

Around the Globe

News from Unitarian and Universalist Groups

Compiled by John Clifford

From Hong Kong: The world body responsible for internet classifications (.org, .net, .com, etc) is about to make a major opening up of classifications and one of the bodies taking advantage of this is the UU group in Hong Kong, called the Spiritual Seekers Society. They have had an internal consultation about what sort of registered names might be most useful in the future and they have decided to take out registrations on three endings: sss.org.hk; uuhk.org; uucn.org (for a future UU group in China). Note that they are positively thinking about future witness in mainland China!

From the Khasi Hills, India: A recent report from their General Secretary, Rev Helpme Mohrmen, describes their plans for continuing the education of their church leaders within the contexts both of their strong local democratic conditions and their recognition of a more professional approach to ministry being required in the modern world. Their first training session was well received and they hope that these training sessions will help leaders to develop skills that they need for doing ministry in their respective churches. They have found that the previous training was able to boost the leaders' confidence and also empower them. The training was on leading worship, conduct rites of passages, basic Khasi Unitarian beliefs and pastoral care.

Their Executive has also decided to start a review of partner church relations and has set up a Cell to oversee all matters involving partnerships. Two members of their leadership were able to attend the recent UUA General Assembly and meet with American UU Partner Church Council members.

From Chennai, India: The Madras Unitarian Church, partnered with the Glasgow and Edinburgh congregations in Scotland, is just about to rebuild their 200 year old church. The old building will come down and a modern replacement built. Professional advice has been taken and substantial financial help from an Appeal organised by the Scottish Unitarians will supplement local efforts. The existing bell tower (separate from the building) will be retained. The new building will be better able to serve the local community needs which the church tries to meet.

From Nigeria: The building of the First Unitarian Church in Lagos was under immediate threat because of irregularities in the planning and registration

procedures when it was constructed many years ago. The UUA international office and ICUU have provided an emergency grant to enable the proper procedures to be instituted. One of only three Unitarian churches of any duration in Africa, it would have been a great blow to the congregation to have lost it.

From Australia: The small single-room Shady Grove Unitarian chapel in the hills outside Adelaide will celebrate its 150th anniversary in October. It has served isolated farming communities both as a chapel and a school house over the generations and still lacks electricity and power. It does have a pedal organ, however, along with a continuing small congregation and part-time leader based in Adelaide.