



# The Global Chalice

ICUU Newsletter

[www.icuu.net](http://www.icuu.net)

April 2010

A Publication of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

## Out in Africa: Ugandans Stand on the Side of Love

On Valentine's Day 2010, bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender (BGLT) Ugandans gathered in Kampala for the **"Standing on the Side of Love: Reimagining Valentine's Day"** conference. The conference served to organize a response to the anti-gay bill that would soon be voted on by the Ugandan Parliament and to provide support for Ugandans who are facing persecution. Local Unitarian Universalist (UU) minister Rev. Mark Kiyimba convened the conference in conjunction with Spectrum Uganda and other grassroots BGLT community organizations.

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill prohibits "(i) any form of sexual relations between persons of the same sex; and (ii) the promotion or recognition of such sexual relations in public institutions and other places." Punishment can range from life imprisonment for homosexual sex to execution in cases of "aggravated homosexuality," which includes having sex while infected with HIV or having sex with a minor.

Many of the conference participants were young adults. Minors were discouraged from attending to protect the conference from suspicions of pedophilia, a common charge against Ugandan homosexuals.

One organizer described it as a "Pride Parade in a closet," but the subject matter was serious. Conference participants called for the complete decriminalization of homosexuality and full access to services, human rights, and protection by the state. Sessions included talks by religious and human rights activists.

The keynote speaker was Anglican Bishop and Integrity Uganda President Christopher Ssenyojo, a champion ally of BGLT rights who spoke on the theme of love and justice. Two UU ministers from the United States were also featured speakers. The biggest cheer of the afternoon came when Rev. Marlin Lavanhar, a UU preacher from Oklahoma, said, "You can be a good person and be a gay or lesbian person. Please know you will reach the promised land. God bless Uganda!"

The conference culminated in a petition for equality to be presented to the speaker of the house or a local member of parliament and in the promise to bring legal challenges to the Anti-Homosexuality Bill.

Unitarian Pastor Kiyimba, whose congregation includes many BGLT people, offered this statement: "I cannot stand by and watch as my community is exterminated. If the bill finally passes into law, our church will go to court and sue the government, because some provisions of the bill contravene the Ugandan constitution. What this work means to me is that my church can take a leading role in liberating the sexual minorities in Uganda. This work will benefit almost everyone, but we wanted our people to have freedom. The wider view is that the bill can put people in danger, lying about them. People should have freedom of worship and of relationship. The fact remains that BGLT people exist. They are in Uganda. BGLT people are all ages and types of people. My dream for Uganda is a Uganda that would look like any other country where all people are equal on all sides of the law: black, white, gay, straight, rich, poor. Mandela identified South Africa as a vulnerable nation because there are so many different people, and all of them live side by side. That is what I would like to see in Uganda. It will take a while but I believe it will come."

### 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 Conferences This Year

Two major ICUU conferences are planned for July, 2010. From July 9-12, we will host a first-ever international gathering of **Unitarian and UU ministers**, to meet one another and begin to build friendships and collaborations around the common challenges of ministry.

Presentations, workshops and discussions will focus on the general themes of:

- The Call to Ministry
- Liberal Ministry in a Global Context and a Global Movement
- How Oppression and Freedom Shape our Ministry

Leaders of the UU theological schools in Britain, Transylvania and the USA will take part, as will leaders of the various UU Ministers Associations around the world. For many, it will be a first-time experience of the ICUU and the international UU community.

Following the ministers conference the ICUU will host our third **International Theological Symposium**, featuring nine major presenters from 8 countries, focusing on the theme "Belonging: Our Unitarian Identities and the Nature of Our Relations."

Presenters, including Revs. Maria Pap of Transylvania, Gordon Oliver of South Africa, Paul Razor of the USA, Nihal Attanayake of the Philippines, and others, will address questions such as:

- What does it mean to be Unitarian –Universalist? How does this identity relate to other identities such as European, American, African, other, gay, straight, etc?
- How are we related to one another around the world, and to other entities?
- Do we recognize shared covenants? Or is covenant a culturally/historically limited term?
- Are there core U-U teachings on belonging, on membership, on covenants? Are traditional structures of religious membership still valid for today's world?
- If we belong to each other in some ways, how does that manifest as mission, as care, concern, collaboration, mutuality, accountability, etc?
- Are there threats to our belonging – to each other, to the world, to the earth, to Life/God?

Both conferences will take place at the Rolduc Conference Center in the Netherlands, a venue often used by the European Unitarian Universalists for their retreats. We will be joined by, and hosted by, representatives of two Dutch Liberal Protestant Churches – the Remonstrants and the NPB, both of whom are interested in closer ties with the ICUU. It is still possible to register for these conferences – information is available at the ICUU web site or from Executive Secretary Rev. Steve Dick, at [execsec@icuu.net](mailto:execsec@icuu.net).

In addition, immediately following the Symposium on July 17, also at Rolduc, European Unitarian Universalists will sponsor a one-day training event for lay people who want to learn how to lead rites of passage such as weddings and memorial services. ICUU President Rev. Brian Kiely, a trainer in the Canadian Unitarian Council's Lay Chaplaincy Program, will be the facilitator for this workshop. Registration is open to all who are interested; information about registration is available from EUU President Tina Huesing, at [president@europeanuu.eu](mailto:president@europeanuu.eu)

## African Leadership Training and Consultants

With support from the UU Funding Program, and in partnership with the UU Partner Church Council and the UUA International Resources Office, the ICUU is sponsoring several training events for African Unitarians in 2009 and 2010.

In December, 2009, Fulgence Ndagijimana and Mark Kiyimba (Unitarian leaders from Burundi and Uganda, respectively) **traveled to Kenya as ICUU Consultants**. There they met with a group of Kenyan Unitarians to give further support and encouragement toward the ability of the Kenyans to organize a stable national Unitarian organization, in order to be recognized by the ICUU as an emerging group.

Ndagijimana's and Kiyimba's observations and recommendations are helping the ICUU, the UUPCC and the UUA understand how to best support the Kenyan movement by giving us more insight into their struggles with generational differences, tribal differences, extreme economic stress, and very new exposure to Unitarian ideas and ideals.

The larger part of this current work in Africa will take place in April 2010, when **Community Capacity Building workshops will be held in Burundi and Uganda**.

These workshops, developed and led by Richard Ford of the United States, have been used successfully in Unitarian organizations in Transylvania, India and the Philippines as part of the Partner Church program.

The goal is to strengthen the capacity of each organization, and the community it is part of, to build a local base of resources plus experience in setting priorities to strengthen the ability to gather and maintain resources.

In addition to these workshops, ICUU program coordinator Rev. Jill McAllister will provide leadership training for new Unitarian leaders from Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania.

## ICUU Launches New Email List

This new list is open to all interested groups and individuals for the distribution of announcements about ICUU as well as news about developments in Unitarianism and Unitarian Universalism around the world.

It is not a discussion list and emails will be posted only by ICUU staff.

To join the list and get ICUU information delivered directly to your email inbox, sign up at: [http://www.icuu.net/events/mailing\\_list.html](http://www.icuu.net/events/mailing_list.html).

## UU News from the Philippines

The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines is composed of 29 congregations and fellowships, two in Manila and others on Negros Island. National Headquarters is based in Dumaguete City.

The usual Sunday Worship services in all congregations are the major activity.

The Faith in Action Committee creates and manages programs that benefit the congregation and members. Church Partnership is one of the major programs. Congregations in the USA such as San Mateo, Monte Vista, and San Diego, California; Honolulu, Hawaii; Castine, Maine; and White Plains, NY are six partnered congregations. Some Partnered USA congregations have started to support students with their school needs, to build and renovate chapels, and to pay visits to their partner congregations in the Philippines.

We conduct a Micro Finance program supported by Corvallis UUs in Oregon, a Livelihood program established and funded by the late Rev. Poly Guild, and Student Sponsorship facilitated by the UU Partner Church Council.

The women's movement has created educational programs to equip women on rights, social issues, laws and participatory processes in society.

The Youth have camped to develop skills, socialization and awareness building of environmental concerns.

The Church Annual meeting was held from April 24-27, attended by 65 delegates. The keynote speaker was Rev. Eric Cherry, Director of the UUA International Resources Office.

We also organize tours and congregational visits. The last tour, in March 2010, included 12 members from the USA. Another is planned for late March of next year. The next congregation to congregation visit is from Monte Vista, California at the end of July.

UUCP will host the ICUU's Executive Council meeting in August 2010. EC members will be in the Philippines from the 21st to the 30th. In connection with that meeting, the UUA President is scheduled to visit the Philippines from the 25th of August to the 2nd of September 2010.

We are active in social outreach with ecumenical groups working in prisons and advocacy on environmental concerns, disaster relief, and justice issues.

Our biggest institutional project is a dormitory for University students. Information on this is found on our website, [www.uupcdorm.com](http://www.uupcdorm.com)

## Transylvanian Church Looks Ahead

Re-organizing would be the word that best describes the life of Transylvanian Unitarians in 2010. The new church leadership, elected in 2008, has been able to set up its priorities by now, and has started working on them piece by piece.

For the future, an important challenge will be to consider changing the constitution and bylaws of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church itself. Over the last 20 years these documents were updated twice, but further improvements are needed. A TUC Synod is expected to deal with proposed modifications in the fall of 2011.

The inner life of the church is focusing on re-thinking its priorities. Dedicated work is being done in this regard by setting up the new strategic plan of the church, to be adopted by the General Meeting, either in July 2010 or July 2011. Another new program is structured continuing education for our ministers, with two 3-day-long intensive training sessions every year.

Special status is being given to our relationships with the Unitarian Church in Hungary. Once belonging to one organization, the two communities were last divided as a consequence of Europe's restructuring after World War II. After 50 years of separation, more and more attention is being given on both sides to the idea of re-unification. Decisions in this regard are to be expected soon.

On the international level, our church is most actively involved in the work of the ICUU. After hosting the Council Meeting in 2009, we will have 14 delegates attending this summer's ministers' conference and theological symposium in Holland. Also, we are taking part in the work that aims to revitalize the International Association for Religious Freedom: several TUC church leaders will participate in the IARF's next Congress in India, in fall 2010. Our most developed network continues to be the partner church relationship of our congregations with Unitarian Universalist churches in North America.

### **ANZUUA Conference on Congregational Growth and Vitality**

In August 2010, ANZUUA (the Australia New Zealand UU Association) will host a conference on congregational vitality and growth, encouraging ICUU groups from the Asia and Pacific region to join them. Brisbane, Australia will be the location and host congregation. Workshop facilitation will be provided by ICUU program consultant Rev. Jill McAllister, with local ANZUUA ministers and leaders.

**Death of Rev. Shiego Akashi,  
Minister of Japan Free Christian  
Church (Universalist)**

Following in the tradition of his father, Rev. Shiego Akashi was a dedicated liberal minister in Tokyo, active for many years with the Japan Free Religious Association and the International Association of Religious Freedom. He studied at the Starr King School of the Ministry in California, where he made lifelong connections with American UUs. Rev. Akashi died in Tokyo 24 October 2009.

**ICUU Member Groups**

Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Universalist Assn.  
British General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches  
Canadian Unitarian Council  
Religious Society of Czech Unitarians  
Danish Unitarian Church  
European Unitarian Universalists  
Unitarian Universalist Society of Finland  
Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft (Germany)  
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.  
Transylvanian Unitarian Church (Romania)  
South African National Association of Unitarians  
Unitarian Universalist Assn. of Sri Lanka  
Unitarian Universalist Assn. of Congregations (USA)

**Executive Committee, 2009-11**

President: **Rev. Brian Kiely**, Canada  
Vice President: **Pauline Rooney**, Australia  
Secretary: **Rev. Dávid Gyerő**, Transylvania  
Treasurer: **Rev. David Shaw**, UK  
At Large: **Rev. Nihal Attanayake**, Philippines  
**Olufemi Matimoju**, Nigeria  
**Rev. Celia Midgley**, UK

Executive Secretary: **Rev. Steve Dick**, UK  
[execsec@icuu.net](mailto:execsec@icuu.net)

Program Director: **Rev. Jill McAllister**, USA  
[program@icuu.net](mailto:program@icuu.net)

**ICUU Office Address**

International Council of Unitarians and Universalists  
345 Addiscombe Rd., Croydon, Surrey, CF07LG UK  
phone: +44 20 8407 2866

**Member Groups' Websites**

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

[www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org) Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (USA)

[www.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.unitarian.org.uk) British General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

[www.cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca) Canadian Unitarian Council

[www.anzua.org/anzua\\_alt](http://www.anzua.org/anzua_alt) Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Universalist Association

[www.euu.uua.org](http://www.euu.uua.org) European Unitarian Universalists

[www.unitarian.co.za](http://www.unitarian.co.za) South African National Association of Unitarians

[www.uuphilippines.org](http://www.uuphilippines.org) Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines

[www.uu-uno.org](http://www.uu-uno.org) Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office

[www.uuen.org](http://www.uuen.org) Unitarian Universalist Esperanto Network—ICUU's newest associate member!

[www.unitarius.hu](http://www.unitarius.hu) Unitarian Church in Hungary—enter in Hungarian or English

[www.unitaria.cz](http://www.unitaria.cz) Religious Society of Czech Unitarians—click on USA/UK flags at top right for English content

[www.unitarerne.dk](http://www.unitarerne.dk) Danish Unitarian Church—click on “info in English,” left column.

[www.unitarius.ro](http://www.unitarius.ro) Transylvanian Unitarian Church—click on “belepes” to enter site, then USA flag for English (not working at press time)

[www.unitarier.de](http://www.unitarier.de) Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft (Germany)

[www.netlife.fi/users/antti.pelkola/uu](http://www.netlife.fi/users/antti.pelkola/uu) Unitarian Universalist Society of Finland

Readers of Spanish are encouraged to visit  
[www.uuhispano.net](http://www.uuhispano.net)

**The Global Chalice** is a publication of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists, an association of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist organizations and congregations in more than 20 countries. Learn more about the ICUU on our website, [www.icuu.net](http://www.icuu.net)  
Officers and staff of the ICUU and its member groups may submit material for this newsletter by contacting the editor, Lorella Thomas Hess, [newsletter@icuu.net](mailto:newsletter@icuu.net)