

A Free and Responsible Search

In this presentation, Anne will give an overview of Unitarian history and thought. She hopes to show how this free-thinking religious movement, while thoroughly grounded in and responsive to the Judaic and Christian traditions (the first Unitarian martyr was put to death in the 16th century), is now inclusive of Eastern as well as Western thought, and of individuals ranging from liberal theists to atheistic humanists.

Unitarians have no creed and no test of membership. Those who join a Unitarian congregation are not promised salvation or even happiness, only companions in the human journey. The Unitarian way appeals mainly to those who have found themselves questioning the religion of their upbringing (or their lack of religion) and yearning for a spiritual home which welcomes a non-authoritarian approach to the discovery of personal truth and meaning.

Anne is an ordained Unitarian Minister and currently serves the First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo, at 96 Dunbar Road South. She will be retiring from professional ministry on December 31st, so take this opportunity not only to learn about a small religious movement (only 5,200 members in Canada) but also to question the distinctively free Unitarian way! Anne presented this seminar to an audience of 22 at the University of Waterloo.

Spirituality in Caring

The current interest in spirituality has intensified the quest to incorporate spirituality in non-sectarian therapy. In his presentation, Peter will explore a variety of spiritual perspectives that have become prominent in the clinical practice of therapy and counselling. The presentation will focus on spirituality as an intrinsic human quality not predicated by religious dogma or restricted to any particular faith community.

The presentation derives from a recent book that Peter has published: *Spiritual Care and Therapy - Integrative Perspectives* (WLU Press, 2003). The book explores spiritual care, from religious traditions to essential psychotherapies in individual, couple, and family therapy. The approach celebrates diversity and describes flexibility in personal styles of helping and sharing care with others.

Dr. VanKatwyk is professor emeritus at the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Wilfrid Laurier University. He has, in the last 25 years, conducted a therapy practice and directed clinical education programs certified by the Canadian Association of Pastoral Practice and Education and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Dr. VanKatwyk presented this seminar to an audience of 16 at the University of Waterloo.

The Life of the Soul

Many Scientist believe that human emotions, consciousness, hope and will power are not located inside the brain. If they are in the mind, how are they related to the brain? What happens to the mind in the case of brain damage? How is soul connected to them? Is it the mind, soul or the brain, the seat of human personality? Does the mind or soul survive physical death? Are these ideas and beliefs scientific, religious or both? Why have people over thousands of years talked about soul and dream? Is there a benefit of dream? Tony will try to address all these questions in his presentation?

Tony T. Ahdifard is a professional counsellor for over 27 years. He has worked with Azaris, Persians, Chinese, Russians, Indians, South Americans and Canadians. He helps clients to connect to their own inner personal guide. He has a doctorate degree in counselling from Arizona, USA.

Tony presented this seminar at the University of Waterloo to an audience of 15.

A Taste of Life in an Indian Ashram (Monastery)

Shiv Talwar recently returned from India after staying two months in an Ashram in Rishikesh, the spiritual capital of India if not the entire world. There, he tasted a disciplined monastic life in the company of a real life guru. This life emphasizes inward orientation resulting in complete mindfulness in all life activities. Nothing should happen automatically, not even breathing and certainly no un-reflected reactions in personal relationships. Cultivating reflection mindfully leads to personal happiness and happy interpersonal relations.

Shiv learnt the real meaning of negative theology, a way of describing the ultimate in negative terms. The key lies in sub-rating one's current understanding of spiritual realities to a newer and better understanding gained in deep meditation. One must meditate with an open, detached and searching mind and validate every meditative experience before sub-rating the old understanding. Blind faith can prove to be a hindrance in this process and it may impede spiritual growth.

In this seminar, Shiv shares his experiences and his learning at the Ashram. Shiv presented this seminar at the University of Waterloo to an audience of 47.