

# ICUU Council Meeting, 2009 Kolozsvar

## **1<sup>st</sup> September**

### **Session 0.5**

- Opening speeches by Brian Kiely and by bishop of Transylvania. Rules of procedure and Minutes of Oberwesel '07 were PASSED UNAN.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> September**

### **Session 1**

- President's Report
- Recognized Congo (Democratic Republic) Unitarians as Emerging Group (pending assessment visit)
- Discussion on application by the Umbrella Organization of Unitarians in Norway to become a Provisional Member. Mov. Celia Midgley (UK), Sec. Derek (ANZUUA). Eric Cherry (UUA) asks for description of group. Description of group given by Galen Gissler (Norwegian observer). Followed by some discussion on frequency of meetings and ordination issues. VOTE: PASSED UNAN.
- Discussion on application by the Burundi Unitarians. Mov. Jaume (Spain), Sec. Gordon (SA). Fulgence from Burundi described their group. PASSED UNAN.
- Acknowledgement of reception of new Constitution of the South African Unitarian association.
- Announcement by J. Clifford that an application has also been received from Brazilian Unitarians to become a Provisional Member. The information will be copied and distributed later for voting.
- Jill McAllister led discussion on Executive Committee (ExCom) document about changes in membership status criteria and procedures. J. Midgley asks about follow-up of financial practices of groups. More discussion on the importance of on-site assessments from Istvan Kovacs referring to his visit to Indonesia.
- Beginning of Member Group reports: ANZUUA, German Unitarians, EUU, GA of British Unitarians, Transylvanian Unitarians, Indian U Council, Spain.
- Jill presented and led discussion on the Strategic Plan draft. S. Dick expanded on SWOT analysis and described how the group will split in smaller groups for more detailed study.

### **Session 2**

- S. Dick introduced arrangements for discussion of Strategic Plan in smaller groups on the draft Strategic Plan. After rejoining, spokespersons from small groups provide short reports on their discussions and conclusions about priorities and visions for the Plan.
- Session is adjourned for some rest and arrangements of the local sightseeing of Unitarian sites.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> September**

### **Session 3**

- Treasurer's report received.
- Executive Secretary's report. J. Clifford explained the issue of visa denials to African and Sri Lankan participants, due to alleged bureaucratic miscommunication. He offered personal thoughts about a time of transition, both personal and organizational.
- More Member Group reports: CUC, Czech Unitarians, Hungary, Poland.
- Report from Task Force for Ministerial Education and Training. Jill McAllister, Fulgence Ndagijimana, David Keyes, Kingka Reka-Szekely. They have been working for 1 full year in a 3-year project funded by a UUA panel about training of U\*U ministers around the world.
- More Member Group reports: South Africa, UUA, Philippines.
- Reception of the Nominating Committee report. Presented by R. Boeke as the convenor of the NC.
- B. Kiely asks for any further nomination from the floor. None is made.
- Since the only contested election is for At-Large positions at the Executive Committee, candidates were invited to introduce themselves to the Council. Those two who were present (Celia Midgley and Nihal Attanayake) did so. The other two candidates (Harrison Kingsley and Olufemi Matimoju) were unable to come. Gordon Oliver spoke on behalf of Matimoju and John Clifford spoke on behalf of Harrison Kingsley.

## **4<sup>th</sup> September**

### **Session 4**

- Richard Boeke presented a report on the Friends of the ICUU. The presentation included a decision by the Friends organization to dissolve as such and become a staff managed program of the ICUU.
- Vote is called for delegates to choose the new Executive Committee and Nominating Committee. Time was given to cast the ballot until coffee break so that absent delegates may cast their vote.
- Steve Dick and Jill McAllister presented their understanding of the staff positions of Executive Secretary and Program Coordinator.
- Reports from Working Groups. Brian Kiely presented the Communications WG report.
- Brian asked for a vote to confirm Lorella Hess for a new period as the editor of the Global Chalice. Mov. Paavi (Finland). Sec. Derek (ANZUUA) and Will Saunders (UUA). PASSED UNAN.
- Cathy Cordes made a presentation on the Women's Convocation WG.
- The report of the Parliament of World's Religions was given by Pauline Rooney.
- Gordon Oliver and Tina Huessing made a presentation of the Strategic Plan WG.
- After counting votes (done by Jaume de Marcos and Steve Dick), the results of the election were announced by Brian Kiely: 22 votes were cast, all the uncontested candidates were confirmed. Elected for the At-Large positions were: Nihal Attanayake, Celia Midgley and Olufemi Matimoju.
- David Shaw started discussion of the budget. People were encouraged to use PayPal for international transactions to lower transaction fees to a minimum. David explains the different items in the budget. Jill McAllister asked about the Benevolent Fund. David: this is a fund that was established to support ministers and lay leaders with medical problems. The

budget is not final and delegates are invited to give suggestions. There is also a provision for reserves. The proposed budget uses a small part of those reserves. Eric Cherry asks about expectations of member dues by the end of the current fiscal period. David: I don't know how the figure produced in Oberwesel was calculated and by July 2009 I had to ask member group to comply with their 2008 dues. Jill: income is already higher and if the full amount of member dues is obtained by the end of the year, the benefit will be even higher. Will Saunders asked if the request for dues included actual figures. David: the criteria is that member groups pay \$0.5 or \$0.05 per member according to whether the country is developed or not, but I am not the person to decide what fee is applied in each case. Jill: Since membership numbers have been reported in member group reports, it is possible to make an estimation. Wolfgang Jantz: it is important to whom this notice is sent, some countries have treasurers who are very conservative and need a bill in order to pay. John Clifford: we use our contact list but we cannot be totally sure about its reliability. Galen Gissler: there are some discrepancies between the amounts in GBP between the current period and the budget, are British interest rates much lower than in other countries? David: Yes, they are significantly lower nowadays. Will asks if it would be useful for groups to give a contact specifically for billing. David: I need to refine the contact list. Steve: it is necessary to contact each group and ask for more specific contacts, not just billing (e.g. religious education). Eric Cherry also asked about the final figures for the current period. David: I don't know yet, some big differences may well be expected both in income and expenditure because of Council Meeting costs. John Midgley asked about attendants who are officers/delegates and others who are visitors. Are visitors costing money to the ICUU or are they actually giving money? J. Clifford answers: in Oberwesel and here, the financial results for visitors is slightly positive, with the possible exception of some discounts expected according to number of attendants, but this may affect the host community and not the ICUU organization. It was important that this time expectations about travel costs were pretty accurate, although visa costs have been higher than expected due to complications and extra costs. In the end this Council Meeting will need to draw some money from reserves. David: Further discussion may be held during the workshop sessions. Derek asks about unspecified income for programs. Jill: there are applications for funding to UUA panels and the amount in the budget is a conservative estimate. Donations have increased from past years.

- More group reports: Finland (Member), Indonesia (Member), Burundi, Mexico, Hong-Kong.

## **5<sup>nd</sup> September**

### **Session 5**

- Last group reports: Bolivia, Norway, Esperanto UUs, France (John Clifford speaking on behalf of this group since they were unable to come).
- Brian Kiely presents a resolution on the use of Hungarian language in Slovakia. There was news that a new law on minority languages may harm the Hungarian-speaking community in Slovakia. The Council finds it unacceptable and expresses its deep sympathy with the Hungarian minority and Slovakia, and asks its members to inform the own country. Mov. From Board, Sec. Pauline (ANZUUA). Discussion about whether the ICUU was entitled to examine this kind of motions. The chair ruled the motion to be in order. There was a second resolution moved by Celia Midgley on the same topic. There was a discussion about whether both motions can be discussed jointly or not. Celia observed that she has been unable to present her own motion. Brian pointed out that the motion on the floor was the one under discussion. Efforts were made to find a compromise solution. Celia suggested

removing the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of the original motion and joining the two. Mov. By Brian, Sec. Jaume. Passed with 2 votes against. Second motion is presented. Mov. Celia, Sec. Vicky Roberts-Gassler (EUU). Celia introduced the resolution and her motives to move it, referring to the importance of language and freedom to speak your mother tongue in your religious community. Discussion was opened. John Midgley asked for clarification of last paragraph. Will Saunders suggested that the word “denominations” is changed to “faith communities”. Further discussion changes it to “religious leaders” without objection. John Clifford expressed his concerns about procedure and that the statement should be made by the Council as such and not on behalf of the ICUU as a whole. Eric Cherry remarked that the important thing was what happens after the Council when member churches decide to support and act upon the resolution. Vicky R-G asks if language can be changed, especially to remove the words “This conference of”. Moved by Vicky R-G, Sec. Will Saunders. The mover accepts the amendment, changing the language so that the law is specified (as this would be now removed from the text). The motion is voted as amended. PASSED UNAN.

#### Resolution 1 -

The Council of the ICUU, at its meeting held in Kolozsvár / Cluj-Napoca, Romania, was saddened to learn from the annual report of its Hungarian member groups about the new law on state language in Slovakia.

The Council expresses its deep sympathy with the Hungarian minority in Slovakia afflicted by the new law. The Council asks its member groups to inform their own countries' government and public opinion about the unfortunate situation created in Slovakia.

#### Resolution 3 -

The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU), meeting in Kolozsvár, Transylvania on 5th September 2009 congratulates Bishop Ferenc Balint-Benczedi on his speech in Szeged, Hungary on 30th August in which he, alongside other religious leaders, spoke out against the recent law passed by the Slovakian government forbidding the use of the Hungarian language in schools and many other institutions, citing the Unitarian tradition of tolerance and freedom.

Further, mindful of its own commitment to freedom and tolerance, ICUU resolves to send a message of support to the Hungarian-speaking community of Slovakia and asks the ICUU Secretary to implement this on its behalf as a matter of urgency.

- Another resolution is presented to ask the city council of Torda to exhibit the historic painting of the Edict of Torda at the local history museum, as it is hidden now in storage. Mov. Transylvanian delegation, Sec. Paavi (Finland). Discussion follows on the language of the resolution. Brian reassures that the wording will be refined. PASSED UNAN.

#### Resolution 2 –

The Council of the ICUU, at its meeting held in Kolozsvár / Cluj-Napoca, Romania, was saddened to learn from the annual report of its Romanian member group about the impossibility for the public to visit the painting of Aladar K.orosfoi Kriesch, A vallaszabadsag kihirdetese az 1568. evi tordai orszaggyulesen, in the city museum of Torda.

The painting, a property of the museum, has been hidden in the building for 10 years now, for a so-called reason of restoration. The Council finds it unacceptable, that in Romania art pieces belonging to public treasure are hidden from being enjoyed, and appreciated.

The Council respectfully asks the city council of Torda, as well as the county council of Cluj, to immediately exhibit the painting in the museum again. The Council hopes that visitors coming from all over the world will again have the opportunity to admire this extraordinary piece of art of invaluable religious and cultural worth.

- Final discussion on the Strategic Plan. Delegates are invited to make their last comments and establish priorities. Aryanto (Indonesia) remarks that there is no mention of youth programs. He suggested that an Internet forum may be a good way to connecting youth leaders. Pauline reminded all that the visibility of the ICUU was also a concern in most small group reports. Jennifer (CUC) said that communications should also be a more relevant topic in the Strategic Plan. Eric Cherry was missing a more explicit reference to support to emerging groups. Jill agreed that more specific language needed to be included

on that respect. Will Saunders made a comment that the ICUU is now more concerned about its own capabilities and using available resources and skills, and encourages more creativity to be more cost-effective than in the past. Brian confirmed that this cost-effective way of implementing projects is indeed the way that the ICUU is working and will work. There was also a suggestion from a visitor that there are some more specific criteria for a deadline to know whether the plan is on track. Vicky R-G felt that the document needs to begin with things that we want to be done, and later on how to do it. Derek thought that programs go first because they match the mission statement. There was a general agreement that programs need to be prioritized in the document in accordance with the mission statement. Eric commented that there are priorities in every area. Pauline felt that ministerial training is one of the highest priorities (agreed by Will Saunders, who suggested more specific and smaller projects in that area rather than one big one). Leadership training and organizational consulting were the top priorities in Eric Cherry's view. Pauline remarked that member groups are very mindful of their administration, so building organizational capacity is a priority. Vicky R-G suggested using the EUU Retreat model as a template for similar gatherings. Jill felt that seeking strategic partners is not a high priority, but rather take the opportunities that may arise (agreed by Eric, although giving preference to U\*U organizations rather than secular or interfaith organizations). Derek remarked that these are informal partnerships, and that having a fundraising team is a strong priority to find funding sources for programs. Members should also plan in advance for their presence and funding for the future Council meetings so that this is not a burden for the ICUU. Jennifer agreed about the priority of the fundraising team. Susan Geisler suggested a better distribution according to group size. Eric Cherry asked when reporting on the progress of the strategic plan will be sent to member groups. Brian said that twice a year there will be a specific session of the ExCo on the strategic plan and its proceedings will be sent to member groups. Jill reminded about the importance of ongoing contact with current delegates during the next 2 years. From a suggestion by Jennifer, **by November the minutes from this meeting should be available** for delegates. Wolfgang asked about relationships with IARF. Jill considered that it is not a critical question at the moment, but there are possibilities for cooperation. Steve Dick reminded that both organizations work in very different areas. It is noted that IARF is not being considered in the area of strategic partnerships. There is a suggestion that human rights are also included as priorities. Brian noted that while specific issues may be addressed, the cause of human rights - however worthy - is not in the mission of the ICUU. He felt we would be better off following the lead of strategic partners and member groups concentrating on that area. The Executive moves a motion **that “the ICUU adopts the Strategic Plan “Grounding and Growing” and directs the Executive to carry out the plan according to following priorities”**. As it is moved by the Executive, no seconding is needed. PASSED UNAN.

- A motion moved by the Executive was presented by Brian so that **“The proposed 2 year budget be adopted (as amended) and that the Executive be empowered to adjust expenditures as needed to reflect the Strategic Plan priorities set by this meeting”**. David Shaw made a few corrections to the copy given to delegates. Discussion followed. Celia asked a question about the benevolent fund: it is clarified that the money comes from a specific donation to support leaders and their immediate families if they require medical treatment. David also remarked that adding member contributions would considerably modify the current budget, so they would be considered simply as extra income. The budget is voted and PASSED UNAN.
- Brian presented the candidacy of Brazilian Unitarians for Provisional Membership. Having regular meetings, historical background, transparent organization and stability. Olga asks about on-site visit. They have not been visited. Moved by Derek. Sec. By Aryanto. PASSED UNAN.

- Brian introduced the motion about the suspension of membership for Spain and Poland, so that **“Recognizing that Spain and the Polish Unitarians have reported a need for a period of reorganization, and that at this time they are unable to maintain the level of activity needed to be full Council members, be it moved that membership of these groups be suspended. This action is taken with regret and the ICUU looks forward to welcoming Spain and Poland back into membership at the earliest possible date”**. Moved by Gordon Oliver. Sec. By Vicky R-G. Eric Cherry considered it a responsible move by the ICUU, and whether the Executive is prepared to check what could have been done in the relationship between the ICUU and the Spanish and Polish Unitarians, so that there is learning for what may happen next. Brian agreed that a report is in place. Derek suggested the word “recess” rather than suspension. Passed with 1 vote against.

The Council is adjourned.