



The Global Chalice

ICUU Newsletter www.icuu.net

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President Bill Sinkford (far right) introduces international guests to the UUA General Assembly, along with the UUA's first three ambassadors to fellow ICUU member groups.

From left, Revs. Pearl Greene Marbaniang and Derrick Pariat (Unitarian Union of NE India), Rev. Abhi Janamanchi (UUA Ambassador to UUNEI), Rev. Nihal Attanayake (UU Church of the Philippines), Rev. Fred Muir (UUA Ambassador to UUCP), Rev. Steve Dick (British General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches), Linda Thompson (Canadian Unitarian Council), Rev. Bela-Botond Jakabahazi (Transylvanian Unitarian Church/2007-8 Starr King Balazs Scholar), and Rev. John Gibbons (UUA Ambassador to TUC).

photo credit: UUA

ICUU President's Message

Many of our national groups have been holding their annual meetings, going about the business of deciding the many issues facing them and electing or re-electing some of their leaders. Most notable was the election of a new slate of officers led by Derrick Pariat in the Khasi Hills of North East India. This election represents a passing of the torch from a much respected elder generation to a younger group of leaders. The ICUU Executive wishes them well. More about this new era for Khasi Unitarians will appear in the next Global Chalice.

Meanwhile, a team from the UUA, the ICUU and the Partner Church Council are still working to develop assistance programs to be piloted in Africa and then, possibly, expanded to a larger scale. The ICUU is also working with theological schools to develop distance education programs for lay leaders seeking more training.

Many of the various annual meetings feature an international presence. This newsletter focuses on the ICUU's largest English-speaking member groups, which held their annual meetings in the past few months. The British in March, the Canadians in May, and the Unitarian Universalist Association in June, all included international guests and official ICUU representation.

In addition, European UUs welcomed Charlie Clements of the UU Service Committee as their guest speaker in April, and their next two retreats will feature ICUU officers. My point is that international awareness is growing – well, internationally! While it would be nice to give ICUU all the credit for this, the fact is it is really being driven by individuals around the globe who want to know more about the practices and the people who make up our global faith.

Now, that's exciting!

-Rev. Brian Kiely

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.

Report on the British Annual Meetings

-John Clifford

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches' Annual Meetings were held at the University of Hertfordshire, not far from London's Northwest.

Attendance was close to the average of recent years, around 300 including a handful of international guests. This event, always held during the Easter school break, was unusually early this year (in March) because Easter was also unusually early.

The three-day event consisted of lectures, business meetings, a quiet room, presentations, consultations, worship, and ever-present stalls including the bookshop and special-interest stalls. For many participants this annual event is an opportunity to renew friendships with distant Unitarians. Times to relax with a cup of tea or coffee were scheduled but sometimes hardly seemed relaxing in a very full and busy three days.

The theme for this year was "Preparing the Ground for Growth & Renewal" and the GA's new Chief Executive, the Rev Steve Dick (pictured below), presented his vision for emphases during his tenure on an attitude to growth and service. Dick made use of the opticians' definition for clarity of vision: 20:20, the year 2020 being only 12 years distant and being his notional retirement date. A secondary theme running through several presentations was the contribution of women to our movement.



Motions carried included several directed at UK governments, calling on them to introduce laws permitting religious involvement in ceremonies creating civil partnerships; to work more for crime prevention and rehabilitation rather than rely on prisons; and, in their consultations and negotiations with faith communities, to include the widest possible spectrums of faiths. Other motions congratulated the Women's League on reaching its centenary and recognized the Ministerial Fellowship as an affiliated society. There was also an emergency motion expressing support to the Welsh congregation of Gellionnen after its chapel was severely damaged by vandals.

International visitors included Mark Kiyimba of Uganda, Eric Cherry of the UUA, and Csába Tódor, (and his wife and daughter) a Transylvanian minister on study leave at Unitarian College. Several other Unitarians from overseas, including some temporarily serving British churches, were present and helping us all to realize that we are part of a growing world-wide religious movement.

ICUU and the UUA

-Will Saunders

There has been considerable confusion in recent years about the ICUU and the UUA. I hope that this column might help redress this confusion.

The ICUU is an organization of national judicatories worldwide. The membership of the ICUU is made up of organizations, not individuals. The UUA is a member of the ICUU, as is the Unitarian Church of Transylvania, the Indian Council of Unitarian Churches, the British General Assembly. There are twenty-three member organizations. Because the UUA is a member as an institution, the relationship is with the Board of Trustees, not the staff. I have been appointed as the Board's Liaison to the ICUU.

For some time, clarity about the respective roles and responsibilities of the ICUU and the UUA in the international arena has been absent. Together, we are trying to address this problem with a "Memorandum of Understanding" between the ICUU and the UUA. The ICUU Executive Committee may choose to initiate Memoranda with other national groups as well; this one was initiated by the UUA. It is almost finished and addresses such matters as who does what internationally, financial protocols, and structures of accountability. One important item is that, while the institutional aspects of the relationship fall to the Board's Liaison, the programmatic work is handled by the UUA's Office of International Resources.

The Memorandum process is an indication that the relationship between the ICUU and the UUA is maturing, and that the organizational looseness associated with start-up is a thing of the past. Just as the UUA aspires to be mission-driven, it chooses to be in relationship with other similarly aligned organizations.

The programmatic shift at the UUA with respect to our international work is significant and can be characterized as congregation-based. Rev. Eric Cherry, International Resources Director, leads the charge in this work. An International Advisory Committee under the leadership of Rev. John Buehrens has been established. Three "Ambassadors" have been appointed to represent the UUA President internationally. More may be appointed. In all, our work internationally is maturing. Our international relationships are no longer dependent on the particular style and preferences of the sitting UUA President. This is as it should be.

Some might wonder if the candidates for UUA President express different visions of our international work. At this point, the differences between the two announced candidates, Rev. Laurel Hallman and Rev. Peter Morales, appear minimal. What is different in this election cycle is that the Board of Trustees has a clear vision statement regarding international engagement and that will remain the UUA's vision unless the Board changes it.

In sum, I am enthusiastic about the prospects and the possibilities for the ICUU as it works to meet its mission of connecting Unitarian-Universalists around the world, nurturing emerging U-U groups, and helping us grow what is increasingly a global faith. Furthermore, I see no evidence to suggest that the current approach of the UUA will change in July, 2009, when a new UUA President takes office.

More than 600 Canadian Unitarians Converge on Ottawa



The new CUC Board “lit” its chalice with tulips because open flame is prohibited in buildings on the Algonquin College campus.

Photo credit: Tony Smith

The looming environmental crisis provided the theme and much of the program content for the Canadian Unitarian Council’s Annual Conference and Meeting in Ottawa, Ontario. With over 600 adults, youth and children in attendance it was also one of the largest CUC meetings ever. As one organizer noted, there were more youth present than the total number of attendees the last time Ottawa hosted the conference in 1993.

“The Web of Life – In our Hands” “La toile de la vie – Entre nos mains” was the conference theme. Participants took the idea seriously. Workshops were devoted to voluntary simplicity, merging spirituality and environmentalism and a host of other topics. National social responsibility policies concerning the environment were reviewed. One multigenerational day was built around a lunchtime performance of “Just Food”, a giant puppet play devoted to raising consciousness about the world’s food crisis. It was performed by adult and youth members of the Kingston, Ontario Fellowship.



One of the “Just Food” puppets

An interesting example of diverse minds reaching the same idea also arose during the three day meetings. A Board appointed Task Force reviewing Canadian attitudes towards the UU Principles concluded that we like the Principles as they are, but that we might want to consider making the seventh Principle (the interdependent web) our first.

Later that evening, Rev. Meg Roberts of Calgary and ICUU President Rev. Brian Kiely of Edmonton reached the same conclusion in a major lecture entitled “Can Eco-Spirituality Lead to Eco-Justice?”

Over \$6,700 was given at the Sunday Service to benefit Child Haven International and L’abri en Ville of Ottawa. These two organizations help vulnerable individuals—providing women and children in India, Nepal, Tibet and Bangladesh with food, education, health care, shelter, clothing, emotional and moral support, and providing people with serious mental illness in Ottawa with long-term housing and support. Additional gifts totalling over \$4,000 will be shared between the Ottawa Food Bank and the School Breakfast Program in Ottawa—again, supporting those who are most vulnerable.

The CUC enjoys welcoming international guests. This ACM saw visits from Joyce Ashworth, President of the British General Assembly, who led a morning worship service, Rev. Beth Miller from the UUA, and Jean-Claude Barbier from the Assemblée Fraternelle des Chrétiens Unitariens.

A well attended international dinner featured presentations from the International Association for Religious Freedom, the AFCU and the Partner Church Council. The ICUU also hosted a pre-banquet reception for all interested in the international UU movement. One visitor to that event was Rev. Chris Buice, on sabbatical from his congregation in Knoxville, TN. Just a few weeks later, Rev. Buice would be helping his congregation recover from the recent fatal shootings.

The CUC Annual Conference and Meeting has grown into a dynamic three day gathering (not to mention pre- and post-conference intensive training sessions and meetings). Wonderful worship, moving music, the chance to break bread with Unitarians and Universalists from across our vast land, the opportunity to exchange ideas and forge new and renew old friendships make it a worthwhile venture. That the meeting has grown from 200 a decade ago to over 600 this year is testament to its success.

Order ICUU books online!

The Home We Share, collected papers presented by lay and professional theologians at the **2006 ICUU Theological Symposium**, is now available online. Search www.uuabookstore.org for “Home We Share” or “International” and this book can be ordered with a credit card for delivery anywhere in the world. Thank you, UUA Bookstore!

ICUU Member Groups

Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Association
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 Association of Sri Lanka
Unitarian Universalist Association 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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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 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.unitarius.hu Unitarian Church in Hungary—enter in Hungarian or English

www.unitarius.ro Transylvanian Unitarian Church—enter site by clicking on belépés, then click on the US flag (not working at press time)

www.unitarisme.dk Danish Unitarian Church—click on “info in English,” left column.

www.unitarier.de Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft (Germany)—select English at top left

www.unitaria.cz Religious Society of Czech Unitarians—click on “Praha” for the Prague congregation’s site, which has some English content

<http://uuespana.googlepages.com/home>
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 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

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