

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

PRANA

Volume 17, Issue 3
August 2004

Email: tsw@wgtn.theosophy.org.nz
<http://www.theosophy.org.nz/wgtn>

19 Marion St, Wellington
Ph. (04) 384-8741 (Hall)

The purpose of the Theosophical Society

Theosophists often question themselves and each other about the purpose of the Theosophical Society. The first object ranks high for many: to form a nucleus of people, without distinction, to create a more compassionate relationship between human beings. For the founders, and many today, the aim was 'a new society' – one based on values of altruism and selflessness.

There is much more to the question, particularly the spiritual element where the first object leads to the understanding that we are all aspects of the One reality.

Recently this question of the purpose of the society has been considered by participants in the TS NZ e-mail discussion group, sometimes called 'Livewires'.

The Hamilton Branch President, **Sonia Veelenturf** gave a view on the purpose of the TS through the concept of service and the branch role. Her comments are reproduced here, slightly abridged.

"The 'new society' has had its beginnings for a while, and we need to be mindful that the TS is not the only esoteric group working towards a selfless path for the good of humanity. I think we lose sight of the help that's around us. But relatively speaking, society does have a long way to go.

"The beginning of a change in consciousness brings about a new vision within the individual, and we do see others working for the same goals. We only have to attune to them, and we will see how many people are out there working for a better humanity.

"I think the 'work for the good of the world' the concept often quoted, is sometimes confused with physical getting out there and feeding the poor, type work in the world. Service for humanity is also about raising our own consciousness, it's daily presence in our thoughts, feelings, words, actions. It's being driven by our soul consciousness, not by our intellectual knowing that we must 'do good out there'. The two are not the same. Anyone who operates from a higher perspective, is part of the One reality. Many of our TS lodge members haven't grasped this concept, and run at the thought of 'doing' service.

"It is true that kinship is amiss. Many of our members want a smorgasbord, a supermarket approach to our weekly programme, and few come along to our core discussions, even fewer when we cover deeper topics. Perhaps they think they know it all, but lack the passion to share. This doesn't seem to fit.

"We've worked hard in the Hamilton lodge the last six months or so, to move away from the often misinterpreted 'freedom of thought smorgasbord/supermarket approach' to presenting a programme, and while numbers

- continued p 2.

The purpose of the Theosophical Society

– continued from front page

have been smaller, I feel our discussions have been richer. Because *that* is how we reach a common understanding. As we progress, our approach will be like a funnel, where we fall away from a broad smorgasbord of topics to a more directed vision. It is very difficult, particularly for small lodges, to provide a balanced two-fold approach. (i) The variety of topics for newer members, and (ii) the more directed and richer discussions for others

“I also think the further out in the world you are, the less attuned you may be to recognising it. It is not out there in the world - I believe you need to be attuned to it. A nucleus is very small anyway, and I suppose it's relative to the size of the organism (organisation), which is fairly small as well.”

Those views from Sonia Veelenturf followed thoughts from our national president, **John Vorstermans**: “Theosophy is essentially, in my opinion, not what is called the doctrine of the eye (an intellectual pursuit of knowledge) but rather the doctrine of the heart, a pursuit of the real meaning of the ‘wisdom of the ages’ through study, meditation and service.

“In this way we learn to listen to our own inner voice, awaken our intuition and we then begin to realise the true doctrine of the heart. Something no book, lecturer or guru can give you, although they can point to a way for you to come by it. (A way of life).”

John Vorsterman says, “Some people ask what is the use of the Theosophical Society and what does it do for me?” This is not the right question in his opinion. The question, he believes, is: “What can I do to bring about the objectives of the Society?”

Ninety Plus

Both **Isabel Ashforth** and **Nona Mathers** qualify as the “oldest member” of the Wellington TS Branch – as far as we know!

In our last newsletter we reported that Isabelle Ashforth reached the significant age of 90 years in May and was our oldest member. Shortly after publication a call came from Mrs Nona Mathers, of Levin, not to complain, just cheerfully advising that she could give Isabelle two years.

So at 92, Nona is our oldest member in age – and Isabelle is the oldest in length of membership. Her parents were members and Isabelle joined in 1935.

Nona joined in 1946 after her husband, the late Liberal Catholic Priest, Rev. Reg Mathers, introduced Nona to theosophy. She has been a member ever since.

It is a real pleasure to talk with these two ‘senior members’ – their experiences, knowledge, understanding and wisdom is broad. Both are still active with theosophy an integral part of their lives.

HALL EXTENSIONS COULD ASSIST TS ACTIVITIES

Major developments are being considered by the branch committee for the Theosophical Society Hall in Marion Street, Wellington.

Proposals are being investigated which would allow rented commercial space on the ground and first floor of an extended, high rise building. The object, as well as to provide new premises, is to assist financially and operationally, the society's activities.

The TS and the two partner organisations which also use the hall, would be accommodated along with the library on level three. Initial architect's sketches show the street frontage would maintain the existing hall's neo-Grecian look with its triangular roof line being replicated at the top of the high rise. Level two and above would be stepped back from the street. Using glass to maximise light and front balconies are also possible design elements.

The top five of the proposed seven floors would be sold as quality apartments with lift access from the south side. These and the retail and office space on the ground and first levels would help finance the development.

The committee is taking a cautious but positive approach to this proposal for the TS Hall. Professional advice is being sought and all members will be informed of progress. Any decision to proceed would require membership approval either at an AGM or a Special General Meeting.

The society holds in trust this valuable site in Marion Street. Your committee see these proposed extensions, using the site's allowable construction height, as an avenue to create opportunities for theosophy. It could benefit the TS not just in Wellington, but possibly throughout the country.

If the opportunities and financial returns are shown to be worthwhile and the plan approved, special legal safeguards would be put in place before construction began. The aim, as always, would be to further the objects of the Theosophical Society.

- Clive Conland, Wellington President

=====

The Annual General Meeting

of the Wellington Branch of the Theosophical Society

will be held in the TS Hall, 19 Marion Street,

at 7.30pm on Tuesday 19th October 2003.

This is your opportunity to come and hear how the branch has been going and what is ahead. All members are welcome and will have an opportunity to elect the committee for the coming year. Most of the committee has agreed to stand again with some changes of positions. Your ideas and views are welcome.

=====

FOR YOUR DIARY

Some of the regular 'like minded groups' operating in the TS Hall are worth remembering. For those of a devotional nature, Christianity with a theosophical approach is provided by **The Liberal Catholic Church**. Services are held on the first and third Sunday of each month at 10am.

The Thursday **yoga classes** at 7.30pm with long standing member Tania Dyett, help keep physical development in tune with mental and spiritual development. These are probably the best value in town at \$3 for TS members (\$5 non-members) per session.

Several people have been enjoying the relaxing resonance of the **Crystal Bowls** on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm. This sound and vibration healing is conducted by Barbara Hedges, whose phone is 04-478 0966. Maybe it is the winter weather but numbers at these hall activities have been low in recent times. Surely Spring and Summer are not far away.

Planning is well underway for another New Zealand **TS Section Convention in Hamilton**. Details will be posted in the magazine Theosophy in New Zealand for this gathering to be held from 7th to 12th January, 2005. It is hoped there will again be a TS Family Camp beforehand – contact Maureen Paterson, 183 Coatsville Riverhead Highway, RD 5, Albany, Auckland – tel (09) 426 7017

The weekly **lunchtime discussion** and fellowship is still held at the hall on Tuesdays from 12 noon to 2pm. It's time for informal exploration of views and subjects over lunch. And the library is open, too.

The Library with its influx of books from the Vladamir Loncar collection has expanded dramatically. The Librarian, Russell Graham and his dedicated group still need help with processing these books. If anyone has some time to assist, phone Russell on (04) 934 3525 or at the hall (04) 384 8741.



There is often discussion about TS members needing to be 'doing something to help others'. As you will know, there is a Theosophical Order of Service which has begun an active section in Auckland. Wellington TS member Tania Dyett is offering an outlet for such service here.

Anybody who has two or three hours to spend with an elderly person, she has asked to please get in touch with her - Tania Dyett. Ph.970-2666, e-mail: tdyett@paradise.net.nz



PROGRAMME

**Wellington Branch of the New Zealand Theosophical Society –
19 Marion Street, Wellington
Programme August to December 2004**

(Weekly sessions on Tuesdays at 7.30pm unless otherwise advised)

	SUBJECT/SUBJECT	DETAIL
AUGUST	Featuring Major Traditions	
Tuesday 3 rd	The Hindu Faith - Dr Pushpa Wood	A personal view from a Hindi Priestess
Tuesday 10 th	Islam – Raihana Ali	The faith & the experiences of a NZ follower
Tuesday 17 th	Judaism – Susan Bultitude	Exploring a personal journey
Tuesday 24 th	Revelations of Zoroastrianism - Charles Sitwell, TSNZ vice-Pres.	A Theosophical approach to this ancient religion – still practiced by the Parsee today.
Tuesday 31 st	Buddhism – one Tibetan mode	The first Woman Kadampa monk in NZ
SEPTEMBER		
Tuesday 7 th	Tim Parry	Annie Besant - Biography of her life
Tuesday 14 th	Clive Conland	Annie Besant - Group discussion on her teachings
Tuesday 21 st	TBA	
Tuesday 28 th	Gavin Laurie, national speaker	Universal Meaning of Symbols and Explanation of the TS Emblem
OCTOBER		
Friday 1 st	Dr Annie Besant's Birthday	
Tuesday 5 th	Video / Discussion	
Tuesday 12 th	Aroon Parshotham, Pres, Palm Nth	Theosophy as a Synthesis of Science, Philosophy and Wisdom
Tuesday 19 th	Annual General Meeting	Discussion, reports, election of officers
Tuesday 26 th	Susan Kirkham on Alice Bailey	Offshoots of the Theosophical Society, Part 1
NOVEMBER	Founders' Day 17th November	
Tuesday 2 nd	Bishop Ian Hooker, Sydney, The Liberal Catholic Church	Offshoots of the Theosophical Society, Part 2
Tuesday 9 th	Tim Parry on Krishnamurti.	Offshoots of the Theosophical Society, Part 3
Tuesday 16 th	Hugh Dixon, national speaker	Illusion – known in the East as Maya
Tuesday 23 rd	Vicky Hughes on Rudolf Steiner	Offshoots of the Theosophical Society, Part 4
Tuesday 30 th	End-of-Year Celebration & Christmas Party	
DECEMBER		
Tuesday 7 th	Readings and Discussion	
Tuesday 14 th	Readings and Discussion	

- Weekly lunch time discussion & fellowship at the hall on Tuesdays from 12 noon to 2pm.
- The Library is open before & after meetings on Tuesday nights & on Fridays from 6pm to 9pm.
- Yoga is conducted by Tania Dyett in the hall each Thursday from 6pm to 7.30pm
- Crystal Bowls – Sound and Vibration Healing – on the second Wednesday of each month, conducted by Barbara Hedges. Further information: Tel: 04-478 0966.