
campbell@austheos.org.au

### Australian Capital Territory

*Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:*  
Postal Address: c/- 27 Reveley Crescent,  
Stirling ACT 2611  
Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent &  
Condamine Streets, Turner ACT 2612  
7.30pm 1st Monday of month  
(Please confirm by email or telephone)  
President: Peter Fokker  
Tel: 02 6236 3170  
Email: fokkerbakker@gmail.com  
Secretary: Tony Fearnside  
Telephone: 02 6288 7656  
Email: janton@netspeed.com.au

### New South Wales

*Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:*  
2nd & 3rd Floors, 484 Kent Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Telephone: 02 9267 6955 Fax: 02 9283 3772  
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au  
www.tssydney.org.au  
Meet: 2.00pm Wednesdays  
President: Simon O'Rourke  
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

*Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:*  
Meet: Charlestown Community Centre,  
Charlestown Square, 81/30 Pearson Street,  
Charlestown NSW 2290  
8.00pm 2nd Friday each month  
(excluding January)  
Study group (members) confirm dates  
with Lodge  
http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/  
President: Melanie Ball  
Secretary: Jill Genders

### Blue Mountains Group:

Meet: 1st Floor, 122 Katoomba Street,  
Katoomba NSW  
2.00pm 1st Monday each month  
Coordinator: Donald Fern  
Tel: 02 4757 1910

### Gosford Group:

Meet: The Neighbour Centre,  
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250  
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month  
Coordinator: Marianne Fraser

Tel: (02) 4339 7118, 0400 713 273  
E-mail: marifraser256@gmail.com  
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard  
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

### Northern Beaches Group:

Postal address: c/- The Manor,  
2 Iluka Road, Laitokanui NSW 2088  
Meet: c/ 22 Laitoki Road  
Terrey Hills  
NSW 2084  
8.00 pm 3rd Friday each month  
Coordinator: Dai Trandang  
Tel: 0438 357 522

### Queensland

#### *Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:*

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,  
Atherton QLD 4883  
Meet: Meeting Room, Community Services  
Tablelands, 38 Mabel St, Atherton  
2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.  
President: Max Brandenberger  
Secretary: Chris Pang Way  
Tel: 07 4091 5156

#### *Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:*

355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000  
Tel: 07 3839 1453  
Email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au  
www.theosophyqld.org.au  
Meet: 7.30pm Fridays  
President: Brian Harding  
Secretary: Phoebe Williams

#### *Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004*

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,  
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556  
7.00pm Thursdays  
President: Carmen French  
Tel: 07 5495 6980  
Email: carmen\_french@yahoo.com.au  
Secretary: Joyce Thompson

### Toowoomba Group:

Meet: 49 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba  
1st Wednesday at 7pm and 3rd Sunday at  
2:30pm each month  
(Meditation 1pm & Study Group at 1:30pm)  
Annual Springbrook Retreat each winter  
Coordinator: Barry Bowden  
Tel: 0427 751 464

### South Australia

#### *Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:*

310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000  
Tel: 08 8223 1129  
Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au  
http://www.austheos.org.au/adelaide  
Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday  
of every month. Please contact Lodge for  
additional meeting dates.  
President: Marlene Bell  
Secretary: Kevin Davey

### Tasmania

#### *Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:*

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000  
www.theosophicaltas.websytle.com.au

Meet: 8.00pm Mondays  
Acting President: Helen Steven  
Secretary: David Giffard  
Email: helen\_steven@live.com

#### *Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:*

54 Elizabeth Street, Launceston, TAS 7250  
Postal address: 66 Flinders Street,  
Beauty Point, TAS 7270  
email: rmholt@gmail.com  
www.austheos.org.au/launceston  
Meetings: Wednesdays commencing  
7.00 pm for meditation, followed  
by meeting at 7.30 pm  
President: James Deavin  
Secretary: Ruth Holt  
Tel: 0448 397 246

### Victoria

#### *Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:*

126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624  
email: meltheos@bigpond.net.au  
Meet: 2nd, 3rd and 4th Tuesdays, 6.00pm  
President: Kari Torgersen  
Secretary: Edward Sinclair

#### *Mornington Peninsula Group:*

Meet: Mt. Eliza Neighbourhood Centre,  
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday  
of the month 11am - 3.30pm  
(meditation - lunch - Theosophy)  
Coordinator: Daphne Standish  
Tel: 03 9589 5439  
www.austheos.org.au/centres/mpg

#### *Wodonga-Albury Group:*

Meet: Shop 6, Tower Place, High Street,  
Wodonga VIC 3690  
1st Tuesday each month  
Library hours Mon-Fri 10.00am-2.00pm  
Coordinator/Secretary: Denis Kovacs  
Tel: 02 6024 2905

### Western Australia

#### *Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:*

21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000  
Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104  
Email: tsperth@iinet.net.au  
http://tsperth.iinet.net.au  
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays  
President: Harry Bayens  
Acting Secretary: Anne Bower  
*Mount Helena Retreat Centre:*  
1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082  
All enquiries to Perth Branch  
Tel: 08 9328 8104

### Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre, Springbrook, Qld

2184 Springbrook Road,  
Springbrook QLD 4213  
Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211  
email: info@tsretreat.com.au  
Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

