



The Global Chalice

ICUU Newsletter

www.icuu.net

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A Publication of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

Call to Transylvania

On behalf of the ICUU Executive, I would like to invite you to our biennial Council Meeting in Koloszvár, Transylvania, Romania, from September 1-6, 2009. The meeting site at the Unitarian Student Center provides us with a remarkable opportunity to visit some of the oldest sites in Unitarianism and enjoy the culture and hospitality of people who have been practicing our religion for nearly 500 years.

You can find detailed information on the meeting, the program, travel and accommodation at www.icuu.net. Here I want to write about opportunity and friendships.

My first Council Meeting was in Montserrat, Spain, in 2005. I had never been to an international event of any kind and despite nearly two decades in the ministry, I found it an eye opening experience.

First, I found the worship services provided by different national groups to be stimulating and challenging. I was pushed to see Unitarianism and Unitarian Universalism as something much broader than the liberal humanist tradition I knew in Canada. The challenge was to find a common thread that united us across theologies, languages and cultures. For me the common tie was respect for each other and respect for freedom of belief. Worship was a highlight.

The other moving aspect for me was the warmth and cooperation among participants. Unlike any event I had ever attended, people came to ICUU with an intention to make friends and meet new people. The best illustration comes from mealtimes. The unwritten tradition is that when you arrive in the dining area, you sit anywhere, simply taking the next available seat. Perhaps you will know your table mates at the start of the meal. If not, you will by the end. It is marvelously inclusive.

Of course the Council Meeting is more than food and worship. In business sessions we will have reports from member and emerging groups, the most hotly contested elections for the Executive in our history, financial reports and so on. We will also have an opportunity to hear, discuss and refine the Strategic Plan being prepared by the Executive Committee.

In spite of the economic downturns, the ICUU is finding ways to move ahead. We are identifying new sources of funding for program development as well as for core budget. We are planning more of the familiar short term programs such as Leadership Conferences and Symposia, but also working on longer term sustained projects including one to enhance ministerial training in many locations around the globe. The details are properly the business of the full Council, but I feel confident that the Executive will be able to present a plan with a scope that stretches our abilities.

As well, there will be workshops from both ICUU members and affiliate groups and the chance to build our existing networks of cooperation.

Finally, we will both say a fond farewell to our retiring Executive Secretary John Clifford, and introduce his yet to be named replacement.

I am excited about this Council Meeting, for I believe the Executive has done excellent work on many levels. I look forward to meeting you there, sharing a meal, sharing worship and sharing conversation.

See you in Koloszvár,
-Brian

Rev. Brian J. Kiely, ICUU President
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

The Mission of the ICUU is

- To build relationships through communication and collaboration;
- To develop spiritual community among member groups and their leaders;
- To identify and nurture prospective and emerging groups;
- To foster our U*U faith for mutual inspiration, development, and growth.

ICUU Executive Summary

Leading up to the Koloszvár Council Meeting, the ICUU Executive is focusing on four main areas:

- **Planning the Council Meeting**, in cooperation with our Transylvanian colleagues. Delegates will prioritize programs and approve a Strategic Plan, elect new members of the Executive and Nominating Committees, and pass a budget that is both responsible and visionary. We are coming into this Council Meeting focused and excited about the possibilities before us.
- Seeking and hiring a **new Executive Secretary**. The Rev. John Clifford is retiring after the Koloszvár meetings having given fine service. A search is on for his replacement, with interviews slated for April. We anticipate having the new Executive Secretary on hand at the Council Meeting.
- Moving forward with the work of the **Task Force on Ministerial Education and Training**. We have secured a grant that has allowed us to assemble an international team to help plan for distance training and other programs for potential ministers in UU communities around the globe with limited or no access to theological schools and seminaries.
- **Securing stable funding** for core and program budgets and presenting our financial picture in the clearest possible terms.

In addition several other initiatives are underway. We have been able to make small grants to a few new UU communities needing help for basics like finding meeting space. We are making arrangements to be represented at the World Parliament of Religions in Australia this year. We welcomed the U-U Esperanto Network into ICUU Associate status.

Finally, we are, with a degree of regret, retiring our familiar ICUU logo. Because of copyright laws in the nation of the artist, we would have to pay a prohibitively high fee to maintain our right to use it. In these hard economic times, we could not justify the expense.

Therefore a redesigned logo is unveiled on the masthead of this Global Chalice. **Welcome to the new ICUU logo!** Our new image depicts a global faith moving dynamically forward as our Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist message is heard in ever more places around the world.

Unitarian Group in Togo

Téou Alfa, leader of a new Unitarian group in Togo, has made contact with ICUU and the French-speaking Assemblée Fraternelle des Chrétiens Unitariens. More details and photos at the [AFCU blog](#).

International U*U Women's Convocation



Nearly 600 Unitarians, Unitarian Universalists, and progressive people of faith from approximately 20 countries gathered in Houston, Texas for the First International Convocation of UU Women, February 26th through March 1st. The theme of the Convocation was "Weaving Global Partnerships to Enrich Women's Lives".

Convocation participants enjoyed worship and music, panel presentations and workshops, keynote speeches, plenary sessions, and joined together in small "Global Sisters" groups for reflection and planning. Events were organized around four areas: Faith, Education, Action, and Transformation.

The ICUU was proud to co-sponsor this Convocation, which also featured the launch of the Global Literacy Project, a six-session curriculum in English for individuals, families, women's groups, congregations, and other organizations. More information can be found at www.icuuw.com

How do you say "Unitarian Universalism" in Chinese?

There is a recent surge of interest in religion in China. Texts of all major religions, and some lesser known ones such as Bahá'í faith and Mormonism, have been translated. However, little information about Unitarian Universalism is available in Chinese. There is not even an agreed-upon term for translating "Unitarian Universalism."

Alex Szeto, President of the Spiritual Seeker's Society – the first Chinese UU group in Hong Kong, and Jian Li, a member of Community UU Church in Plano, TX, have been working on translating "Unitarian Universalism" into Chinese. They have come up with eleven Chinese names for UU and each has its unique strength and limitation. They are seeking input from UU scholars to find the best alternative.

Szeto and Li are also seeking help from a publisher for a bilingual version of the booklet, "The ABC for UU Newcomers." The author, William Cleary, has endorsed publication of Li's Chinese translation. Sample copies will be available at the ICUU table at the UUA General Assembly. For further information, please contact jianli@connecttochina.net or alexander.szeto@gmail.com

John Clifford reports on visit to Kenyan Unitarian Universalists in January

Our first week was in Nairobi, getting acclimated and seeing some of the tourist sites. That week we also linked up with early arrivals for a UU tour organized by Janice Brunson and we met several times with Nairobi area UU leaders. One of the best things we did was to go into a mobile phone shop and buy a Kenyan sim card for my mobile. EVERY adult in Kenya has a mobile phone and it is the main means of communication, even taking priority over face-to-face conversations. For those who do not have electricity at home (a large part of the population) there are service points in the villages where phones can be recharged.

On our first Sunday, there was a special worship service in Kitengela (Nairobi suburb) held under a marquee given to Nairobi UUs by Janice a couple years before. The service was attended by several UUs from Kisii (a region some 8 hours by road to the west of Nairobi), including Patrick Magara, the one most responsible for introducing UUism to Kenya. My wife Barbara and I were welcomed to Kenya and in my response I mentioned the need for stable communities and leadership to achieve their goals and ICUU's hope to assist in developing these.



Under the marquee in Kitengela

This service and the two others that we participated in were led by local leaders/pastors, who did their best to make everyone feel welcome and to get everyone to contribute something to the service – a prayer, a hymn, a poem, a reflection on the sermon, a self-introduction, etc.

We were in Kisii City the evening of President Obama's Inauguration and the tour gathered around a small television to watch the event. Kisii City is only a couple miles from the town where Obama's father was born and the excitement was palpable.

Barbara's health difficulties brought us back to Nairobi, where we attended our third Sunday worship, in Ruiru. This congregation uses a community hall for its monthly services. We met many new UUs, including a woman who was about to move with her family to Mombassa on the Kenyan coast and was planning on starting a new UU congregation there.

Kenya has suffered a two year drought that, along with displacement of farmers from the post-election violence, has devastated the maize crop, their staple food. The people's suffering and poverty will take a lot of work and luck to do anything significant about. They have also been let down badly by their politicians in ways that exhibit a selfish creativity almost unbelievable. Virtually every conversation with Kenyans involved requests for jobs, for help in emigrating, or for money.



At a worship service in Kayole

UUism in Kenya is spreading quickly, but with a totally insufficient base of understanding what it is. Kenyan UUs will develop their own flavour and style, but they need information and mentoring to help them become a recognisable UU variant.

On my last morning in Kenya I spent a couple of hours at Sheria House, the government's registration documentation centre, confirming the registration of Patrick Magara's group and assisting the registration of the Nairobi-centred group.

I close with the following reflections: (a) Those of us who attended the ICUU's Leadership Development conference last year were somewhat protected from the realities of Kenya's poor infrastructure, including its severely pot-holed roads. The conference also had available excellent wifi; rural cyber cafés function much more slowly and erratically. Some of the folk we correspond with have to travel 60 minutes by bus over terrible roads just to get to a cybercafé. (b) ICUU's remit does not run to poverty relief and we do not have funds for this and the world is much bigger than Kenya. But the endemic and worsening poverty in Kenya is real and our global community needs to find ways to deal with this if we want UUism to progress there. (c) There are real tensions within the Kenyan UU community, partly over authority and partly over resources. If these can't be solved then outside financial help will tend to make the situation worse, not better.

Transylvanian Unitarian Church Election Results

Congratulations and best wishes to the new leaders!

Bishop: Rev. Ferenc Balint-Benczedi, minister of
First Unitarian Church of Kolozsvár

Vice Bishop: Rev. Laszlo Nagy, Dean of
Marosvasarhely

Provost: Rev. István Kovács, minister of
Sepsiszentgyorgy and former ICUU Executive
Committee member

ICUU Member Groups

Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Universalist Assn.
Canadian Unitarian Council
Religious Society of Czech Unitarians
Danish Unitarian Church
European Unitarian Universalists
Unitarian Universalist Society of Finland
Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft (Germany)
General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian
Churches (Great Britain)
Unitarian Church in Hungary
Indian Council of Unitarian Churches
Jemaat Allah Global Indonesia
Unitarian Brotherhood Church and First Unitarian Church of
Nigeria
Unitarian Universalist Christians of Pakistan
Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines, Inc.
Unitarian Church in Poland
Transylvanian Unitarian Church (Romania)
South African National Association of Unitarians
Unitarian Universalist Society of Spain
Unitarian Universalist Assn. of Sri Lanka
Unitarian Universalist Assn. of Congregations (USA)

Executive Committee, 2007-09

President: **Rev. Brian Kiely**, Canada
Vice President: **Rev. Gordon Oliver**, South Africa
Secretary: **Jaume de Marcos**, Spain
Treasurer: **Rev. David Shaw**, UK
At Large: **Rev. Pearl Greene Marbaniang**, India
Rev. Jill McAllister, USA
Pauline Rooney, Australia

Executive Secretary: **Rev. John Clifford**, UK

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email: polly@pollyguild.com

Member Groups' Websites

The first eight sites are in English, afterwards in other
languages with English options as noted.

www.uua.org Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations (USA)

www.unitarian.org.uk General Assembly of
Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (Great Britain)

www.cuc.ca Canadian Unitarian Council

www.anzua.org/anzua_alt Australian and New
Zealand Unitarian Universalist Association

www.euu.uua.org European Unitarian Universalists

www.unitarian.co.za South African National
Association of Unitarians

www.uuphilippines.org Unitarian Universalist
Church of the Philippines

www.uu-uno.org Unitarian Universalist United
Nations Office

www.grupoamikema.org/UUEN.html Unitarian
Universalist Esperanto Network—ICUU's newest
associate member!

www.unitarius.hu Unitarian Church in Hungary—
enter in Hungarian or English

www.unitaria.cz Religious Society of Czech
Unitarians—click on USA/UK flags for English content

www.unitarerne.dk Danish Unitarian Church—click
on "info in English," left column.

www.unitarier.de Deutsche Unitarier Religions-
gemeinschaft (Germany)—select English at top left

www.unitarius.ro Transylvanian Unitarian Church—
click on "belepes" to enter site, then USA flag for
English (not working at press time)

http://uuespana.googlepages.com Unitarian
Universalist Society of Spain—readers of Spanish will
also want to visit www.uuhispano.net

www.netlife.fi/users/antti.pelkola/uu Unitarian
Universalist Society of Finland

The Global Chalice is a publication of the
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association of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian
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20 countries. Learn more about the ICUU on our website,
www.icuu.net

Officers and staff of the ICUU and its member groups may
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