

**THE THEOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY
IN CANBERRA**

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

THE GOULBURN BRADLEY GRANGE

On a visit to Goulburn recently we visited a collection of industrial buildings dating back to 1833: the Bradley Grange, which houses the oldest surviving brewery buildings, malhouses, mills and mews in Australia, as well as the oldest tobacco curing kilns and a cooperage where wooden vats to hold beer were made.

The complex was built for William Bradley (1800-1860) a first generation Australian entrepreneur who employed a British convict architect, Francis Howard Greenway, to plan and build it. By growing tobacco in the surrounding district, Bradley saved the sheep industry from ruin, using an extract made from tobacco leaves to cure sheep skin disease in the 1850's. Although I have no interest in either beer or tobacco I did become interested in this architect and his building.

Francis Howard Greenway had an extensive knowledge of Egyptian antiquity. This was inspired by Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and the investigations by the British after the departure of the French. The Egyptian pyramids exerted a long standing fascination for most and Greenway used the dimensions of the pyramids in many of his buildings, including the Bradley Grange, where he was able to use "slaves" as workers in the form of British convicts. Being an excellent architect and builder he was pardoned and continued to work privately as an architect in the colony¹.

In Egyptian pharaonic times linear measures were calculated according to physical features such as fingers, hands, palms, feet and agricultural produce such as barley corns. One important measuring unit was the cubit, divisible into palms of four fingers each. The earliest cubit, around 2,800 BC was divided into six palms of 24 fingers, later extended to become seven palms of 28 fingers. A distinction was afterwards made between a common-use cubit of 450 mm and a royal cubit of 525 mm plus many other variable lengths over time. When measured in fingers the Bradley Grange comes to a total of 80 fingers.

Reading further, I discovered that Egyptian measures also related to atomic, light and radiation dimensions and to ratios of music. It appears that the circumference of earth and star movement also influenced the understanding of measurements in antiquity. It is even claimed that the pyramids functioned as a music and/or energy producer for society at a certain period in the dim past.

The Theosophical Society in Canberra is not responsible for any statement in this newsletter. Views expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Society or the Editor.

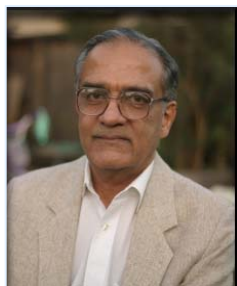
(Continued on page 3)

Notes for members and friends



2010 Convention

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Prof K Krishna
Monday 21 September

Parliament of the World's Religions

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Adyar Bookshop's new address

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The 2010 TS convention will be held from

Saturday 16 to 23 January 2010 at

Maritime College—Launceston
Tasmania.

**It's not too early to start planning for
the next convention**

On Monday 21 September Professor K Krishna will be talking to the Canberra Branch.

Do not miss this opportunity to hear and meet Professor Krishna who was the international speaker at the Perth Convention earlier this year. Currently in charge of the Krishnamurti Study Centre, Varanasi, India, he was previously a professor of Physics, Banaras Hindu University, specializing in Solid State Physics, his area of research and teaching being X-Ray Crystallography.

Parliament of the World's religions

MELBOURNE

3—9 December 2009

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions was created to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions in order to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

As from **Monday 15 June 2009** the address of **Adyar Bookshop** will be:

99 Bathurst Street
Sydney NSW 2000 (tel: 02 9267 8509)

If you are arriving by public transport, keep in mind that the new shop is even closer to Town Hall Station than the Clarence Street address.

(Continued from page 1)

An interesting observation was made that the Teutonic word *God* relates to the Egyptian word *Thoth*, which in turn is the regurgitating sound made by the ibis: a bird which lives in the Nile river marshes.

Ibis, Thoth, pyramids, ancient measurements, brewery buildings: certainly, everything is related.

Welcome to Canberra's 2009 winter times: that we may have some rain for our parched land.

Peter Fokker, President.

References:

Michael O'Halloran, *Remembering the "First time"*, Goulburn Brewery Publishers 2006 (O'Halloran is the host at Bradley Grange – two interesting websites are

<http://goulburnbrewery.servebeer.com/> and <http://francisgreenway.servebeer.com/>)

¹ State Library of NSW: Francis Howard Greenway had a promising career as an architect in the Bristol area until the firm went bankrupt. In March, 1812, Greenway was found guilty of the capital charge of forgery. His death sentence was commuted to 14 years' transportation to the colony of New South Wales. He arrived in Sydney in 1814, bringing with him letters of recommendation and his portfolio which he sent to Governor Macquarie. He was almost immediately granted a ticket of leave which enabled him to seek his own work.

As one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Alexandria lighthouse inspired Francis Greenway to design the Macquarie Lighthouse which is now used as the logo of Macquarie University.

Pronunciation of Devanāgarī देवनागरी

On Saturday 21 March our discussion group topic introduced us to the pronunciation of Devanāgarī, presented by Kaveri Chakrabarty and assisted by Tony Fearnside - both had put much energy and thought into the subject.

Devanāgarī is made up of two Sanskrit words, *deva* which means god or celestial, and *nāgarī* meaning city. It implies a script that is both religious as well as urbane or sophisticated and is used to write Hindi, Pali, Sanskrit, Nepali and other languages. Technically it falls into the abugida type of writing system which is based on consonants.

Kaveri, brought up learning the Devanāgarī script, introduced us to the intricacies of

pronunciation: velar, palatal, retroflex, dental and labial consonants; primary and secondary vowels. To consolidate what we had heard, we then saw our names in Devanāgarī on the whiteboard.

The two hours we spent on this fascinating and important topic initiated us into at least knowing how to pronounce Buddha (with no dental emphasis, the 'd' is lightly stressed and the 'h' aspirated ever so softly) and Chakra: 'ch' as in *Charlie*, but delicately and with the 'a' light as a feather (not pronounced *shakra* as we sometimes hear). The handout on pronunciation was a useful tool to take away from the learning session.

Back to Basics— Study group

If you have retired from work, or have Monday morning free, note that we have started a small study group focussing on *Basic Theosophy - The Living Wisdom* by Geoffrey Hodson. You will need a copy of the book which can be ordered from Adyar Bookshop tel: 02 9267 8509 (\$29.95 plus postage). The group will meet at **10.30 am on the third Monday of each month**. Venue—TBA - Phone Janice, Barbara or Birthe.

PERTH CONVENTION JANUARY 2009 - PEDRO OLIVEIRA – THE ADEPTS' DREAM

Towards the end of her life, HP Blavatsky wrote an article in which she expressed regret at having made known to the West the existence of the Adepts. The reason for her regret, which was very visible, was because during the first few decades of the existence of the TS the names and nature of the Masters had become distorted. Even during HPB's lifetime, for example, an organisation was formed in America, claiming to be in contact with the Adepts: this organisation, calling themselves the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, had no relationship whatsoever with the real Brotherhood of Luxor. She warned against such a kind of imposture.

The warnings continued, not only from HPB but from the Masters themselves. An example of this was in 1900 when Annie Besant received a precipitated letter after HPB's death. This letter – which is the last known letter to be written by a Master of the Wisdom and which is in a private archive at Adyar, instructs:

The cant about the "Masters" must be silently but firmly put down. Let the devotion and service be to that Supreme Spirit alone of which each one is a part. Namelessly and silently we work and the continual references to ourselves and the repetition of our names raises up a confused aura that hinders our work. The T.S. was meant to be the cornerstone of the future religions of humanity. To accomplish this object those who lead must leave aside their weak predilections for the forms and ceremonies of any particular creed and show themselves to be true Theosophists both in inner thought and outward observance. The greatest of your trials is yet to come.

The Mahatmas were not interested in any kind of propaganda. Their work is anonymous but since the foundation of the TS many groups and individuals have claimed loudly and vociferously to be in contact with the adepts; that they brought new messages from the Masters with extraordinary claims that the Masters have websites and email! There is no end to these claims. The whole idea of what an adept is has been banalised beyond redemption. And it would be a very sad day when the TS would reflect that kind of banalisation. The TS should be the last organisation that would try to portray the adepts as projections of an immature mind.

How do the Adepts see themselves? What or who is an adept? The word *adept* has been used differently in early theosophical literature. HPB said that Apollonius of Tyana was an adept. Does that mean that he was a Master of Wisdom? Not necessarily; as the word also connotes someone who is well versed in occult or esoteric science, not just theoretically, but as a way of life.

In the second letter to AP Sinnett, received in Simla, October 1880, Master KH makes references to the nature of an adept. (Letter No. 2 and No. 2 chronologically)

The adept is the rare efflorescence of a generation of enquirers; and to become one, he must obey the inward impulse of his soul irrespective of the prudential considerations of worldly science or sagacity.

We are now informed that an adept is one who enquires; but out of a whole generation of enquirers, one of those *may* be an adept. Why is that? Because inquiry can be biased. Science uses concepts like consciousness and is unable to say what that is in itself. Consciousness is highly complex because in its most basic expression it generates a sense of self and in its most elaborate expression it generates a concern for others. To become an adept, we must obey the inward impulse of the soul, irrespective of the considerations of worldly science and sagacity. The kind of enquiring that leads one to adeptship is not punctuated by self-imagery—concern of how others see us, or by what others think—unlike the enquiring done by scientists who live in fear of losing credit and funding etc.

In the following passage from the Letters, the Mahatma explains when he is an ordinary man and when he is an adept. (Letter 24B, 85B chronologically received mid September 1882)

An adept, the highest as the lowest, is only one during that exercise of his occult powers. Whenever these powers are needed, the sovereign will unlock the door to the inner man (the Adept) who can emerge and act freely – but on condition that his jailer (the outer man) will be either completely or partially paralysed as the case may be required.... No adept can be supposed to keep his will in constant tension and the inner man in full function, when there is no immediate necessity for it. When the inner man rests the adept becomes an ordinary man, limited to his physical senses and the functions of his physical brain. Habit sharpens the intuitions of the latter, yet is unable to make them supersensuous. The inner adept is ever ready, ever on the alert, and that suffices for our purposes. At moments of rest then, his faculties are at rest also.

References in literature indicate that the projection of psychic phenomena had to be authorised by the Chiefs of the Brotherhood, because the act of producing such phenomena requires a great deal of energy, which comes from Atma and Buddhi through Manas.

And an adept *knows* directly without mediation of any kind.

There comes a moment in the life of an adept, when the hardships he has passed through are a thousandfold rewarded. In order to acquire further knowledge, he has no more to go through a minute and slow process of investigation and comparison of various objects, but is accorded an instantaneous, implicit insight into every first truth. The adept sees and feels and lives in the very source of all fundamental truths - the Universal Spiritual Essence of Nature.
(Letter No. 31, Letter 17 chronologically)

Since they have inspired the foundation of the TS and the challenges of its work, what do they have to say about the work of the Society?

In a letter to a member of the London Lodge, in 1884, one of the adepts wrote:

*The pendulum has swung from the **extreme of blind faith** towards the **extreme of materialistic scepticism** and nothing can save it but Theosophy.*
(Here the Mahatma refers to the stream of inquiry of the Ancient Wisdom).

We have to consider here that for 11 centuries Europe, particularly, had been forcefully controlled by a dominant theology. By the 17th century there was a movement towards rationalism and an independent affirmation of science as a mode of knowledge. When the scientific mind was freed it would hardly regress, it would go to the other extreme – that of materialism and scepticism. The Society was formed to define a saner course for humanity: the study of the ancient wisdom.

How do the Masters try to inspire the Society? The 1900 Letter to Annie Besant advises:

The essence of the higher thoughts of the members in their collectivity must guide all action in the T.S. and E.S. We never try to subject to ourselves the will of another. At favourable times we let loose elevating influences which strike various persons in various ways. It is the collective aspect of many such thoughts that can give the correct note of action. We show no favours. The best corrective of error is an honest and open-minded examination of all facts subjective and objective. Misleading secrecy has given the death blow to numerous organizations.

A difference of opinion emerged between Sinnett, Hume and the Mahatmas. Sinnett and Hume wanted to be a kind of “phenomena club”. That was not the aim of the TS - the Society had to spread the fundamental principles of Ancient Wisdom. The question of motives was discussed. In terms of a theosophical way of life, the awareness of motives is essential because it is one way of purifying Manas and helps to untangle the mind from its dependence on desire.

Letter no. 2 (Letter 2 chronologically) received at Simla in October 1880 explains:

To our minds then, these motives, sincere and worthy of every serious consideration from the worldly standpoint, appear selfish. (You have to pardon me what you might view as crudeness of language, if your desire really is that which you profess— to learn truth and get instruction from us who belong to quite a different world from the one you move in.) They are selfish because you must be aware that the chief object of the T.S. is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow men; and the real value of this term "selfish," which may jar upon your ear, has a peculiar significance with us which it cannot have with you; therefore, and to begin with, you must not accept it otherwise, than in the former sense. Perhaps you will better appreciate our meaning when told that in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of desire for self benefit or a tendency to do injustice, even when these exist unconsciously to himself. Yet, you have ever discussed but to put down the idea of a universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the T.S. on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism. This, my respected and esteemed friend and Brother will never do!

The TS was not meant to be a college of occultists. It was meant to be a body of Brotherhood. As a final word of advice we may quote the following from the Mahatma Morya in Letter no. 38 (33 chronologically) received at Allahabad about February 1882.

I say then that it is the vilification and abuse of the founders, the general misconception of the aims and objects of the Society that paralyses its progress—nothing else. There's no want of definitiveness in these objects were they but properly explained. The members would have plenty to do were they to pursue reality with half the fervour they do mirage. I am sorry to find you comparing Theosophy to a painted house on the stage whereas in the hands of true philanthropists and theosophists it might become as strong as an impregnable fort. The situation is this: men who join the Society with the one selfish object of reaching power, making occult science their only or even chief aim may as well not join it. They are doomed to disappointment as much as those who commit the mistake of letting them believe that the Society is nothing else. It is just because they preach too much "the Brothers " and too little if at all "Brotherhood" that they fail. How many times had we to repeat, that he who joins the Society with the sole object of coming in contact with us and if not of acquiring at least of assuring himself of the reality of such powers and of our objective existence—was pursuing a mirage? I say again then. It is he alone who has the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical Brotherhood who is entitled to the possession of our secrets. He alone, such a man—will never misuse his powers, as there will be no fear that he should turn them to selfish ends. A man who places not the good of mankind above his own good is not worthy of becoming our chela; he is not worthy of becoming higher in knowledge than his neighbour.

Universal brotherhood is the only solution for universal morality. The last paragraph of Letter No. 4 (No. 5 chronologically) apparently received 5th November 1880 places emphasis on having us understand the seriousness of brotherhood.

The term "Universal Brotherhood" is no idle phrase. Humanity in the mass has a paramount claim upon us, as I try to explain in my letter to Mr. Hume, which you had better ask the loan of. It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind and it is the aspiration of the true adept.

AUDIO CDs OF TALKS PRESENTED AT THE 2009 CONVENTION IN PERTH

See Librarian, Henny Fokker, if you wish to borrow any of the following audio CDs which were recorded during the Convention

With the nature of consciousness in Mind	Dara Tatray
Krishnamurti and Theosophy	Dara Tatray and Professor P Krishna
The scientific and religious quest for truth	Professor P Krishna
Right education for the 21st Century	Professor P Krishna
A true Olympic Spirit	Linda Oliveira
An interview with Noël Duzevich	Interviewed by Linda Oliveira
The Adepts' Dream	Pedro Oliveira
How can theosophy transform the mind	Denise Frost and Ruth Holt
The Role of Service in Transformation	Georgina Fode; George Wester; Harry Bayens
What is theosophical education?	Hana O'Rourke; Anna Robb; Brian Wood
Working dynamically with TS groups	Paul Robb and Betty McAllister

**Canberra Branch website has been revamped by webmaster Gil Murdoch
—check it out at <http://www.austheos.org.au/canberra/>**

THE EPIPHANY OF THE EUCHARIST - BY REV DR GREG CONNOLLY
(abridgement of the talk given to Canberra TS on 2 February 2009)

In the Church's calendar we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany on 6 January each year, in commemoration of the visit to the infant Jesus by the three magi. Apart from this meaning of 'epiphany', other definitions include "appearance, revelation or manifestation of a divine being" and "a perception of some essential truth".

The alternative epiphany is the proclaimed discovery around 1910 by Charles Leadbeater of the psychic power generated in the celebration of the Eucharist: the Holy Eucharist, or the Mass, as practised in Roman Catholic, Liberal Catholic, High Anglican and various other denominations of Christianity.

While the Eucharist refers to the whole of the ceremony of the Mass, here we will focus on the Consecration, where bread and wine are symbolically converted by a priest, assisted by altar servers, the congregation, angels and other non-physical beings, into the body and blood of the Christ.

Charles Leadbeater first encountered the psychic power of the Eucharist in Taormina, Sicily, as described in his book "*The Sacraments*":

I used to go for long walks into the back country when I was just at the beginning of the study of these things, and I especially noticed the wave of peace that came from the church in a distant village. It was some time before I connected it with the celebration of the Mass.

When I was miles away, I could feel this powerful influence strike me like a wave of the sea and at first I did not know what it was. But I encountered it a good many times and it was that which led me to attend the church and to investigate further.

I found that every celebration of the Holy Eucharist not only strengthens those who take part in it, but also floods the entire neighbourhood with spiritual power and blessing. To what extent this blessing is assimilated by the souls upon whom it falls depends upon their attitude and their degree of development, but assuredly it must produce some effect, even upon the most careless.

Further describing his clairvoyant investigations of Catholic Masses in Sicily, Leadbeater states that during one such mass:

At the moment of consecration the Host glowed with the most dazzling brightness; it became in fact a veritable sun to the eye of the clairvoyant and as the priest lifted it above the heads of the people I noticed that two varieties of spiritual force poured forth from it, which might perhaps be taken as roughly corresponding to the light of the sun and the streamers of his corona. The first...rayed out impartially in all directions on the people in the church; indeed, it penetrated the walls of the church as though they were not there, and influenced a considerable section of the surrounding country.

...The second force was called into activity only in response to a strong feeling of devotion on the part of an individual. At the elevation of the Host all members of the congregation duly prostrated themselves — some apparently as a mere matter of habit, but some also with a strong upwelling of deep devotional feeling.

I found that at every celebration the same results were produced, and the two forces which I have tried to describe were always in evidence — the first apparently without any appreciable variation, but the display of the second depending on the number of really devotional people who formed part of the congregation.

According to Leadbeater, at the Consecration, a single line of communication reaches up to the Lord Christ and through Him to the other divine aspect of Himself which is the Very God of Very God. The power of the Lord Christ transforms the bread and wine and water spiritually, even though they remain unchanged physically. Quoting Leadbeater, these substances become “*a far fuller and closer epiphany of God*”.

Here, one of the leading theosophists of the early 20th century is using this second meaning of the word, ‘epiphany’, in connection with the Holy Eucharist.

Assistance of the Angels

A number of angels, according to Leadbeater, assists during the Eucharist. The Angel of the Eucharist is invoked to direct the divine forces during the mass. The Angels of the Incense and of the Music assist with these parts of the sacrament and the Angel of the Presence assists during the consecration during which other angels are attracted to join in the celebration and bathe in the light radiating from the consecrated Host.

The Flesh and the Blood of the Christ

The Rev Geoffrey Hodson, a prominent Liberal Catholic and Theosophist from New Zealand (1886 to 1983) also made some pertinent points about the esoteric happenings in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

One of the difficulties of understanding the symbolism of the bread and wine being linked with the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ are the words of Jesus – that unless we eat his flesh and drink and drink his blood, we have no life within us, but if we do, we have eternal life. In Volume 1 of *The Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible*, Hodson pointed out that Jesus was talking metaphorically and did not mean these words literally. He wrote that:

...the flesh of Christ represents spiritual knowledge. When the human intellect has absorbed and become illumed by divine truth and is inspired by interior revelation, this experience is symbolically described as the eating of the flesh of the Deity. The blood of God, or Christ, is the ever-outpoured Divine Life by which the universe is sustained, without which it cannot live.

He expanded on the theme by saying that the flesh of a divine being represents spiritual truth and law, stating that, “Eating such flesh implies intellectual absorption, full comprehension of eternal verities.” He went on to state that when someone becomes spiritually illumed, and becomes aware of, and consciously identifies himself or herself with the universal life in all beings, that person can be said symbolically to drink of the blood of Christ. To quote Hodson “*Drinking such blood implies conscious absorption in the one life of the universe and the realization of unity with its source.*”

According to Hodson, the attainment of these two acts, the eating of the flesh of Christ in the form of the gaining of spiritual knowledge and the drinking of the blood of Christ in the form of identifying with universal life, lead to the realization of immortality, otherwise known as the entry to eternal life.

In St John's Gospel, Jesus is reported as saying, "*My flesh is true food and my blood is true drink*".

In order to understand both Hodson's interpretation and the quote from St John, it is important to know the view of the Gnostics and others: that what happens on the spiritual level is reality but what happens on the physical level is an illusion, or is at least less real than the spiritual developments that underpin the physical happenings that we observe.

The Eucharist as a Work of Transformation

A Liberal Catholic view of the Eucharist, with theosophical underpinnings, is that it is a dual work of transformation – we ascend towards the divine in the first part of the Eucharist, and divine power is poured down on us in the second part of the Eucharist.

Traditional View of the Eucharist

In comparison, the psychic power of the Eucharist is not emphasized in the same way in the traditional Roman Catholic view of the Eucharist. Herbert McCabe, author of *A New Catechism of Christian Doctrine* is unclear in describing how Jesus is really present in the Eucharist, writing:

Christ is present in the Eucharist in the hearts of those celebrating through grace, in the word of God that is proclaimed and preached, and sacramentally, as priest in the actions of his minister and as the food and drink that we share.

The Eucharist and God within Us

Another spiritual purpose of the Holy Eucharist is that by symbolically taking an aspect of God inside ourselves, we are reminded that God is not just an external being totally separate from ourselves, but rather that we have an aspect of the divine within ourselves. This is described, by the Rosicrucians and many others, as the divine spark. This aspect of divinity within ourselves can be nourished, by the Holy Eucharist, but also by other religious rituals and spiritual practices.

With the coming of Jesus Christ and the New Testament, our understanding of God evolved from an external being to a godhead that is in intimate union with us. Jesus also showed how the Christ principle, otherwise known as the cosmic Christ or the second aspect of the Logos or divine Word, could completely infuse a human being so that person was fully human and fully divine.

This spiritual evolution of our concept of God as being part of us was continued by St Paul when he wrote: "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*". In other words, the aspect of God represented by the Cosmic Christ that is inside believers is the hope of glory, not only when we physically die but also in terms of attaining enlightenment while still alive.

Conclusions

The Holy Eucharist, or the Mass, serves a number of purposes, both on the readily observable level and on the esoteric level. On the readily observable level, it allows participants to gather together as a community of believers and come closer to the divine presence while celebrating a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ.

On the less readily observable level, it signifies to us that an aspect of the divine is inside us and that God is not wholly external to ourselves. When we think of ourselves as a temple of God, this should have an influence for the better on our actions and the way that we treat our neighbours.

On the esoteric level, the clairvoyant investigations and other analyses of Charles Leadbeater, Geoffrey Hodson and others have shown that there is an extra dimension of significance to the Holy Eucharist. There is a psychic power generated during the Eucharist, especially at the consecration. There are angels and other unseen helpers at the Eucharist. The flesh and blood of Christ have a subtly different meaning of spiritual knowledge and the outpouring of universal life than in the traditional view. Also, in addition to the traditional view of the purposes of the Eucharist, another important purpose is the outpouring of divine power to the world outside the church, especially the neighbourhood of the church.

Admittedly, there are other ways of achieving most of the things that occur during the Eucharist. For instance, many non-Christian mystics have realised that an aspect of the divine is deep within themselves. Another instance is that it is possible to remember the Last Supper through reading and meditating or contemplating the appropriate passages of the gospels or sharing an agape meal with other believers.

The Holy Eucharist is an efficient and effective way to achieve a variety of spiritual purposes, not only for those present at the sacrament, but also for the neighbourhood and the wider world, especially those for whom we pray during the service.

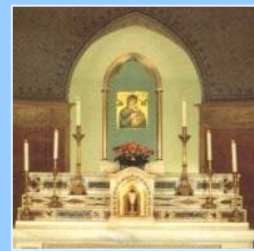
MORE ON THESE GREAT WA THEOSOPHICAL WOMEN

In newsletter 51, page 7 we mentioned how Florence Fuller had been a member of the TS in Perth before going to spend some time working in Adyar. Are Canberrans aware that the recently inaugurated National Portrait Gallery has one of Florence's portraits on display? Executed in circa 1905 the portrait of a very young Deborah Vernon Hackett is in delicate green/grey oils. I could find no evidence that Mrs Hackett had any TS involvement, but she was tremendously influential in charity work both in WA and Adelaide where she later lived. The painting shows the great talent of

Florence Fuller as a portrait artist. To view the portrait, at the site <http://www.portrait.gov.au/site/collection.php> in the *search field* key in Hackett or better still, pay a visit to the Gallery.

Also currently on display at the NPG is a small black and white photograph of **Vida Goldstein** and others at the Great Suffragette Demonstration in London. The photograph [ca. 1890-ca. 1900] is on albumen silver stereograph and on loan from the State Library of Victoria.

TS WORLD CONGRESS - ROME, ITALY FROM 10 TO 15 JULY 2010



When you visit Rome for the TS World Congress **from 10 to 15 July 2010**, remember that the Eternal City has many more treasures than the well known and well trod pilgrim and tourist paths.

Above: (1) the Church of San Clemente has an underground Mithraeum dedicated to Mithra; (2) the miraculous image of the Salus Populi Romani, perhaps the best loved Marian icon in Italy, in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore; (3) the Church of Santa Prassede with its magnificent mosaics; (4) the Santuario della Madonna del Perpetuo Soccorso in the Church of Sant Alfonso—these four sites are within walking distance of each other.

LIBRARY NEWS
THE OBJECTIVE OF THE LIBRARY IS TO SUPPORT THEOSOPHICAL STUDIES

The library is open to borrowers before Monday night meetings and librarian Henny Fokker is available to assist at other times. The Librarian's current list of choice features the topic of death.

A practical guide to death and dying - John White

WHLJ 1

Conquer fear and anxiety through a program of personal action. While there are many books that will tell you about experiences of other people dying, none really outlines ways to prepare you for your own demise, as this book does. The author, an internationally known researcher in consciousness, offers a practical program for personal action. Although the subject is death, this can become a book of good cheer for young and old, for the healthy and those who are terminally ill.

Our last adventure: A commonsense guide to death and after – E. Lester Smith SMI 1

Lester Smith was a scientist, horticulturist and lecturer and a long-time member of the Theosophical Society. He has written about 100 research papers in various scientific and medical journals. In this book he adds another dimension to his work – research into death and beyond.

The life after death and how Theosophy unveils it - C.W. Leadbeater LEA 23

As Annie Besant said of him: "Charles Leadbeater's name is known all the world over for his wonderful books, and the floods of light which he has cast over obscure questions. None has done more than he to lift the veil which men call Death."

What death really is: Questions we all ask - Gottfried de Purucker PUR 7

In this booklet we are presented with ideas surprisingly still not familiar to the average reader, yet they touch on the deepest issues of our lives. Who are we? What are we here for? Why do we die? Where do we go when we die? And then what? Questions we all ask!

Wings of death: The last poems of Rabindranath Tagore TAG 3

In 1937 Tagore passed through a serious illness, which opened for him a new understanding of man's relation to the universe. This volume contains poems selected from the work of those last years before his death in 1941, and it reiterates one triumphant theme – that in death there is nothing to fear, for the whole universe is life, shaped with a love over which death can have no power. The body's death is but a new birth of the spirit into the Great Unknown.

Through death to rebirth - James Scudday Perkins PER 1

What will be my situation immediately after death? Does my individual consciousness continue? Is immortality a myth? In this book, Perkins answers these and other questions concerning the pilgrimage of the soul through the cycles of death and rebirth.

Life after life: The investigation of a phenomenon – survival of bodily death – R.A. Moody MOO 1

In this fascinating book, Dr. Moody reveals his groundbreaking study of more than one hundred people who experienced "clinical death" – and were revived. Their amazing testimonies and surprising descriptions of "death" and "beyond" are so strikingly similar, so vivid and so overwhelmingly positive that they have changed the way we view life, death and the spiritual hereafter.

Reflections on Life after life - Raymond A. Moody MOO 2

Dr Moody has continued his research into near-death experiences since the publication of "Life after life". He has now interviewed hundreds more men and women who were close to death or actually pronounced dead. New elements not encountered in the previous case histories are recorded here for the first time.



The Theosophical Order of Service Representing theosophy in action on a daily basis.

The TOS was founded by Annie Besant in February 1908

NEWS FROM KENYA

We recently had news from Elizabeth Bryson, whom many members will know and remember from Canberra TS meetings. For the past few years, Elizabeth has been doing remarkable things in a remote up-country location in Kenya. Most of her work involves agro-forestry which brings in a lot of issues. One cannot underestimate the need for clean water and the wise re-use of existing water.



Waiting for the water hole to fill up – this can take days

In the past five months, Elizabeth has completed two water projects - connecting pipes to a water tank and sealing off a spring to prevent animals contaminating its small flow of water. She has often gone to this spring at 4.00am to stand in the queue as many people depend on this water. Leaving the queue means losing your place in line.

Since Elizabeth is the only person in the village with a vehicle she is often asked to assist with transporting villagers to hospital which is an hour's drive away. The only alternative is for them to do this journey on foot.

Bee-keeping has been introduced successfully to the village women who combined together and purchased the bee hive, with Elizabeth covering the gap in funds.



Boys repairing the road – Elizabeth provides food after their day's work

She is helping them establish a small home-based honey enterprise which will pollinate the trees and the passionfruit planted on the borders of her food garden. The passion fruit are growing well, and are often picked by the children - which is to be expected from hungry people. Villagers have now requested seedlings so they too can plant passionfruit. The original idea of planting the fruit came from seeing a certain amount of vitamin C deficiency in the local children, but it has become a success story in its own right; a great hope for this project would be for it to become a sustainable micro-industry for the villagers.

Certainly there are lighter moments. Having transported a sick woman to hospital, on her home-ward journey Elizabeth encountered what looked like a procession on the road and slowed down to avoid stirring up dust. Far from being a procession, it was several men carrying a bed on which lay a Mamma, having great difficulty giving birth – on the way to hospital. Elizabeth turned her vehicle around and took mother quickly into hospital care; she was told by the nurses two days later (when she returned with yet another patient) that mother and child were doing very well.

Although she is involved in many activities, Elizabeth's aim is to start some sustainable industry so the local people can fund their own infrastructure projects, as needed. They require funds to build roads and water tanks, amongst other things

SOME LOCAL NEWS

- Barbara recently held a garage sale and generously gave a donation of the sales to our Canberra TOS project.
- Are you interested in meeting once a month to discuss TOS issues? Contact Barbara, Birthe or me. The meeting will be held after the study group on the third Monday of the month—see page 3. Thank you everyone for your interest and kind assistance. *Janice*

**THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN CANBERRA
PROGRAMME**

<u>Saturday</u> 2.00pm	20 June	Janis Butt	The relevance of Numerology, Astrology and Hand Analysis in the 21st century
Monday	6 July	Swami Sridharanandaji	Ancient religious texts of India
<u>Saturday</u> 2.00pm	18 July	Discussion group	Theosophy in the Dutch East-Indies
Monday	3 August	Graham Crookham	The spiritual in abstract art
<u>Saturday</u> 2.00pm	22 August	Discussion group	Theosophical views on evolution
Monday	7 Sept	Brian Harding	The 3rd Tradition and Process Philosophy
Monday	21 Sept	Prof P Krishna international speaker	Topic TBA

Information on future talks will be in the next newsletter

Our public meetings are usually on the **first Monday of the month at 8.00pm** and discussion group meetings are usually on the **third Saturday at 2.00pm**.

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are at the **Friends Meeting House**, at the corner of Bent and Condamine Streets, Turner.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME, PLEASE BRING FRIENDS.

Gold coin donations are requested at our meetings

We rely on these donations to cover the cost of renting the Friends Meeting House for the evening and they are sincerely appreciated.

The Theosophical Society in Canberra, through the Australian Section, is part of the world-wide Theosophical Society which has its headquarters in India. The Australian Section publishes the quarterly *Theosophy in Australia*, arranges annual conventions, schools and retreats and facilitates a network of regional lodges and branches. Members of the Canberra Branch receive a newsletter, and have access to a library of over 1,000 books as well as audio cassettes and video tapes. The Canberra Branch arranges monthly public meetings, workshops, study groups, occasional activities for members and discounts at the Adyar Bookshop in Sydney.

Annual fees for the Theosophical Society in Canberra:

Single: \$50, **Couple:** \$90, **student/pensioner*:** \$40

Joining fee: \$5, **Associate member:** \$10, **Friends donation:** (suggested) \$20

Library: no charge for members; \$10 for non members (reimbursed on return of book).

* Number of concession card required: as per National Executive Committee minutes of July 2004