

SOUL FOOD

Earth Angels

Celebrating International Women's Day



March 2015

Earth Angels

This program is dedicated to International Women's Day which represents an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women while calling for greater equality.

March 2015

Program



As the Crow Flies

1. *Prayer*
2. *Two Wings of a Bird*
3. *Leunig*
4. *Cornelius Heinrich Agrippa*
5. *Hildegard of Bingen (12th Century Christian Mystic)*
6. *Qur'an*



As the Crow Flies

7. *Christian Writings*
8. *Jnaneshwa*
9. *Kagaba myth*
10. *Tao Te Ching*
11. *Tenrikyo . Ofudesaki XIII*
12. *Ábdu'l-Bahá*



As the Crow Flies

13. *Hindu Prayer*
14. *Susannah De Vries*
15. *Ábdu'l-Bahá*
16. *Stephanie Dowrick*
17. *Ábdu'l-Bahá*
18. *Judaism*



19. *Ábdu'l-Bahá*
- ### **As the Crow Flies**

Not until the world of women becomes equal to the world of men in the acquisition of virtues and perfections, can success and prosperity be attained as they ought to be.

Abdu'l-Bahá



Crescent Moon/Not What I Expected

by Emily Wolfe and Violet Harrison-Day

As the Crow Flies

(Rebecca Bryan, Emily Wolfe and Violet Harrison-Day)

01. **Prayer**

Magnified be Thy name, O Lord my God! Behold Thou mine eye expectant to gaze on the wonders of Thy mercy, and mine ear longing to hearken unto Thy sweet melodies, and my heart yearning for the living waters of Thy knowledge. Thou seest Thy handmaiden, O my God, standing before the habitation of Thy mercy, and calling upon Thee by Thy name which Thou hast chosen above all other names and set up over all that are in heaven and on earth. Send down upon her the breaths of Thy mercy, that she may be carried away wholly from herself, and be drawn entirely towards the seat which, resplendent with the glory of Thy face, sheddeth afar the radiance of Thy sovereignty, and is established as Thy throne. Potent art Thou to do what Thou wilt. No God is there beside Thee, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful.

~Baha'u'llah

2. Over a century ago, for the first time in religious history, Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, in announcing God's purpose for the age, proclaimed the principle of the equality of women and men, saying: "Women and men have been and will always be equal in the sight of God. The establishment of equal rights and privileges for women and men", Bahá'u'lláh says, "is a precondition for the attainment of a wider unity that will ensure the well-being and security of all peoples". The Bahá'í Writings state emphatically that "When all mankind shall receive the same opportunity of education and the equality of men and women be realized, the foundations of war will be utterly destroyed."

The Baha'i vision of equality between the sexes rests on the central spiritual principle of the oneness of mankind. The principle of oneness requires that we 'regard humanity as a single individual, and one's own self as a member of that corporal form,' and that we foster an unshakable consciousness that, 'if pain or injury afflict any member of the body, it must inevitably result in suffering for all the rest.' Baha'u'llah teaches that the divine purpose of creation is the achievement of unity among all peoples.

~ Two Wings of a Bird: 'The Equality of Women and Men.'

Abridged from A Statement of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Look upon all with the single eye of equality; in each and every heart, the Divine Light is contained.
Shri Guru Granth Sahib

03. Dear God.
We pray for balance and exchange.
Balance us like trees. As the roots of a tree shall equal
its branches so must the inner life be equal to the outer life.
And as the leaves shall nourish the roots so shall
the roots give nourishment to the leaves.
Without equality and exchange of nourishment
there can be no growth and no love.
Amen
~Leunig
04. Woman does not have a soul of a different sex from that
which animates man. Both received a soul which is absolutely
the same and of an equal condition. Women and men were
equally endowed with the gifts of the spirit, reason, and the use of
words; they were created for the same end, and the sexual
difference between them will not confer a lesser destiny.
~Cornelius Heinrich Agrippa (c1486 -1535)

***I hope that all the friends become manifestors of knowledge and
the centers of merciful feelings, each of them becomes like unto an
angel and radiate heavenly deeds, thoughts and actions.
Abdu'l-Baha***

05. **All Beings Celebrate Creation**
All of creation is a symphony of joy and jubilation.
God has arranged all things in the world in consideration
of everything else. And everything that is in heavens,
on the earth, and under the earth, is penetrated with
connectedness, penetrated with relatedness.
No wonder angels and humans can join so readily in a
common choir – what does this say about race, religion,
gender, culture?

What does this say about learning to sing with others?

Ecumenism is the law of the universe, a way of wisdom, a return to our origin. On the path of transcendence it is interesting to see how much like the human hands the wings of angels are. We are all marvels of creation, royal persons, called to sing justice back into creation.

~Hildegard of Bingen (12th century Christian mystic)

- o6. In several places in the Qur'an, Mohammad sets out the spiritual equality of men and women. The following passage provides an example:
"Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the charitable men and the charitable women and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard their chastity, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember; Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward".
~ Qur'an

***I look upon all creatures equally; none are less
dear to me and none more dear.***

Bhagavad Gita 9.29



***For Clive - Emily Wolfe
As the Crow Flies***

- o7. In Christ,
there is no longer Jew or Greek,
slave or master,
male or female, You are all one,
In Christ Jesus.
Galatians :28

o8. I honor the God and the Goddess,
The eternal parents of the universe.
The Lover, out of boundless love,
takes the form of the Beloved.
What beauty!
Both are made of the same nectar
and share the same food.

Out of Supreme Love
they swallow each other up,
But separate again
for the joy of being two.

They are not completely the same
but neither are they different.
None can tell exactly what they are.

How intense is their longing
to be with each other.
This is their greatest bliss.
Never, even in jest,
Do they allow their unity
to be disturbed.

They sit together in the same place,
Both wearing a garment of light.
From the beginning of time
they have been together,
Revelling in their own Supreme Love.

Without the God there is no Goddess,
And without the Goddess there is no God.
~ Jnaneshwar (Hinduism)

***We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we
can only fly by embracing one another.
Luciano de Crescenzo***

09. **The Universal Mother**

The mother of our songs, the mother of our seed, bore us in the beginning of things and so she is the mother of all types of men, the mother of all nations. She is mother of the thunder, the mother of the streams, the mother of the trees and of all things. She is the mother of the world and of the older brothers, the stone-people. She is the mother of the fruits of the earth and of all things. She is the mother of our youngest brothers, the French and the strangers. She is the mother of our dance paraphernalia, of all temples and she is the only mother we possess. She alone is mother of the fire and the Sun and the Milky Way. . . . She is the mother of the rain and the only mother we possess. And she has left us a token in all the temples . . . a token in the form of songs and dances'.

She has no cult, and no prayers are really directed to her, but when the fields are sown and the priests chant their incantations the Kagaba say, 'And then we think of the one and only mother of the growing things, of the mother of all things.' One prayer was recorded. 'Our mother of the growing fields, our mother of the streams, will have pity upon us. For whom do we belong? Whose seeds are we? To our mother alone do we belong.

Kagaba myth (Brazil)

10. The universe comes into being through
The Mother of the world.
By knowing the Mother,
By coming to know the children,
We come to know Her.

So united are they.
One does not exist,
Without the other.

-Tao Te Ching Vs 52

***A woman is human.
She is not better, wiser, stronger, more intelligent, more
creative, or more responsible than a man.
Likewise, she is never less. Equality is a given.
A woman is human.
Vera Nazarian***

11. All the people of the whole world are equally brothers and sisters. There is no one who is an utter stranger. There is no one who has known the truth of this origin. It is the very cause of the regret of Tsukihhi (God). The souls of all people are equal, whether they live on the high mountains or at the bottoms of the valleys.
~Tenrikyo. Ofudesaki XIII.43-45

12. The one whose heart is most pure, whose deeds and service in the Cause of God are greater and nobler, is most acceptable before the divine threshold – whether male or female... Why should man, who is endowed with the sense of justice and sensibilities of conscience, be willing that one of the members of the human family should be... considered as subordinate?... There must be no difference in the education of male and female in order that womankind may develop equal capacity and importance with man in the social and economic equation. Then the world will attain unity and harmony...
~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá

***If the world sees a time when women shall come together
purely for the good of humanity, it will be a power
such as the world has never seen.
Matthew Arnold***



The Fisherboys - Violet Harrison-Day
As the Crow Flies

13.

God Let us be united;
Let us speak in harmony;
Let our minds apprehend alike.
Common be our prayer; common be the end of our assembly;
Common be our resolution;
Common be our deliberations.
Alike be our feelings;
Unified be our hearts;
Common be our intentions; perfect be our unity.
~Hindu Prayer

14. **A Struggle for Gender Equality: Dr. Dagmar Berne 1865-1900**

Dr. Dagmar Berne was the first woman to study medicine in Australia, gaining entry to Sydney University in 1885. Her story is one of a struggle for gender equality at a time when medical doctors were men, some of whom jealously guarded their territory.

In the previous decade, a British doctor had written in the London journal 'Reproductive Medicine' that women should not be allowed to enter the profession of medicine, declaring that they lacked the necessary brain power because their "skulls were smaller". They could, he thought, become sterile if they attempted to work in such a difficult discipline.

This male prejudice was evident in Australia, where male doctors defended their domination of the profession by suggesting such views that childbirth was "so gruesome that women would faint" if they had to witness it.

The Dean of Sydney University, although opposed to the idea of women medical practitioners, did admit that the Faculty of Medicine had an excellent female student who had been studying medicine for two years and whose presence had "neither inconvenienced nor embarrassed male students or teaching staff". Her name was Dagmar Berne.

Dagmar was the daughter of a Danish father who had sacrificed his own life while attempting to save a drowning man in the Bega River in New South Wales. Her mother remarried, but on the death of her second

husband took Dagmar and her other seven children to Sydney where Dagmar attended a private school. In spite of her love for the sciences, she was taught dancing, deportment, conversational French and needlework.

Arriving at Sydney University, she studied Arts before changing to Medicine and gaining honours in botany, chemistry, zoology and anatomy in her first year. The Dean, it is written, did not want woman to qualify. In spite of exhausting weeks of study, Dagmar would look for her examination results on the notice-board to find that her name was never on the pass list, in spite of the fact that men with lower marks had succeeded. Her biographer, Susannah De Vries, writes that Dagmar would tell her mother in despair, "Mama, I've failed again...sometimes I think they don't *want* me to pass."

After four years of hard and intensive study at Sydney University, Dagmar realized that male prejudice was too strong and that she would not qualify there. In fairness, it should be said that despite her intense dedication, she may have struggled at times because of her lack of access to secondary education in science subjects.

Encouraged by Britain's Dr. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, she moved in frustration to London to continue her studies, working at the Royal Free Hospital and finally qualifying as a doctor in 1893, when she began work at the North Eastern Fever Hospital in Tottenham.

But those London years took their toll on Dagmar's health: her family's fortunes had declined and she had been forced to live in damp accommodation in a London basement and to subsist on little food. She suffered continuing bouts of pleurisy and pneumonia.

In 1895 she returned to Sydney and set up a medical practice in Macquarie Street. Unfortunately she died of tuberculosis in 1900, at the age of thirty-five.

Today approximately half of the students in Australian medical schools are women. The Dagmar Berne Prize is now presented each year to the female graduate with the highest marks in final year Medicine at Sydney University.

Major source : Susannah De Vries. The Complete Book of Great Australian Women. Sydney: HarperCollins, 2003 pp90-100

***If society will not admit of woman's free development,
then society must be remodelled.***

Elizabeth Blackwell (the first U.S. female medical doctor)

15. By angels is meant the divine confirmations and heavenly powers. Angels are also those holy souls who have severed attachment to the earthly world, who are free from the fetters of self and passion and who have attached their hearts to the divine realm and the merciful kingdom. They are of the kingdom, heavenly; they are of the merciful One, divine. They are the manifestations of the divine grace and the dawns of spiritual bounty.

~Abdu'l-Baha

16.

Holy ones, angelic forces
when I have no answers, sustain me;
when have no solutions, sustain me;
when I feel abandoned, sustain me;
when I feel no hope, sustain me;
when my hands remain empty, sustain me;
when I feel too small, sustain me;
when I know I am "not enough," sustain me;
when I am ashamed or shamed, sustain me;
when my sorrows overwhelm me, sustain me.
Open my heart and mind to a fresh vision of love.
Let love move through me and within me.
O bringers of Love: sustain me.

~Stephanie Dowrick

***When your words are sweet and filled
with the power of truth, you are an enlightened being with the
heart of an angel.***

Roger Cole

17. Ye are the angels, if your feet be firm, your spirits rejoiced,
your secret thoughts pure, your eyes consoled, your ears opened,
your breasts dilated with joy, and your souls gladdened.
~Abdu'l-Baha

***The emancipation of women, the achievement of full equality
between the sexes, is one the most important, though less
acknowledged prerequisites of peace.
Bahá'í Faith***

18. I call heaven and earth to witness: whether Jew or Gentile,
whether man or woman, whether servant or freeman, they are
all equal in this: that the Holy Spirit rests upon them in accordance
with their deeds!
~ Midrash, Judaism.
19. The world of humanity is possessed of two wings: the male and
the female. So long as these two wings are not equivalent in
strength, the bird will not fly. Until womankind reaches the same
degree as man, until she enjoys the same arena of activity,
extraordinary attainment for humanity will not be realized; humanity
cannot wing its way to heights of real attainment. When the two
wings or parts become equivalent in strength, enjoying the same
prerogatives, the flight of man will be exceedingly lofty and
extraordinary. Therefore, woman must receive the same education
as man and all inequality be adjusted. Thus, imbued with the same
virtues as man, rising through all the degrees of human attainment,
women will become the peers of men, and until this equality is
established, true progress and attainment for the human race will
not be facilitated.
~Abdu'l-Bahá

*In societies where men are truly confident of their own worth,
women are not merely tolerated but valued.*

Aung San Suu Kyi



Sirkeci/Opposable Luck
by Rebecca Bryan, Violet Harrison-Day
As the Crow Flies

*

Please join us for refreshments

Soul Food

Soul Food is an open community event hosted on the first Sunday of each month and whose purpose is to inspire us to transform our lives, our neighbourhoods and our communities with actions that promote the unity and betterment of society. Set in the tranquil setting of the Baha'i Centre of Learning, it provides an occasion to be inspired and reflect on uplifting themes with our neighbours. Our programs feature live music, audio-visual pieces and readings from various authors, sources and Faiths - indigenous, ancient and modern- from all over the world.

Soul Food was initiated by the Bahá'í community in Adelaide and now occurs in places around Australia and as far afield as Botswana, Africa. It is also proudly supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Original programs are available for free download from www.soulfood.com.au/tas/

Soul Food - First Sunday of each month.

Venue: Bahá'í Centre of Learning, Hobart

Time: 3.00pm – 4pm

Dates for 2015

April	5 th	- Gateway to Happiness
May	3 rd	- The Spiritual Home
June	7 th	- Trustees of Earth
July	5 th	- Sweet Scents of Friendship
August	2 nd	- Youth: Bridge to the Future
September	6 th	- The Light of Universal Peace
October	4 th	- The Inner Balance – Spiritual Health
November	1 st	- Children -Tender plants in the garden of life
December	6 th	- Reflections

Children's classes in the Neighbourhood

Regular children's classes are held in communities around Tasmania and provide moral, spiritual and virtues-based training essential in nurturing the inner capacities of children. The classes aim to build a strong moral framework which will assist children to achieve excellence in material, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of life. For inquiries or more information please call Shohreh's mobile 0419 585 453.

"Children are even as a branch that is fresh and green; they will grow up in whatever way you train them. Take the utmost care to give them high ideals and goals, so that once they come of age, they will cast their beams like brilliant candles on the world..."

-- from the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith

Junior Youth Groups

Developed for youth between the ages of 12 and 15, these programs are designed to empower and equip young people with the knowledge and concepts that will encourage the expression of their personal potential, and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become agents of change - for themselves and their communities. Through engagement in service initiatives, artistic and extracurricular activities they foster a sense of world citizenship and a lifelong commitment to serve humanity.

The junior youth spiritual empowerment program is open to young people aged between 11 and 14, and assists them to navigate through a crucial stage in their lives.

Those in their early adolescent years possess altruism, a sense of justice, eagerness to learn about the universe, and a desire to contribute to the construction of a better world.

The program helps them form a strong moral identity and empowers them to contribute to the well-being of their communities and the world at large.

By developing their spiritual qualities (virtues), their intellectual capabilities and their capacities for service to society, the participants come to see that they can become agents of positive change in the world.

The program adopts a participatory mode of learning where the facilitator and participants learn from each other.

Groups of participants engage in activities such as artistic expression, discussion, drama, cooperative games, study of literature, story telling and acts of community service.

The junior youth program explores themes from a Baha'i perspective, but is not a formal religious education program. It is open to all, subject to parental approval. Junior youth groups meet on a regular basis and there is no written homework.

All program facilitators are certified under the Baha'i Child Protection Policy, which includes a mandatory police check. Parents are welcome to meet with the facilitators to learn about the program.

For enquiries or more information please call James Pepperell ☎️ 0404352042 or email him james.pepperell@gmail.com

Study Circles

The Bahá'í Community is offering a series of life-changing circles of study.

The purpose of Bahá'í study circles is to provide participants with the knowledge, spiritual insights and skills to enable them to contribute to the betterment of society, starting with their own neighbourhood. This is done through systematic study of a sequence of courses based on the Bahá'í Writings using the courses of the Ruhi Institute. The first in the sequence of books is called Reflections on the Life of the Spirit. It examines spiritual matters such as prayer, meditation, life and death and the development of the soul. Study circles are held all around Australia and are open to all. You are invited to take inspiration from the Bahá'í teachings, benefitting from whatever gems of wisdom and knowledge will help you to address the challenges you face. Study circles are held in an uplifting environment conducive to spiritual empowerment of individuals, who come to see themselves as active agents of their own learning. The role of the study circle facilitator is not to impart knowledge, but to assist discussion. Study Circles feature participatory learning, involving discussions with others and the use of the arts.

For inquiries or more information please email Shirin at shirin@iinet.net.au.

join us

for the next program

Sunday the 5th of April, 3pm

“Gateway to Happiness”

The Bahá'í Faith

You can find out more about the Baha'ís and their world embracing vision at www.bahai.org.au or feel free to call 03 6234 7654 for more information.

All Soul Food programs are available for free download from
www.tasbcl.com.au



The picture on the front page features Clematis and Hardenbergia - native plants painted by Western Australian botanical artist Philippa Nikulinsky. These three colours have symbolised equal rights for women over the last century.