

Sea of Faith Network 2014 Conference



Exploring Inner Space – Can Spirit, Soul and Free-will Survive the Scrutiny?

Friday 3 October to Sunday 5 October 2014

Tolcarne Residence, 12 Tolcarne Ave, Dunedin

The Programme

FRIDAY 3 October

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

Committee meets over lunch

2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

Registration. Tea and Coffee available

3:00 pm – 3:10 pm

Conference Opening

3:10 pm – 3:30 pm

Conference Introduction: What Goes On In Our Head? by Professor Lloyd Geering

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Keynote: Reuben Johnson. Can spirit, soul and free-will survive the scrutiny of a neuroscientist?

4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Core Group Discussion

5:30 pm – 6:00 pm

Happy (half) Hour

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

DINNER

7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

A.G.M.

SATURDAY 4 October

7:00 am – 8:00 am	BREAKFAST (and making own packed lunch)
8:30 am – 9:30 am	Keynote: Sandra Winton Psyche meets Soul
9:30 am – 10:30 am	Core Group
10:30 am – 11:00 am	MORNING TEA
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Keynote: Bernard Beckett Consistency's curse
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Core Group Discussion
1:00 pm – 1:45pm	PACKED LUNCH
1:45 pm – 5:00 pm	VISITS or IN-HOUSE ACTIVITIES (See visits and activities section for details)
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Afternoon Tea
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm	Happy Hour
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm	DINNER
8:00 pm – 9:15 pm	ENTERTAINMENT – Play: Rehearsed reading of FREUD'S LAST SESSION centers on legendary psychoanalyst Dr. Sigmund Freud, who invites a young, little-known professor, C.S. Lewis, to his home in London. Lewis, expecting to be called on the carpet for satirizing Freud in a recent book, soon realizes Freud has a much more significant agenda. On the day England enters World War II, Freud and Lewis clash on the existence of God, love, sex and the meaning of life – only two weeks before Freud's death.

SUNDAY 5 October

7:00 am – 8:00 am	BREAKFAST (and making own packed lunch)
8:30 am – 9:30 am	Keynote: Richard Egan Contemporary spirituality in health-care: a re-emerging issue
9:30 am – 10:30 am	Core Group Discussion
10:30 am – 11:00 am	MORNING TEA
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	PANEL DISCUSSION
12:30 pm – 1:00 pm	Conference Wind Up and Introduction to Conference 2015
1:00 pm	Packed LUNCH and DEPARTURE
1:30 pm	Steering Committee Meets

Note: copies of this program can be downloaded from sof.org.nz

EXPLORING INNER SPACE

Can spirit, soul and free-will survive the scrutiny?

All of the major paths of faith came to birth long before the revolutionary discoveries that comprise our contemporary world were made. Such discoveries proved to be disruptive and strongly challenging to earlier world-views as well as to the tenets of specific religious faiths. With the rise of psychology in the 19th and 20th centuries and of mind-body research (often called neuroscience) of today, the findings of such disciplines are proving to be at least as challenging as was Darwin's account of human development in the mid-19th century.

Just as Galileo's adoption, four centuries ago, of a sun-centred system clashed with the assumptions of theologians of the day and just as Darwin's account of human origins is still rejected by many religious systems, so today the consequences of discoveries in psychology, medicine and neuroscience present hurdles -- thought by some to be insurmountable -- to traditional notions of 'spirit', 'soul' and 'freewill'.

Does neuroscience explain away religious experience? What is really going on in our "inner space"? Where do our convictions and attitudes come from?

What must now be done? Some might ignore these development while others would reject some or all religious ideas and practices. Our speakers will address those who would draw on our new-found knowledge of what it is to be human and adapt current norms to embrace that new knowledge. In light of the revolution in psychology and neuroscience how might we find a spirituality for today?

These are some of the issues to be dealt with at this year's Conference.

The Papers and Guest Presenter

Conference Introduction: Sir Lloyd Geering

What goes on in our heads?

There is something inside our heads and/or hearts, that we have long referred to as our soul, spirit, mind or psyche. Is it independent of the body, as we once used to believe? Or is it essentially a part of our physical body, as our increasing knowledge of the brain now suggests? How does it function? What is its destiny? What answers, if any, can we derive from the Bible? These are some of the questions to be raised as we pursue our conference theme - Exploring Inner Space.

Keynote: Reuben Johnson

Title: "Can spirit, soul and free-will survive the scrutiny of a neuroscientist?"

Reuben will discuss what the study of brain structure and function has added to our understanding of the soul, spirituality and free will. Drawing on findings from neuroscientific studies of free will and spiritual experience Reuben will consider the implications in concert with major concepts in evolutionary biology.

Keynote: Sandra Winton

Psyche meets soul: a consideration of some of the ways in which psychological factors and religious belief interact in the individual.

We are used to thinking about the content of belief, how we might understand the divine, our life on earth, morality.... The title of this conference directs our minds to the person who believes, or not, who is seeking meaning, wanting to understand how to live. As a practicing psychotherapist, I am interested in what it is in the person, in their inner condition, that shapes the religious belief they may hold. What is the inner space into which faith sits? What internal and personal factors affect whether or not we believe, how we believe and what we believe?

Keynote: Bernard Beckett

Consistency's curse

As a great admirer of modern science, and as a passionate agnostic, I have always struggled to define a personal philosophy that might provide a grounding for our expanding understanding of the physical world, while underpinning my reluctance to commit to particular cultural mythologies. Although at first blush the two appear to lead easily into some form of naturalism, I've never been convinced by this approach. My talk will be an attempt to outline my current position, with regard to both the philosophy of science and those beliefs that sit necessarily beyond its influence. My tentative conclusion is one of what I shall call collective objectivism, and I will attempt to explore the relative merits and pitfalls of my evolving stance.

Keynote: Richard Egan

Contemporary spirituality in health-care: a re-emerging issue

Spirituality, while a contested concept, is increasingly being used in health-care policy, training and practice. But what does it mean? Why is it important? How is such care assessed and addressed? These and other questions will be considered in this presentation from principle, evidence and zeitgeist informed perspectives. A particular focus will be on recent New Zealand studies that have explored spirituality in end-of-life care, aged residential care, and renal care.

Panel Discussion: Noel Cheer

All of the available Keynote Speakers are brought together into an on-stage discussion chaired by Noel Cheer. Provision will be made for the audience to ask questions.

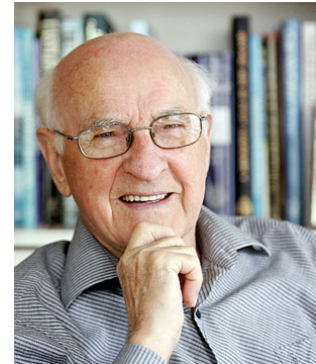
The Speakers and Panel Chairman

Sir Lloyd Geering

Sir Lloyd Geering, a Life Member of The Sea of Faith Network (NZ) is New Zealand's best-known and most controversial commentator on theological issues.

Lloyd held Chairs of Old Testament Studies at theological colleges in Brisbane and Dunedin before being appointed as the foundation Professor of Religious Studies at Victoria University and is best remembered by many New Zealanders for the high-profile 1967 trial in which he faced charges of heresy for his controversial statements.

Since his retirement in 1984 he has continued to write and lecture widely throughout New Zealand, and has presented 10 Keynote addresses at Sea of Faith Conferences. He is theologian-in-residence for The St Andrew's on the Terrace and until recently Principal Lecturer for the St Andrew's Trust for the Study of Religion and Society in Wellington and in this latter capacity he has presented more than 20 lectures series, which have been published as small books, and/or on audio media. He is the author of at least 10 books, including his autobiography, *Wrestling with God*, (2006) He was awarded an Honorary DD by the University of Otago in 1976 and a CBE in 1988; in 2001 he was named a Principal Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit and in 2007 he was admitted to the Order of New Zealand.



Reuben Johnsen



Reuben is an academic neurosurgeon trained in Glasgow, London, Cambridge, Oxford, Melbourne (Australia), and Vicenza (Italy). He attended Magdalen College in Oxford where he completed a DPhil in neurogenetics in the Department of Human Anatomy & Genetics. Reuben also has a dual qualification in law with a LLB from the University of London.

Reuben is the author of numerous peer-reviewed articles on neurosurgery. He is also the author and editor of four books in surgery including the best selling 'Landmark Papers in Neurosurgery' by Oxford University Press which he authored and co-edited with Alex Green from Oxford and which in 2013 was translated and published Chinese.

Reuben met his wife, Willow Sainsbury, when she was a New Zealand Rhodes Scholar at Magdalen College in Oxford. He recently moved with Willow and their children back to New Zealand and has taken up a position as Senior Lecturer in Neurosurgery at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

Sandra Winton

Sandra Winton is a registered psychotherapist working in private practice in Dunedin. She studied English Literature at the University of Otago where she gained an M.Litt, writing a thesis on the parson-poet, George Herbert. She served as Catholic chaplain at the university for some years. She studied theology at Knox College and at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. She is a Dominican sister. She is interested in the inter-relating of religious belief and psychological factors in clinical practice.



Bernard Beckett



Bernard Beckett has been a high school teacher for the last twenty five years. During that time he has taught Mathematics, Economics, English, Media Studies, Philosophy and Drama. He is the author of ten novels and a book of non-fiction, *Falling for Science*, which explored the relationship between science and story telling.

He lives in Porirua with his wife, Clare, and his four year old boys, Alexander and Sebastian.

Richard Egan

Dr Richard Egan is a lecturer in health promotion, based in the Cancer Society Social and Behavioral Research Unit, Department of Preventive & Social Medicine, Dunedin School of Medicine, University of Otago.

His background includes five years working as a health promoter in a Public Health Unit and five years secondary school teaching. Richard's Master's thesis examined spirituality in New Zealand state schools, his PhD thesis explored spirituality in end-of-life care and he has qualifications in Theology, English literature, Religious Studies, and Public Health.

Richard's academic interests centre on supportive care in cancer, health promotion and the place of spirituality in health and well-being. Richard is a past-president of the NZ Public Health Association and currently on the Board of the Health Promotion Forum.



Noel Cheer

Well known to all Sea of Faith members as the Newsletter Editor and to Conference participants as the Panel Chairperson, Noel has chaired the now traditional and celebrated Conference Closing Panels since 1997.

Early in his career Noel took an interest in public speaking which paved the way for his involvement in the spoken media. Since his retirement in 1997, Noel has hosted or chaired current affairs and political discussions on regional television in both Wellington and Auckland. Until late 2013 he hosted "In Conversation" on Auckland's Triangle Television where he recorded 289 episodes over 7 years. Noel has a wide general knowledge and an ongoing interest in the changes that take place in the expression of religion. His debating and television interviewing experience ensures that this panel will be both informative and highly entertaining.



Visits and Activities

Saturday Afternoon Events

Excursions

1) Orokonui Ecosanctuary www.oroikonui.org.nz

- Depart at 1:45pm
- Bus fare, entry and self-guided walk \$22
- **2) As above** with optional extra : Guided Tour \$12 – pay at site

3) Encounter history at the Toitū Otago Settlers Museum www.toituosm.com and adjacent Chinese garden www.dunedinchinesegarden.com

- Bus fare and entry to garden \$11
- All three venues have a café for afternoon tea.

4) Other

- We are still negotiating with potential workshop people and we will report on the outcome in the August Newsletter. Registration will take place at the Conference.
- Select this option if you do not want to take part, have a siesta or visit friends or relatives.
- Pamphlets for self-guided art and wine trails will be available in the Registration area.

Motels

The accommodation at Tolcarne is very comfortable with single and twin rooms available. If you do not have your own transport there are no motels very close and you would have an up hill walk to the conference venue.

There are several motels at the north end of George Street or Cumberland Street. Nearer ones include Alexis Motor Lodge, Allan Court Motel, Cable Court, Cumberland Motel and Farry's Motel.

Pacific Court Motel is within walking distance and situated on the same hill as Tolcarne. If you put accommodation Dunedin in Google several booking sites with information on the options will come up.

Travel Discount

The Steering Committee has been concerned at the large price differential between flights from the main centres to Dunedin and flights from smaller centres. As a small contribution towards redressing this imbalance, it decided to give those flying to Dunedin from centres other than Auckland, Wellington, or Christchurch a \$50 discount on the cost of Conference. To claim this on your registration form, subtract \$50 from your subtotal. If two of you are travelling, you can claim \$100.

Directions to the venue

Airport shuttle

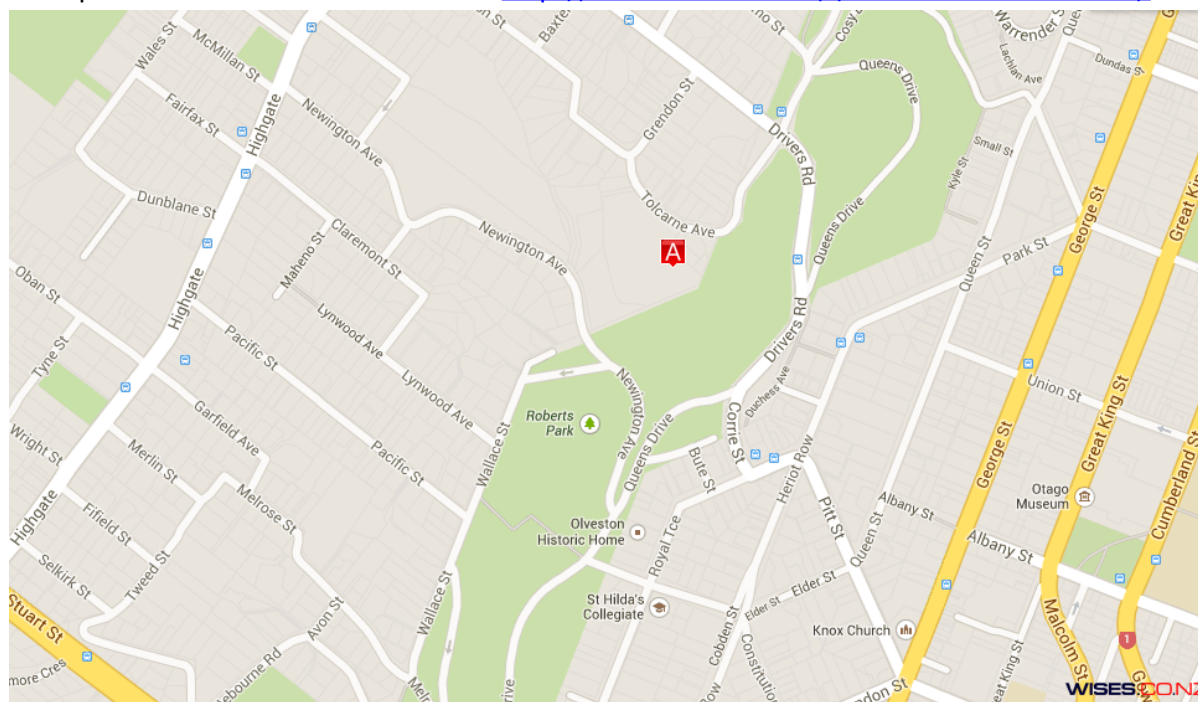
At the same time as you make your air bookings, google kiwishuttles.co.nz and book a shuttle to and from the conference, stating it is to the Sea of Faith conference.

Alternatively ring them on 0800 365 494. This will ensure you have a cheaper ride to and from the venue but the booking must be made in advance.

Directions to the venue: If coming **from the north**, at the bottom of the hill turn left into a loop at the cricket ground that leads into George Street. Turn right off George Street at Knox Church and travel up Pitt Street, and follow the main route up the hill (past Heriot Row, turning left into Royal Terrace for a short distance, and then right for a further short distance into Corrie Street and then right again into Queens Drive and carry on uphill into Drivers Road). Turn off Drivers Road, at the first intersection on the left into Tolcarne Avenue, or, alternatively turn off at the second intersection on the left into Grendon Street and then turn left again into Tolcarne Avenue. The hostel is at 12 Tolcarne Avenue.

If **coming from the south** stay on the one way street system until you come to the hospital and then turn left into Frederick Street until you come to George Street and Knox Church. Go straight across the intersection to Pitt Street and follow the directions above.

A map for 12 Tolcarne Avenue is at: <http://www.wises.co.nz/l/12+Tolcarne+Avenue/>



Parking: There is a limited amount of parking available on site. If you are mobile please unload and then move your car to the street.

The Programme and the Registration Form are on the Website at: sof.org.nz