



# Partner Church News

A publication of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council

Connecting Unitarian and Universalist congregations around the globe

Volume 14 Number 3

Winter 2007–2008

## BOARD CHAIR'S COLUMN

### A Faith Without Borders?

BY THE REV. HAROLD E. BABCOCK

*"The future is not someplace we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths to it are not found but made. The activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination."*

—Paris Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

I have just returned from a meeting of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) in beautiful Oberwesel, Germany, on the banks of the famous Rhine River. I return with a full heart and with a revived and profound sense of the importance of our liberal religious movement to a

world divided by religious violence. I return with a heart overflowing, having reconnected in friendship and love with some old friends, and having made some wonderful new ones.

In Germany I was able to spend some time with my friend Árpád Szabó, Bishop of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania, and with other members of the delegation of that church, some of whom I have met before, and some of whom have become fast new friends. I especially enjoyed a late evening discussion of English Romantic poetry with the Rev. Pearl G. Marbaniang, a wonderful leader and Director of Reli-

gious Education in the Unitarian Union of North East India, otherwise known as the Unitarian Church of the Khasi Hills. Who would think that two people of such disparate backgrounds and experiences of life in such distant parts of the world might share a mutual love of the poet John Keats? I was introduced to Tjahjadi Nugroho, founder of the Global Church of God in Indonesia and dedicated proponent of interfaith dialogue between Christians, Muslims, and others throughout Asia. His dream? To build a Unitarian mega-church in Indonesia. Who'd have thought (though

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The UUPCC Curriculum "Who Are Our Partners Around the World?" was presented at a workshop during the ICUU conference in Oberwesel, Germany in November. This picture includes Rebecca Quimada-Sienes (Negros Oriental, Philippines) explaining how amazingly accurate the information on the Philippines game is to Melinda Sayavedra and Shahan Islam (Oregon, USA).

### Expanding Partnerships

BY CATHY CORDES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We are preparing for the UUPCC Winter Board Meeting as I write this. One of the main agenda items will be strategic planning for increasing the number of US and Canadian churches in partnership. In his column in this newsletter, Harold Babcock writes of the many countries around the world where Unitarian Universalism is beginning to blossom. It is clear that there is a need for more churches to reach out in fellowship to U\*Us (*see footnote on p. 6*) around the globe.

*(Continued on page 4)*

The Mission of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council is to foster and support partner church relationships between North American congregations and congregations in all other countries where partnering is sought and welcomed. This includes countries where partners are already active.

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## A small apology...

To anyone who knows at least a little bit about the Hungarian language: you have noticed that there are some unique accent marks on some of the letters. In particular, the double-acute mark on *O*s and *U*s. Your editor simply *cannot* force this publishing program to create those letters!

The best substitute so far has been a *tilde* over the *o* (*õ*) or an *umlaut* over the *u* (*ü*).

Here is a portrait of the *o* (pronounced “eu”)



## Next PCC Deadline:

March 14, 2008

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Visit the web site at: [www.uupcc.org](http://www.uupcc.org)

## COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE:

# Virtual Conference Calls

*The communication task force is working on an outstanding lineup of Virtual Conference calls for the upcoming Winter Spring season. These calls are an excellent way to hear the latest information related to our partnership work and connect with others of similar interests across the great distances that separate our congregations without leaving your home.*

**February 18 • 8:00 p.m. (EST)** — Rev. Naomi King will facilitate a discussion of “**The Economic Impact of EU Accession on the Unitarian Villages in Transylvania**”. Naomi serves River of Grass UU Congregation in Florida, and is on the Board of Project Harvest Hope. The 2005 UUMA/LREDA/UUA Stewardship Sermon Award winner, Naomi has a keen interest in the flow of money as evidence of our UU spiritual commitment, practices, and growth. (*Rev. King asks that in the month before the conference call we keep our eyes peeled for tidbits of news about Romania and Transylvania. She suggests peeking into the business sections of major newspapers and the Central Europe section of business journals.*)

**Early March (date and time TBD)** — Tom Gallagher, author of *Modern Romania* (2005, New York University); chair of Ethnic Conflict and Peace at Bradford University and a long-time observer of Romania and other Balkan countries.

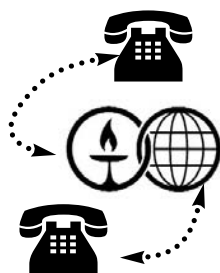
**March 19 • Wednesday • 8:00 p.m. (EST)** — Dee Idnani, PCC networker for and frequent visitor to the Khasi Hills churches since 2004, will lead the “**Annual India Update**” conference call. This call will include information about the early March Khasi Hills community assessment.

**April 3 • Thursday • 8:00 p.m. (EST)** — Rev. Scott Prinster will facilitate a discussion of “**Transylvanian Confirmation and Communion Services.**” Scott is a Starr King graduate, was an English teacher at János Zsigmond Unitarian High School in Kolozsvár for two years; served as a district networker, and has been on the PCC Board.

**April 15 • Tuesday • 8:00 p.m. (EST)** — Michael Loof, Harvard Divinity Student and UUPCC Intern for 2007. Michael has worked in the field of finance in the US— for both commercial banks and the federal government. He is particularly interested in the ideas of the philosophy and theology of microfinance when it is combined with faith-based groups. Together with Cathy Cordes, he will outline the research done during this internship, share some interesting readings and discuss “**Microfinance and Partnership.**”

**May 20 • Tuesday • 8:00 p.m. (EST)** — Rev. Harold Babcock, UUPCC Chair and Cathy Cordes, Executive Director will facilitate the “**Annual UUPCC Leadership Conversation**” call.

**TO REGISTER FOR A CALL,** send an email to [office@uupcc.org](mailto:office@uupcc.org) or call the office 9–5 EST weekdays at 781-275-1710.



Include: \* your name \* city/state \* the topic/date of the call you will attend

You will be sent an email with the call-in information 2–3 days before the call (*please let the office know if you don't have access to email*).

Feel free to submit questions to the speakers ahead of time by email: [office@uupcc.org](mailto:office@uupcc.org)

*The October conference call notes are on page 6*

## A Faith Without Borders?

*(Continued from page 1)*

we might find their three-hour worship services a bit on the long side!).

I discovered that there are emerging Unitarian groups in several countries in Africa, including the Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, Burundi, and Uganda. I met the charismatic young ministers of several of these churches. At least one of these Unitarian groups, the one in Lagos, Nigeria, has been around for 87 years, but the others are relatively new.

I spent time speaking with Roberto Rosso, a young Italian man in a wheel chair who discovered Unitarian Universalism on the Internet and has since founded the Congregazione Italiana Christiana Unitariana. He spoke movingly to us of the difficulty of pursuing a liberal religious path in a country so heavily dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. He is sometimes accused of Satanism! And I met the wonderfully soft-spoken Esteban Obregón, founder of a Unitarian Universalist group in Mexico City. I already knew that there was a thriving Unitarian Universalist church in the Philippines, but I was grateful finally to meet one of its outstanding leaders, Rebecca Quimada-Sienes.

I think perhaps the most interesting aspect of this encounter is that almost all of these groups are indigenous to the countries in which they are located. Although there are some expatriate American UU groups in France and Germany, most of the groups in the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists, including those in France and Germany, are natives of the lands where they are found. They conduct worship in their native tongues. Altogether, there are twenty-three Unitarian or Universalist groups represented by the ICUU. In addition to Canada and the United States, there are established churches in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. There are, in addition to those groups I have already mentioned, existing congregations in Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Finland, and Argentina. Cuba, believe it or not, currently has two Unitarian

Universalist groups. And there is another emerging group in far-off Bolivia. There may even be small groups in Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

What is remarkable is that most of these groups have grown up independently, often completely unaware that there are others who share their religious values and beliefs. Almost all of

**There seems to be among them all a shared understanding that religion is not about belief, but about the search for each person's "hidden wholeness."**

them have adopted the symbol of a flaming chalice. Everyone I spoke with shares an Emersonian belief in an individual spark of the divine within the human being. All of them are fiercely opposed to theological dogmatism. There seems to be among them all a shared understanding that religion is not about belief, but about the search for each person's "hidden wholeness."

These groups are often refreshingly diverse in their membership, particularly racially. They are proof that the underlying principles of Unitarianism and Universalism can exist and thrive outside of our usual North American demographic of middle and upper-middle class white-and-educated homogeneity. In the Khasi Hills of India, for example, few can afford an education beyond elementary school.

Yet, these are people who share our fundamental affirmations: freedom of conscience in matters of religion; tolerance of those whose religious beliefs differ from our own; a reasoned approach to religious ideas and sacred texts; and a willingness to change and grow in our religious understandings. They get it.

In spite of the very real theological differences—some of these groups maintain a biblical and Christian stance, while others are more humanistic in approach—all are in basic agreement with the principles of the ICUU: liberty of conscience and individual thought in matters of faith, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, justice and compassion in human relations and

responsible stewardship of the earth's living system.

Is it possible that UUism is finally beginning to fulfill its promise and becoming a truly global faith, a faith without borders? Though I personally had long been aware that Unitarians existed in places like Transylvania, India, and the Philippines, I had no idea of the breadth of interest in and commitment to our faith. Given knowledge of it, our religious approach obviously has a more than national appeal. I find it amazingly exciting and reassuring, at this most difficult time in world history, when so many are divided by religion, when so much violence is the result of religious disagreements, that our liberal religious way of openness and tolerance is finally taking on a more distinctly international flavor.

Not that many of these groups do not face obstacles, both external and internal, to their ultimate success. Many of them are poor, and most of them lack professional leadership or a trained ministry. But in today's world of internet communications it is clear that it is becoming much easier for people around the world to access information about our faith and to find allies in it. And finally there is an organization—ICUU—which, it is hoped, can assist and support these groups in their struggles to become viable, worshipping, liberal religious

*(Continued on page 4)*



### "Who Are Our Partners Around the World?"

Here, Tjahyadi Nugroho (Indonesia), Richard Boeke (England), and Jeanne Kocsis (US) play the game about Transylvania Unitarians from the UUPCC Curriculum. Jill McAllister and a friend are playing the game about Unitarians in the Czech Republic in the background. Each game includes information about the religious history, religious beliefs, and cultural practices in each country.

## Expanding Partnerships

(Continued from page 1)

The UUPCC Board recently discussed whether or not to encourage partnerships with some of these emerging congregations. How do we know what will happen? Do we have all the information we need? What defines a Unitarian\*Universalist congregation? In countries where our faith has been established for years—over 400 years in Transylvania, over 100 years in India and over 50 years in the Philippines—the answers are much easier. With newly emerging groups the answers are much less clear. The board determined that we can never be 100% sure about any partnership and if we waited for that, there would never have been any partnerships—or a UUPCC.

We do want to know, however, that the people we are connecting with are not simply opportunists representing their own interests. The Board agreed to move slowly and deliberately on partnering with congregations that have taken the initiative to complete our application process. And UUPCC will work deliberately in conjunction with the ICUU and the UUA. With them, we will gather as much information as possible about unknown congregations before matching them. We also will make it clear to the U.S. congregation that they are “pioneering” if they choose to partner in a country where UUPCC does not have well-established channels of communication and contacts.

The UUPCC vision calls for us to help develop partnerships “wherever they are sought and welcomed.” Our primary purpose is to build relationships and friendships between congregations. It is those relationships that expand the “world view” for the U.S. congregations and enrich our world community of Unitarians and Universalists.

I want to say a little more about the purpose of partnerships. We do not do this work in order to raise money for our partners, or to overcome extreme poverty. While those are noble goals, they are not part of the mission of the UUPCC. There are many fine organizations that exist that are today working on those goals. The extreme poverty

## A Faith Without Borders?

(Continued from page 3)

communities, part of a worldwide community of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism.

In the meantime, many of these groups continue to meet in the homes of their members, or even, in the case of the small group in Bolivia, outdoors. Some, such as those in Cuba, must meet surreptitiously and secretly. Some have difficulty proving to the political authorities that their purpose is a religious one. There are, not surprisingly, internal power struggles in some of them. Many of them are poor, some even in communities without access to running water. Just getting to them and from them over terrible roads can be a problem. Often the members have only rudimentary knowledge of how to run an institution; often they have little practical knowledge of how democracy works. Indeed, in some African countries, with their deep traditional and tribal divisions and tyrannical majori-



**“Who Are Our Partners Around the World?”**  
(UUPCC Curriculum) In this picture David Usher (UK), Lilian Burlando (Argentina), and Sherry Wells (Michigan) playing the game about Britain’s Unitarians.

that exists for many of our fellow Unitarian and Universalists around the world is not going to be fixed easily. Seeing their poverty is not easy for us. We are caring and compassionate and it is natural to want to help. We know the problem of poverty is complex and deeply rooted in culture and governance and history. We cannot fix it for them. We can care. We can reach out.

ties, it is not even clear that western-style democracy can succeed.

But I am inspired by their dedication, by their faith, by their hope, and most importantly, by their love. We have brothers and sisters in unexpected places, my friends, people who think as we think and whose greatest dream is simply to be able to worship freely, as we are blessed to be able to do.

It is always a gift to be able to travel beyond the borders of what is familiar and known and to discover new ways of seeing and understanding our world. Truly, it is good to be together, even, or especially, in all of our beautiful and unique differences.

I pray that our faith will continue to grow and to flourish, and that it will provide a religious home to more and more people in generations yet to come.

In a recent theological symposium, held in Kolozsvar/Cluj, Romania, former Unitarian Universalist Association President John Buehrens said,

*Our theological house may be small, fragile, and seem in danger of being blown over in the storms and tumults of our time. But, at its best, it is a vital House of Hope, not only for ourselves, but for many who have never even heard our name. Let us dialogue about its future, that we might repair, rebuild, strengthen, expand and fulfill the promise inherent in our heritage, hoping that we might yet be part of, and catalysts for, humanity’s saving remnant.*

It is something like that vision, and that hope, that originally led me into the ministry. May we all, together, continue to build that House of Hope for all who may wish to enter it. ●●

We can spiritually support. And we can introduce tools that have been demonstrated to work again and again. We can help identify resources that already exist and maybe even provide some of those resources to the community—when asked.

We do realize that a natural outcome of developing relationships is that

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# Educational System for High Schools in Transylvania Today

BY RODGER MATTLAGE \*

**SUMMARY:** To preserve a viable and flourishing culture within the overall Romanian culture, it is essential that the Unitarian minority in Transylvania is able to offer native Hungarian education at all levels. The objective of this article is to provide information about the high school programs available to ethnic Hungarian youth from our Unitarian partner church communities in Transylvania. This article only scratches the surface. Hopefully it provides an informative starting place.

In Romania, the state government pays the basic tuition costs for all students. However, it does not pay for room and board for those students who live too far away for a daily commute to and from their school.

In the rural areas of Romania where most of the Transylvanian Hungarians live there are regional high schools, just as there are in rural areas in the US with low population densities.

In other areas where ethnic Hungarians are less concentrated, Hungarian language instruction and studies are not available at the high school level. For ethnic Hungarian students in these areas a Hungarian-language high school education is not a possibility unless they can find a place to stay and a way to pay for room and board at or near one of the high schools where Hungarian-language instruction is available.

There are two Hungarian Unitarian high schools in Romania. Both are in Transylvania. The oldest is in Kolozsvár (in Romanian: Cluj-Napoca—2002 population approximately 320,000, 19% Hungarian). The other is in Székelykeresztúr (in Romanian: Cristuru Secuiesc—2002 population approximately 10,000, 98% Hungarian). In both schools, native level proficiency is required in both the Hungarian and Romanian languages. Dormitory facilities are also available at both schools.

Kolozsvár's János Zsigmond Unitárius Kollégium is the oldest secondary school in Romania and one of the oldest in Europe. It was founded in 1557 by Rev. Ferenc Dávid, the founder of Unitarianism in Transylvania. The Kollégium has over 200 students (roughly an equal number of girls and boys) from all over Transylvania. While most of the students who receive scholarships are Unitarian, about one third are not (e.g., Reformed, Catholic,

Lutheran—and, before the Holocaust, Jewish). Since communist times, the school shares the building with a secular state school that appropriated the name of the old Unitarian School, Brassai Sámuel.

Székelykeresztúr's Unitarian school was founded in 1793 by the Synod of the Unitarian Church. The school, formerly known as the "Baron Orbán Balázs Unitárius Gimnázium," as of this year (2007) has a new name: Berde Mózes Unitárius Gimnázium. Today the school has a total of 317 students, of whom 186 are at the high school level in two sections. Students come from all over Transylvania. The students are primarily Unitarian but non-Unitarian students who are open to the curriculum offered are also welcome.

Since communist times, Székelykeresztúr's Unitarian school shares the original Unitarian school building with the state's secular high school which appropriated the name "Orbán Balázs

Native level proficiency in the Romanian language is required of all students in all Romanian primary and secondary schools.

In areas with sufficient concentrations (+/- 20%) of ethnic Hungarians (chiefly in Harghita, Covasna and Mures counties) a high school may have one or more "sections" (see note, below) for the ethnic Hungarian students, where students must attain native level proficiency in both the Hungarian and Romanian languages, and one or more sections where only Romanian proficiency is required. For example, this is the case in Kézdivásárhely (Targu Secuiesc) in Covasna county. Other foreign languages such as English, German and French are also taught, in different combinations and to different levels, depending on the individual school.

*(Note: a "section" comprises of a set of students who stay together as a group throughout their high school years under the guidance of a faculty member who acts as their mentor and leader for all four years).*

Gimnázium" in 1993. The state school also has two sections of students, and native-level proficiency is required in both the Hungarian and Romanian languages. It rents its space from the Unitarian church which regained ownership of the building in 2005. It occupies separate floors of the building and has a separate head of the school, administration and classes. (Note: The state high school will probably be moving out of the building in the next few years.)

Székelykeresztúr also has a separately-located state "technical" high school which trains students in the various trades. Kolozsvár also has a number of other state schools at the high school level.

Almost all of the graduates from the two Unitarian high schools go on to college or university, providing many of the greatly-needed leaders for the Hungarian community in Transylvania.

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**\* UUPCC NOTE:** Rodger Mattlage was asked to write this article to provide some background on the educational system and to specifically explain the situation in the Unitarian High School in Székelykeresztúr (also known as Keresztúr, near Székelyudvarhely and Segesvár). First Parish in Concord is partnered with the Unitarian church in Keresztúr.

Students from many of the communities where US churches have partners attend high school in a number of cities and towns. Students take an exam to see if they qualify for academic high school. They can choose—within certain limits—which school to attend. They might be attending a trade school, or an academic high school run by the state, or an academic high school run by the Catholics or some other religion. As Rodger says, "Check with the minister" in your partner village for specific information about where students from your village are attending high school.

Religion is taught in every school, state or religious. The minister or RE minister teaches the classes.

## Expanding Partnerships

(Continued from page 4)

partners often do work on identified local issues and needs. This is a natural progression from getting to know one another. But, I repeat, it is not our primary mission.

The UUPCC spent three years working on guidelines for partners around the issues of money. Those guidelines are in our handbook and published on our website. If you have not read these recently, I encourage every partnership to do so.

In an effort to identify ways that money can be helpful, the UUPCC has spent four years pilot testing community-planning methodology with Richard Ford. Those pilot projects have shown that, for money donations to be most helpful (not paternalistic, not dependency-building) and to be faithful to the UU principles of democratic

action, the local communities themselves should be intimately involved in planning for any projects that are done. That is, priorities should be set by the community as a whole, not determined by the U.S. partner or by one or two leaders in the partner congregation.

It is not a quick fix, but world poverty is not something that can be fixed easily.

Underlying all our efforts is a belief in building long-term, sustainable partnerships that create a global community of Unitarians and Universalists. Helping to strengthen that community and our common faith is our mission.

In some cases, the current model of congregational partnership might not be the best model. The UUPCC is also working on what we are calling “focused” partnerships. These will be time-limited partnerships that focus on

a single issue. But the basis of these partnerships will also be relationship. All of them will contain a component of connection and relationship-building because that is indeed our mission. ●●

## Your Help is Needed

It is exciting to contemplate new partnerships and we need your help. If your congregation is interested in considering a second partnership or if you know another congregation in your district that we should contact about partnership, please write to our Outreach Coordinator, Lee Boeke Burke at [chickadeetree@earthlink.net](mailto:chickadeetree@earthlink.net) or [office@uupcc.org](mailto:office@uupcc.org)

*(Footnote: The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists uses U\*U and Unitarian \* Universalist to refer to the many combinations of Unitarians, Universalists and Unitarian Universalists around the world. I have adopted that shorthand here.)*

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## Philippines Conference Call

BY LINDA LU BURCIAGA  
CO-CHAIR, COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE

Another interesting and insightful call hosted by the Task Force took place on October 18th, 2007. Guest moderators Lee Boeke Burke and Dick Van Duizend led a group of about a dozen from states across the country. Callers Chris Nielson and Phyllis Marshall, both from the Annapolis UU congregation, shared stories from their experiences with “Buhata Pinay,” a church-sponsored program in the Philippines.

Lee Boeke Burke initiated the call, giving her own personal history working in the Philippines. Her first trip in February of 2007 was actually as the PCC staff person working to develop partnerships there. She traveled to 16 of 25 congregations in Negros and then to emerging churches in Manila. Lee advised that the best way to get others interested in partnership is to sponsor a trip.

Dick Van Duizend visited Manila and Negros recently on a five-day trip.

He was much impressed with the self-sufficiency and desire to improve living conditions. Micro finance is well organized and well run. There is a great willingness to try new and different things, some of which work out and others not. There is a great level of hope and resolve which is a function of their faith. Dick highlighted this sense of faith when he told us that the last hymn in a service is most often, “Creators of a New Reality.” (see p. 18)

Phyllis Marsh and Chris Neilson of Annapolis, MD then explained the strong bond which their congregation shares with those in the Philippines, kept vital by their minister, Rev. Fred Muir. Buhata Pinay was formed about 1-1/2 years ago, establishing a key role for women in society—economic, political, educational and health care related. Many good contacts have been made with NGOs as other resources will be drawn upon. Phyllis traveled to the Philippines to learn more about the people and culture. Attending festivals, parades, fiestas, and birthday parties, she came away with a love of the people and of the country. Now, given their varied experiences and knowledge of

people and places, a tour trip is planned for this coming March (details are on the PCC website and on page 20). Upon hearing the description of this trip, our caller from Colorado exclaimed, “I’m eager to go tomorrow but I’ll wait until March!”

Towards the end of the conference call, there was a brief description of how our expression of faith is similar and how different. (ex.: Rather than the Seven Principles, they have eight—with their first principle being “God is Love” and the remaining seven the same as ours.) Dick Van Duizend spoke of the ever present “sacrament” in N. American tradition of the *Coffee Hour*. Well, in the Philippines, it’s the *Coconut Milk Hour*! Chris Neilson spoke of the children—kind, gentle, bright, wanting a chance in life. And, we can influence their futures as they have influenced ours by establishing deep partnership bonds.

As the final hymn sung at their worship services is titled “Creators of a New Reality,” may our partnerships with those in the Philippines and around the world create a new reality for each and every one of us. ●●

## Educational System

(Continued from page 5)

Approximately 70% of Transylvania's Unitarian ministers, bishops, lay presidents and church leaders started their studies in Székelykeresztúr.

In Székelykeresztúr, the dormitory of Berde Mózes Unitarian High School houses 81 students. 70 of these are Unitarians. The budgeted cost for room and board in the dormitory for the 2007-2008 school year is 2,012 RON (the "new" Romanian currency) which is \$837.50 (USD) using the conversion rate on Dec. 6, 2007 when this article was written. This is for students staying in the dormitory during the week. Costs are proportionally higher for students for whom it is impractical to go home on weekends. Costs for the school in Kolozsvár are similar.

The scholarship program of First Parish in Concord Massachusetts has been awarding "sponsorship" grants to individual high school students to help cover their room and board costs at the Székelykeresztúr school since 1996. Each fall, Rev József Szombatfalvi (the minister in Keresztúr) works with the leadership of the congregation and the high school to draw up a list of the Unitarian high school students eligible for sponsorship. First Parish then finds sponsors from among its congregation and from the greater Boston Hungarian community. For the 2007-2008 academic year 37 high school students are being sponsored at the suggested sponsorship level of \$400.

The scholarship program of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) Virginia has been awarding "sponsorship" grants to students at the Kolozsvár Unitarian high school since 2003. For the 2007-2008 academic year 43 students are being sponsored at the suggested sponsorship level of \$300.

In both programs, a sponsorship may be shared. For example, two or more sponsors may split the cost of a student's sponsorship. Also a group may sponsor a student. For example, the Concord women's group, its adult choir and its high school youth group

each sponsor a student to the Székelykeresztúr school.

Sponsors are expected to sponsor "their" student for all four high school years. Once a student-sponsor relationship has been created, periodic contact between student and sponsor is very strongly encouraged, by email or regular mail.

Where a student's need is greater than a sponsorship provides, additional funds may also be provided by the Transylvanian Unitarian Church, the Romanian government or the student's local community and/or church.

A lot of sponsors continue supporting their students to colleges and universities. These costs are higher and the suggested level of sponsorship is also higher. For example, it is \$660 for each of the 13 students sponsored by the Concord program.

Some students receive support directly from their own communities and/or partner churches and do not need the additional support provided by the Concord or Fairfax programs. There may be other programs for other high schools that we are not aware of. It is very important that those in US churches who want to support students from their partner church communities consult with their partner ministers and lay leaders in Transylvania. It is these local people who are aware of their local priorities and the options which are available and appropriate for the members of their local communities. These include the sponsorship programs mentioned above and potentially others as well.

These financial support programs are an essential part of helping to insure the future of both the Unitarian minority in Transylvania and the larger Hungarian minority community in Transylvania. An added bonus for sponsors and their families is the opportunity to get to know these talented young people and their families.

Here is how Rev. Zsolt Solymosi, spiritual leader and teacher at the Kolozsvár school, describes the students and the need: "They are great students who are financially very poor.

I think they deserve to be helped by this program."

A very important note: To improve the depth and breadth of education available to their children and to preserve their minority culture, both the Kolozsvár and Székelykeresztúr Unitarian schools are adding primary and middle school grades and students. They are looking to create additional financial support programs to help these students. More information about these programs is both needed and will be forthcoming. For example: For the past several years János Zsigmond Unitárius Kollégium has been developing an elementary school program, with a view toward creating a K-12 Unitarian school. Each year another grade is added. This year it is 5th grade. The Székelykeresztúr school has also started grades at the primary level and is planning to add a new grade each year until they have all grades from primary through middle school and high school. Stay tuned: there will definitely be additional financial support needs and opportunities! ●●

**If you have further questions** about the Fairfax program, please contact Bob Tripp at [trippm@yahoo.com](mailto:trippm@yahoo.com). If you have further questions about the Concord program, or have either questions or additional information about education needs, programs and/or opportunities for our brothers and sisters in Transylvania, please contact the author at [rmattlage@yahoo.com](mailto:rmattlage@yahoo.com).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Many, many thanks for sharing their knowledge as well as for their help and patience go to the following people who made significant contributions to this article: Ivan Kristoffy and Pat Brinkman (from Concord); Bob Tripp (from Fairfax); Emese Nagy and Rev. Sándor Lakatos (from Székelykeresztúr); and newsletter editor Nancy Daugherty (from Bedford). *Minden jól!*

### JOIN PCC-CHAT!

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## RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

# Capacity Building in Partner Communities

BY RICHARD FORD

While the stock market may be sagging in New York and Tokyo, UUPCC's Capacity Building program is paying dividends. The accomplishments of Nagbinlod on Negros Island (The Philippines) have been reported several times in this newsletter. Its energy and actions multiply each year. Recall that in 2003, as the Capacity Building program was getting started, Nagbinlod was a conflict-ridden community. At the core of the conflict lay tension between the village's Catholic and UU churches. A participatory needs assessment brought the churches together and all members of the community agreed that their highest priority need was a gravity-fed, piped water system.

Using their action plan as a lever, the village mobilized labor from within the community and funding from the local government and UU partners in North America. In less than a year they had completed the water system, providing water to seven standpipes strategically located throughout the village.

Over the next three years the water system enabled the community to attract:

- An agricultural extension center offering courses in irrigated market crop production,
- Greenhouses and fast-growing seeds from a Taiwanese seed company so that market crops (fruit and vegetables) could be grown in 8 to 10 weeks,
- A three-fold increase in size of the village school,
- Renovations to the village health

clinic and assembly room,

- Road improvements,
- An energized women's group to manage some of the income-generation programs that were resulting from the new agricultural production.

All of these improvements from 2003 to 2006 resulted from village action and community fundraising that totaled about \$75,000. The North American partner investment was about \$5,000. Since 2006, the dividends have continued to grow.

Several villages adjacent to Nagbinlod watched how the new water system increased agricultural production, crop sales, health services, school attendance, and new families moving into the area. They asked how they could become involved. Over the last year, the mayor of Santa Catalina (Nagbinlod's municipality) has been meeting with committees from six villages near Nagbinlod as well as committees in the town of Santa Catalina—a total of between 15,000 and 20,000 people. They agreed to cooperate, using Nagbinlod's planning process and leadership techniques (rooted in the UUPCC capacity building approach), to tap into a much larger water source and construct a regional system to serve all seven communities. As of this writing, funds have been approved at municipal, provincial, and national levels to install the expanded water system with the villages providing local labor in their respective com-

munities. The total cost will be about \$50,000, all of which the communities and the leadership team have raised.

Consider the math. Think about the return on the original North American partner's investment of \$5,000. Local leadership has learned how to raise funds and obtain political backing to the tune of well over an additional \$100,000 for the four years of village improvements. How many of us have realized a 20 to 1 return on our investments over a four year period? Nagbinlod has. Capacity building is working for them.

Based on achievements of the planning and training tools, the San Diego UU church, in cooperation with other UU churches and the Philippine-American community in the San Diego area, has launched a partnership with another Philippine UU community: Malingin. They plan to conduct an assessment within the next 8 to 10 months. Their hope is that the assessment will lead to energies and action comparable with Nagbinlod's accomplishments.

The Philippine villages are not the only groups progressing in their capacity to manage their own development. The most recent activities in Bencéd (Transylvania) add another chapter to their already substantial gains. Last year they remodeled a house so their long-vacant church could host a minister. The new pastor arrived last September and has already established a place for herself in the community. The community cyber café, opened last year, now offers computer and internet lessons to both children and adults. The new monthly village newspaper continues publication, summer environmental camp for the young people has run for a second year with 31 children enrolled, more parents are involved in supporting the computer and summer camp programs, and a second Bencéd homecoming weekend (*falutalálkoszó*) to welcome all former residents of the village took place last summer, this time with 400 current and former Bencéd residents attending. Pleased with progress during the first year, a



Nearly every elder in Bencéd attended a special luncheon organized in their honor.

(Continued on page 11)

# Microfinance and Microcredit

**Microfinance Guide** BY MICHAEL JOHN LOOFT

## KEY TERMS

- **Microfinance:** Practice of providing financial services, such as microcredit, micro-savings or microinsurance to poor people. By helping them to accumulate useably large sums of money, this expands their choices and reduces the risks they face. As suggested by the name, most transactions involve small amounts of money, frequently less than US\$100.
- **Microcredit:** Extension of very small loans to the unemployed, to poor entrepreneurs and to others living in poverty who are not considered bankable. These individuals lack collateral, steady employment and a verifiable credit history and therefore cannot meet even the most minimal qualifications to gain access to traditional credit. Microcredit is a part of microfinance, which is the provision of a wider range of financial services to the very poor.

## MICROFINANCE APPROACHES

- **Individual Lending:** Provision of credit to individuals who are not members of a group that is jointly responsible for loan repayment. Requires frequent and close contact with individual clients to provide credit products tailored to specific needs of the business. Most successful for larger, urban-based, production-oriented businesses and for clients who have some form of collateral or a willing cosigner.
- **Grameen Solidarity Group Lending:** Peer groups of five unrelated members are self-formed and incorporated into village “centers” of up to eight peer groups. Attendance at weekly meetings is mandatory. Savings must be contributed for four to eight weeks prior to receiving the loan and must continue for the duration of the loan term. While group members mutually guarantee each other’s loans, they are not responsible for paying off loans of other members. However, no further loans are available if any one member does not repay her loan on time. Loans are made to individuals within the group by the local credit officer at the weekly meetings. Branch staff verify information and make periodic visits to client businesses. Clients are from rural and urban areas and are usually women from low-income groups.
- **Latin American Solidarity Group Lending:** Individual loans to members in groups of four to seven. The members cross-guarantee each other’s loans to replace traditional collateral. Access to subsequent loans is dependent on successful repayment by all group members. Payments are made weekly at a program office. Loan approval is done through a credit officer based on minimal economic analysis of each loan request. Loan disbursement is made to the group leader at the branch office, who immediately distributes to each individual member. Credit officers make brief, occasional visits to individual clients. Clients are mostly urban and have small to medium incomes.

- **Village Banking:** Community-managed credit and savings associations established to provide access to financial services in rural areas, building a community self-help group, and help members accumulate savings. Membership usually ranges from 30 to 50 people, based on self-selection, and financed by internal mobilization of members, funds as well as outside loans. To eliminate the need for collateral, these banks rely on a system of cross-guarantees, where each member of a village bank ensures the loan of every other member. This system gives rise to an atmosphere of social pressure within the bank.

Village banks elect their own leaders, select their own members, create their own bylaws, do their own bookkeeping, manage all funds, disburse and deposit all funds, resolve loan delinquency problems, and levy their own fines on members who come late, miss meetings, or fall behind in their payments. The management committee of the village bank must receive outside training in order to function autonomously. The goal of the village banking model is for the bank to become both self reliant and to serve the entire village.

This fall, UUPCC has also been focusing on microcredit and micro-finance. It is a “hot” topic at the moment, and many of you have expressed an interest and wondered if this was a model that might be useful in partnerships. Michael Looft, a Harvard Divinity student, is working with us as an intern this year to help make some sense of a very complicated subject. His specific interest is the theology of microfinance and charitable giving. As I work with Michael, I realize how very little I know (though I am learning more each day) about this complicated topic. We are hoping to develop some materials for congregational partnerships that want to get involved in microfinance/microcredit. As a start, see the glossary at left and below, and bibliography on page 11 in this newsletter. If your partnership is currently involved in a microcredit project or is interested in exploring this further, please drop me a line [ccordes@uupcc.org](mailto:ccordes@uupcc.org)

—Cathy Cordes

## SAVING ASSOCIATION (NON-MICROCREDIT)

- **ROSCA:** Rotating Savings and Credit Associations. An association formed upon a core of participants who make regular contributions to a fund which is given, in whole or in part, to each contributor in rotation. No outsiders are involved, no one is beholden to anyone else and the process is efficient and reliable. Rather than storing cash, money is passed directly from one member to another. Finding a safe place to store savings is not easy for those living in developing countries, and savings clubs offer a physical means to protect that savings. ●●

See the “Microfinance Bibliography” on page 11 of this issue.



# Presence in Partnership

BY RUTH GIBSON

One of my first lessons in partnership had to do with the value of presence. Early on, in my first partnership, our partner minister enthusiastically urged us to visit. “Nobody in the village speaks English” he told us, “but it won’t matter, because love needs no translation.”

It took a while for me to understand. At first it seemed so difficult to figure out the logistics—just how would we get to our partner village, when we could barely find it on the map? Then there was the matter of cost—if I had the money to travel there, wouldn’t it be better to give the money to the village?

After a visit or two I began to understand the extraordinary importance of face-to-face contact. I began to appreciate that when people who live in different cultures meet, we change each other and we change the world. I remember the school teacher who rejoiced in the partnership because he knew that the children in his school would learn so much more about the world, would be inspired and encouraged to wonder and ask and learn, because people from a far-away country were visiting their village. I remember meeting a pediatrician, who asked me if I felt like a person who was free and unafraid. I had never asked myself that question—but she was asking because she had been struck by how strange Americans looked to her. We looked

different in a way she didn’t quite understand at first, but she was coming to the conclusion that it had to do with an attitude of being free and unafraid, and that the experience of oppression and fear manifested itself in a physical way, even in early childhood, that she recognized as not healthy. As she was not associated with our Partner village, I never did get to know her well enough to learn how her insights influenced her professional practice, but I’m sure it must have done.

**Presence is the key to partnership. We are changed, we change our world, just by meeting one another in the ways that partnership encourages and allows.**

Presence is the key to partnership. Being with my partners over time, to understand that I did not need to be there with the right answer or a big check or the right resource or the right action plan to solve what I thought were my partners’ problems. That wasn’t what was needed or wanted. What mattered, clearly, was just being there. Being there, I have found myself asking or being asked, questions that change the way I see my life and my community, and these insights lead to change.

Just being there makes a difference. On last year’s Partner Church pilgrimage to the Khasi Hills, we learned that nearly every village with a Unitarian congregation has a Unitarian school, open to all the children regardless of their religion. I had prepared for these village visits by bringing a jar of bubble stuff; it’s generally an easy way to connect to children when you don’t know their language. In two of the villages we visited, it was clear that the children had never seen anything like this at all! Later I heard that

a little boy with a tendency towards truancy is now attending school faithfully, because he doesn’t want to be absent if Americans come again. And bubble stuff is now part of the neighboring schools’ curriculum for special occasions.

Another member of our group had the opportunity, after having visited her partner village, to stop by another small village on the way back. This village was extremely isolated and remote, being at the bottom of a river valley. There are no roads to this village. There is a path and at the top of it there are a few feet of steep cement steps, with no handrail. Later the steps give way to earthen footholds, and eventually there is simply a steep and narrow pathway.

She was greeted when she arrived by all the men women and children of the village. They wondered who she was and where she had come from. This turned out to be a more difficult question to answer than one would suppose, because most of the villagers had never been to the nearest town with a road; none had ever been to the city where the pilgrimage group was staying. None had ever seen the ocean, or an airplane; few had ever seen a car. They hadn’t met many outsiders either—Lisa, it turned out, was only the third non-Khasi person to visit this village—the other two—can you guess?—were Unitarian Universalist ministers, on partnership pilgrimages.

It’s hard to imagine that there are such remote places in the world. But can you imagine any better way for a connection to be made? As partners we aren’t out to invade, exploit, study or manage the people we meet. We come and are received with love, and friendship. We tell each other in words or with our eyes, “I see you, I know you, I care about you, I will not forget you.” This is what partnership is about at the heart of it, and this deep sense of connection comes to us most clearly when we meet, face-to-face. No amount of money sent would have led to the kinds of insight and experience gained through face-to-face meetings. ●●



## Capacity Building

(Continued from page 8)

number of villagers met last spring to conduct a second ranking session to see what new priorities had emerged over the year. They determined that the village should:

- Do more for the elderly,
- Work on cleaning up the entire community on Earth Day (22 April),
- Make a new sign board at the entrance to Bencéd, and
- Prepare a history of the Bencéd church

For the elderly, the young people of the village organized a special luncheon, issued written invitations to every senior citizen in the village, prepared boxes of staple foods for each senior citizen, and personally escorted some of those in need of assistance to the luncheon. It was a good time for both the young and the old, as noted in the pictures. The village clean-up day was a great success with more than 100 people (there are 171 residents in Bencéd) participating.

They have completed the sign for the village, and on top of all of these small projects, are now preparing a webpage for the village. It will be posted on the Internet as soon as their site registration is finalized. They have also recently published a 100-page

book, including over 100 old village photos, detailing the history of the church and the community. Perhaps of even greater interest, Bencéd's lead facilitator, Krisztina Pall, is now being invited to speak at workshops and conferences all over the country to tell the story of how capacity building has enabled them to transform their village.

Other communities in Transylvania continue with their programs, and a new village, Torockószentgyörgy, has recently completed an assessment and will embark on its implementation phase in cooperation with its partner churches, East Shore UU and the nearby West Seattle UU Fellowship, both in the state of Washington.

Given the energy and activity flowing from The Philippines and Transylvania, the UU church in Puriang, in cooperation with the Fairfax, Virginia UU church will be conducting a participatory needs assessment in the Spring ('08). There are also two additional assessments tentatively scheduled for April in Transylvania, one in Abásfalva with its partner church in Bedford, Massachusetts, and the second in Vargyas with its partner church in Pittsfield, MA.

The accompanying pictures portray some of Bencéd's many accomplishments of the last 18 months. ●●



On Earth Day, villagers throughout the Nyikó Valley cleaned roads, streams, and homes, including 100 in Bencéd.

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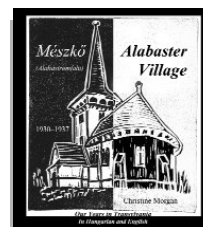
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### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Goldin Institute has done some research and also has produced a bibliography and glossary. The research was done with microcredit recipients in Bangladesh. You can download the full report (9 pages) and the Glossary and Bibliography (12 pages). The website is [www.goldininstitute.org](http://www.goldininstitute.org). From the home page go to KEY ISSUES (top of the page) then MICROCREDIT.

## ALABASTER VILLAGE

Now for the first time this amazing story is presented in both English and Hungarian. This book includes an Introduction by the translator, a new Foreword by Christine and Feri's daughter, Enika—along with a dozen photos from the family album, never before published.



Published by the UUPCC, the book is for sale online—or call for special pricing for church bookstores. See page 16 for details.

# The Social Function of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church

BY ENIKŐ VERES\*  
SOCIAL COORDINATOR, TRANSYLVANIAN  
UNITARIAN CHURCH

## General introduction

The role of Transylvanian Unitarian Church and religion cannot be interpreted without a historical perspective of its social and economic context. In order to have a better view, we must emphasize the transformations our society (and implicitly its subsystems) has gone through. We must outline mainly the processes of the last fifty years which have largely affected the position of the Church in the former communist countries of Europe and, most importantly, that of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania.

One of the main objectives of the former Romanian communist regime was to suppress the activity of those institutions they considered to be a possible threat to the new political power. In the 1940s and '50s the institutional network (mainly NGOs connected to the Church which had performed charitable activities) was banned. This period was characterized by an "underground" way of performing the traditional roles of the Church, including community cohesion.

These hardships, as well as the process of secularization which affected the society at the end of the 20th century, has led to a re-evaluation of the classical role of the Unitarian Church as well. To maintain its role as a significant local actor of the society, the Church had and still has to rethink its functions in order to be in the service of the community and of the people and to reinforce the social commitment of the Church.

In order to foster social care and progress, the Unitarian Church has tried to rethink the social function our Church would play in the society and make a more professional approach toward this involvement in the social issues.

Focus on the enhancement of this "social" function is the primary responsibility of the new Social Department. The first step that our Church has taken

was to establish and organize from the 1st of January 2007 a Social Department and employ a social coordinator (myself) to be in charge of elaborating the main strategies. The main responsibilities are to deal with the topics ranging from the efforts of the civil society organizations which have a Unitarian and Ecumenical spirit to church-sponsored service and advocacy programs at the grassroots in order to overcome (or at least to try) inequalities based on age, class and gender.

Before elaborating an action plan in this sense we have to make up a "social map," more precisely to make up an exact database of the Transylvanian Unitarian congregations' most severe social problems. The outcome of this mapping will be the possibility of elaborating a professional social strategy in order to be able to deliver church-sponsored social service and participate in advocacy programs, mainly for those who are in need of this.

## Specific plans for fundraising

One of the lines of bearing in the strategies of the Social Department of the Transylvanian Church is trying to get financial support both from local (mainly the Transylvanian Unitarian Church and the local and county councils from Romania) and from external funds. In order to raise external funds we have turned to the Unitarian Universalist Funding Panel in the U.S. for financial support, mainly to be able to carry out the field research.

We hope that Romania, as a member of the EU, will be able to support on a larger scale financially (and morally) the institutions of the civil society, including churches. This is true more and more as the Unitarian Church is not one of the "accepted" Churches (the Orthodox Church as being the majority "State" Church of Romanian

nationality), so can get only very little funding from the official Romanian institutions (Government, local and county councils). Until now we have received from the Romanian central and local authorities some support but in order to increase our social and charitable function we will need more financial as well as human resources. Until 2002 the Hungarian government was one of the financial supporters of the Unitarian Church, helping all the Hungarian communities beyond its geographic borders to keep their national, cultural and religious identity, etc. A very significant amount of support for local congregations (including human support) came and comes from the Partner Churches from the U.S. and Canada.

## The strengthening of the social role of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church

The Social Department of the TUC (Transylvanian Unitarian Church) advocates a greater social commitment. This would mean first assistance on a larger scale to those individuals from each local community who are most in need after the changes from 1989 to social exclusion (elderly, women and children, and those who are unemployed or without any financial, social or medical support).

We are doing this as we consider that the Unitarian Church is characterized by: a quality-led view instead of a quantity-led view, as a continuity of the Unitarian tradition; a religion searching for God and approaching God, helping and serving humans; the awakening of the values and identity of this religion; the living of an individual faith to reach a spiritual, intellectual and physical health true also for the manners of living. Unitarianism should become more

*(Continued on next page)*

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\*Note: This article was requested so that those with partners in Transylvania could learn about this new initiative by the Transylvania Unitarian Church Headquarters. In December the Romanian government officially recognized the Providence/Gondviselés Charity Association of the Unitarian Church.

## The Social Function

(Continued from page 12)

close to every person and this way the trust towards our Church would grow. This is also important as the role of religion and Church is decreasing in our modern societies. Becoming even more involved in social life would help to maintain the position we already have in the society. Religion must show

in practice that the people of the future must find their homes in a genuine Church. It has to be a serving and helping institution, according to the spiritual needs and social demands of the constituency. The characteristics of this membership are humility, quality-led view, consciousness, conviction, and consistency.

Respecting these values should

also include the respect for religious differences as well. This means that we will not focus strictly on the social problems of the Unitarians but those in need coming from other religious and ethnic communities. We consider that social justice and solidarity are indispensable parts of the practice of the Church. ●●

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**SAVE THE DATE—FEBRUARY 26–MARCH 1, 2009**

## THE FIRST-EVER INTERNATIONAL CONVOCATION OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN

BY LAUREL NAGEL

The last major gatherings of UU women in the United States were in the early 1990s. It's time to gather again, this time with international representation. The UUA, UU Women's Federation, UUPCC, ICUU and UU Women and Religion have joined together with The Southwest UU Women, the primary organizers, to co-sponsor this special gathering convocation.

The Convocation will be held February 26 to March 1, 2009, in Houston, Texas. Women from around the UU world will meet to

- Educate ourselves about women's rights worldwide,
- Engage with others to cooperate on action,
- Ground our action in faith and UU theological principles,
- Transform ourselves and our world.

We will form ourselves as a living-learning community to share our stories and learn from each other, worship, dance, sing and celebrate together, motivate each other to action, inspire and support emerging leaders, and form lasting partnerships and friendships committed to working together to enrich women's lives. Here are some of the challenges that we will learn more about at the convocation:

- Global poverty
- The politics of power and oppression
- Right relations between unequal partners
- Sexuality, health care and safety
- Access to educational opportunities
- Global climate crisis and environmental challenges
- The role of religion in oppressing or

supporting women

*You won't want to miss this!*

Some of the speakers who have agreed to attend are Dr. Sharon Welch, Rev. Laurel Hallman, Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, and Rebecca Adamson.

Save the date and share the information about this Convocation with others in your church. See the article on p. 23 about the GLOBAL LITERACY PROJECT and plan to use this curricu-

lum in your congregation. Consider sponsoring a woman from your local congregation who otherwise could not attend. See the boxed article below on bringing someone from your partner village or sponsoring an international attendee to the conference.

Imagine what we can do as Unitarian Universalists by coming together in person and via the Internet to strengthen our UU global village network and enrich women's lives worldwide. ●●

### SPONSOR AN ATTENDEE

Would your Partner Church Committee consider bringing someone from your partner church community to the International Convocation of UU Women? The hope of the Convocation Steering Committee is that we will have a good representation of international Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists at this event. We know that most of the U\*Us around the world cannot afford to come if they have to pay for all their expenses. So we are asking congregations to do one of two things:

1. Bring someone from your partner congregation to the U.S. for the Convocation, or
2. Contribute to a scholarship fund that will bring attendees from countries that do not have partners yet.

The cost of the convocation for one international attendee is estimated to be \$640 plus airfare (which we project will range from \$1000 to \$1700 depending on country they are living in.) The \$640 will cover hotel (in a shared room, projected at \$290), registration including 4 meals (\$350), and visa costs (\$100) for a total cost of between \$1670 and \$2340 for each international attendee. Attendees would be expected to cover other costs themselves.

This is a great opportunity to hold a fundraiser through your own congregation's women's association or Partner Church Committee. It raises the awareness of international and women's issues at the same time. Let us know if we can provide you with additional info to help your fundraising process. Write to Laura Nagel at [admin@icuuw.com](mailto:admin@icuuw.com).

This is a great opportunity for you to share this important event with someone from another country. Please consider supporting the scholarship fund or sponsoring someone of your choosing. To make a tax-deductible contribution to the general scholarship fund, send a check payable to SWUW (Southwest UU Women) and note ICUUW scholarship fund on the memo line.

Mail to: Treasurer / SWUW / 3224 Timmons Lane, #165 / Houston, TX 77027  
Your participation in this Convocation is most welcome and needed.

[www.icuuw.com](http://www.icuuw.com)

## Sexuality Education in the Khasi Hills

BY REV. RUTH GIBSON

Last year, Penny Siefker, traveling with the Partner Church Pilgrimage to the Khasi Hills, and also doing some traveling in the region on her own, met Dr. Rica Lamar, a strong member of her Unitarian church in Shillong. In addition to her medical work with tuberculosis patients and recovering drug and alcohol addicts, Rica is also providing sexuality education for the young people in her church. This facet of her work is becoming more critical as increasing truck routes in the area will very likely lead to a spreading of AIDS and HIV.

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**Dr. Lamar would find it most useful to have some resources for comprehensive sexuality education. She has *no* curriculum material at all.**

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Something simple that we can do to help would be to provide her with a set of the excellent resources we have available in *Our Whole Lives*.

- \$379 would provide the entire K–adult curriculum collection.
- \$261 would provide the curriculum for youth and adults—which is most critical.

If we can assemble a set of the curriculum, it will need to be hand carried; the postal delivery system is expensive and unreliable. We have travelers going to the Khasi Hills in February and March from the Washington DC area., so the hand-carrying is not a problem

If you can donate one or more of the curriculum books, or money towards their purchase, please contact Rev. Ruth Gibson, [regibson@uuma.org](mailto:regibson@uuma.org) ••



## Louis C. Cornish “Living the Mission” Award Nominations

The Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council Louis C. Cornish “Living the Mission” Award has been given for the past eight years to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to global church partnership. Past recipients have been the Rev. Dr. Judit Gellérd, the Rev. Dénes Farkas, the Rev. Leon Hopper, the Rev. Richard Beal, Ms. Pat Rodgers, the Rev. Dr. Peter S. Raible, the Rev. Dr. Richard Boeke, Natalie Gulbrandsen, and Dr. Árpád Szabó, Bishop of the Transylvania Unitarian Church. The Partner Church Council Executive Committee confers the award at the UUA General Assembly on your behalf.

We hope you will give careful thought to whom you might wish to nominate for this significant honor. The following guidelines may be helpful in your deliberations:

- The award is named for Louis C. Cornish, early twentieth century president of the American Unitarian Association. Dr. Cornish was a visionary internationalist who devoted much of his life to forging global bonds for liberal religious groups. He headed a task force on human rights for ethnic Hungarians in Romania, and visited the Philippines to initiate connections with

Unitarians there. In the spirit of Dr. Cornish, the award recipient should have made significant contributions to international relationships.

- The recipient should have made an outstanding contribution to church partnership and to the partner church movement.
- The contribution should be, as nearly as possible, of the same magnitude as the contributions made by previous recipients.
- The recipient should not be a current member of the Partner Church Council Board of Directors (see page 27 for a list of Board members).

All suggestions will be appreciated. Please include with your nomination a brief statement describing the contributions and attributes of the nominee. Submissions should be received by February 1, 2007 and should be sent to Larry Coburn, Vice-Chair of the UUPCC Board. His email is [coburnlh@aol.com](mailto:coburnlh@aol.com). The Board will appoint a committee to review nominees and will make a decision at our winter board meeting in February. The award will be presented at our Annual Meeting at the UUA General Assembly in June 2008. ••

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## The Transylvanian Unitarian Emblem

BY REV. PHILIP HEWETT, VANCOUVER, BC

The traditional emblem of the Transylvanian Unitarians consists of a serpent coiled in a circle, swallowing its own tail and surrounding a dove which stands erect on the summit of a mountain, the whole being surmounted by a crown. The standard explanation of this symbolism is that it pictures the Biblical injunction usually rendered into English as “Be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves.”

Modern translators of this passage prefer a somewhat different terminology, relating both to its context and to

the earlier reference to the serpent in Genesis 3:1 as ‘the most cunning of all the creatures the Lord God had made’ (*Revised English Bible*; the New Revised Standard Version uses the word ‘crafty’). The context is that Jesus is commissioning his twelve disciples to go out and preach the message they had learned from him to a largely hostile world. “Look,” he said, “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves, so be as wily as serpents and as non-violent as doves” (Matthew 10:16), adding a list of other survival-tactics they should use. It is easy to see how the Transylvanian Unitarians, with their long history of

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## Transylvanian Emblem

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having to live as it were like sheep among wolves, should have found such imagery particularly meaningful.

Yet this seems far from satisfactory as a complete interpretation of the symbolism. In the first place, it does not explain why the serpent is forming a circle by swallowing its own tail. This is a widespread symbol, the *Ouroboros*, arising from apparently independent origins in many different parts of the world, and usually interpreted as a symbol of eternal life, transcending time. One conjecture is that it was inspired by snakes' sloughing off their skin each spring and thereby being 'reborn'.



The dove is traditionally a symbol of peace, presumably on account of its soft and soothing call. It is also the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, appearing with outspread wings and with rays of light emanating from it in statues of the Trinity to be found in Europe, notably in Austria, as on the famous Plague Monument in Vienna. The *Ouroboros* surrounding a dove in this pose appears on a two-centuries-old tomb in Lichfield Cathedral in England.

The mountain is in the same way a symbol rich with meanings in many parts of the world, and appears in some forms of classical Indian art with an encircling serpent surrounding the entire world. There are many creation

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## UUPCC Board Changes

We are sorry to announce the resignation of two board members: Rev. Matt Tittle and Rev. Eric Cherry. Matt found that his church and professional duties and his family life was leaving scant time for UUPCC. Something has to go and so he unfortunately has to resign from the board. Eric also had to resign in order to accept his new responsibilities as the Director of the International Resources Office of the UUA. Of course this means that we will still be working closely with Eric and we are very pleased to see him take on this new role. We thank both of them for the time and support they did give to UUPCC.

## New Board Members

According to our bylaws, vacancies on the board are filled by the current board members. The Board has voted to appoint two people to fill out the vacancies left by Matt and Eric: Rev. Patt Herdklotz and deForest Ralph. Both are long-time supporters of the UUPCC and have been involved in various partnerships.

**Rev. Patt Herdklotz** brings much partner church experience to the Board. She was at the first meetings to establish the council in 1993, helping to approve the by-laws and elect first board. She supported some of the first programs to assist colleagues, congregations and the seminary in Transylvania, Romania. Her congregation was among the first partnerships and visited her partner church Homoródszentpál. When she became the minister of another church she partnered with a developing Warsaw, Poland congregation and led three historic trips through Socinian-Unitarian Polish sights including an international scholar conference regarding Socinus (and visit to his memorial.) She developed another partnership with Pécs, Hungary

and led two historic trips including Budapest and Pécs areas.

She has served UUPCC as a district liaison for Prairie Star District. Her church hosted the West Conference for the Partner Church Council. Patt has a Bachelor's degree in anthropology from University of California, Berkeley, with a special interest in cultural anthropology and a great respect and admiration for cultural differences. She earned her M.Div. at Starr King School for the Ministry. She was ordained by her first congregation in 1983 and currently lives in the town of her last parish, Ashland, Oregon, with her husband Kim Yasutake, and with their daughters Allegra and Kira nearby. Patt has been enriched by the partner church experience and looks forward to serving on its board and continuing to support such an important program.

**deForest Ralph** (Emerson UU Church, Houston, Texas) Although new to the Board, deForest has been associated with the PCC movement since the mid 1990s, initially as a Partner Church Committee member. Since about 1995, he and his wife Martha have been, and are still, Committee co-chairs. During this time, the committee has put on several fundraising lunches and evening social programs, and hosted the Transylvanian ministers and their wives, several times. In 2004, the committee raised over \$25,000 to assist their partner church, Gyergyószentmiklós, acquire and remodel a Prayer House. DeForest represented his church at the consecration conducted by Bishop Szabó in October, 2004. This past Summer, his granddaughter Carolyn from Atlanta, and Eleanor Schorre from Emerson, went on the Youth Pilgrimage. From 1999 until this past year, deForest was a Networker, first for the Southwest District (USA), and then for the Keresztúr District (Transylvania). ••

## Transylvanian Emblem

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myths that use this same symbolism. Likewise, the crown features frequently in myth and symbolism. It is the only one of the four symbols not drawn directly from the world of Nature, but less directly it too derives from the same source. One Transylvanian commentator describes it as a 'foliate crown' (*lombkorona*)\*, and in the form the emblem usually takes, the crown's crenations do indeed appear to be patterned on foliage, possibly with flowers and fruit as well. Crowns or wreaths of leaves were placed on the brows of heroes in the ancient world, made of laurel or olive in Greece and of oak in Rome. To this day we speak of the

'crown' of a tree, or of the 'poet laureate'.

What does all this add up to? At the very least it suggests to me that the usual interpretation of the emblem arises out of the same sequence as I have myself followed when asked to preach in Transylvania, namely, to determine first of all what the theme will be and later, to find a Biblical text to hang it on. I leave it for others with a deeper knowledge of comparative mythology and symbolism than I can claim to suggest a fuller explanation of the complete fourfold emblem. Is it too far-fetched to see here a symbolization of 'the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part'? The human dimension ('of which we are a part') is introduced by the crown, for

crowns are designed for the sole purpose of being placed upon a human head. Perhaps the foliate crown is only one small step short of the foliate head—the celebrated 'Green Man' carved in so many European churches and cathedrals, in which the vegetation actually issues forth from the head rather than being wreathed upon the top of it.

If there is any validity to such reflections, then those Transylvanian Unitarians of an earlier generation who put this complex symbolism together can be thanked for pioneering in calling attention to the responsibilities laid upon us as part of an ecological unity. ●

\* *Keresztány Magvető*, 1994, No. 2, p 108.

## BOOK REVIEW

### ***Alabaster Village: Our Years in Transylvania* by Christine Morgan**

The events in this memoir cover the years 1930–37 when Christine Fredriksen was married to a dynamic Transylvanian minister named Ferenc Balázs. Many years later, her letters were collected by her benefactor and frequent correspondent, Lucy Morgan, and prepared for publication after Christine's death. They were held from publication any sooner because of their frank and sometimes unflattering descriptions of village of Mészkö, the Unitarian Church in Romania, and the uneasy Romanian politics during those days.

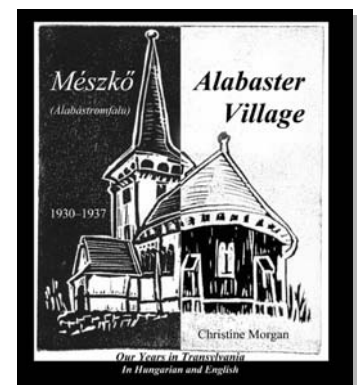
The first edition of *Alabaster Village* was released in 1997 and quickly became popular with Partner Church visitors to Transylvania who read the book for both inspiration and background before making a pilgrimage. Rev. József Kászoni, originally from Romania and now minister of the First Unitarian Church in Budapest, was inspired by his reading of the book to translate it and, with his church's help, publish Christine's words in Hungarian in 2002. After the English language version went out of print, continued

demand led to the Partner Church Council publishing this combined edition. The cover design, a linoleum cut of the Mészkö church, was created by our talented newsletter editor Nancy Daugherty. Although I speak only a few words of Hungarian, I found it interesting to compare words—Hungarian on the left, English on the right.

Rereading the book after 10 years, I am reminded of the mud, the danger of poor health care coverage, the ever-present fear of the Secret Police, and the frustration Feri felt when he expended great effort to encourage people to work together cooperatively, but was often undermined by individual veniality. A constant theme in Christine's letters was the need for money to underwrite his improvement efforts and to buy equipment. They were sustained by many different contributors from the U.S. and Europe. Given the difficulties that Partner Church Council members experienced in the 1990s with mailing money, I wonder if the post office made those deliveries!

We owe thanks to the Executive Board of the Partner Church Council for underwriting this publication effort to make this book generally available once again. The end result is a handsome book and still-compelling reading. ●

—PAT RODGERS



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## The “Road” to Understanding

BY MONTY LOW, SAN JOSE, CA

Throughout our trip each evening we gathered to share a worship conducted by a mix of adults and youth. In Budapest, we were joined by the 2007 Starr King Balázs Scholar, Rev. Erika Orbán, who accompanied us for the remainder of the journey.

The next two days were in Kolozsvár where we stayed at the János Zsigmond Unitárius Kollégium. Here we picked up two college students from our village, István and Csabi. They were shy and unsure of their English. This was remedied by introducing them to Texas Holdem where one can bluff in any language. This rolling card game became a fixture of our trip.

Rev. Erika Orbán did a marvelous job of taking us to see the Unitarian sights in Kolozsvár, explaining their significance to our heritage and to their struggles today. A poignant example was when Erika brought us to the library of the Unitarian high school. We learned that most of the high school’s

old books were confiscated by the communists and the new Romanian government will not return them. We were shown a small cabinet of old books that were saved. Among these old books was one that was five centuries old, with manuscripts of Francis David’s sermons. Such a priceless Unitarian artifact was housed in a wooden cabinet with newspaper taped on the windows. Without funds, the librarian lamented that he was unable to properly physically preserve or digitize the material for future scholars.

We next traveled to Homoródszentmárton, where we spent the next six days. Homoródszentmárton is a farming/dairy village of 600 primarily ethnic Hungarians. It is located in the rolling foothills of the Carpathians in the southeast corner of Transylvania. We were housed in the Youth Conference Center which has around 35 beds, kitchen and meeting spaces.

Upon arrival, the Rev. József Szombatfalvi Jr. and his wife Erika led a group of 30 to greet us. While no longer separated by the miles, we were strangers separated by language and culture, wondering about how we

would get along together. Our youth quickly solved this by teaching the village youth to play Texas Holdem. Soon there was much laughter and chatter in both languages.

On the first morning after our arrival, we were introduced to three main projects to undertake with the villagers. The first was to paint murals on the walls of the youth meeting room. Second was to unearth headstones in the graveyard that had sunk to the point of vanishing. The third project, conceived by traveler Crystal Lanier, was to build an outdoor walking labyrinth. While the site chosen by our hosts was beautiful, there was a 2x2x2-foot rock masonry block in the center, two tree stumps and sloping ground to be leveled. When we asked about access to power equipment, we were shown a pile of shovels. With a project schedule of two days, we were discouraged about finishing in time for the dedication ceremony. We also had to change the design to accommodate the unexplained masonry structure. We divided up and attacked the projects with the villagers.

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The walking labyrinth—leveled and created as a joint effort.

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In this first day of mutual toil, magic began to happen as we got to know each other. We learned that the villagers were capable of doing immense amounts of physical labor. Our hosts were patient, warm and welcoming. At the end of the day, the youth had designed and decorated half of the youth room with images and symbols from both cultures. Two headstones were saved, and the labyrinth had been completely cleared and leveled.

That evening we hiked two miles into the country side to a dinner by the Homoród river. We learned that a Transylvanian pickup truck is a horse hitched to a 4-wheeled wagon. I was quite surprised to find one of our youth driving a horse and wagon to the picnic. Dinner was delicious goulash cooked in a large pot over a fire. Sharing the food, the warm summer sunset, and a worship, we discovered that the villagers and travelers had quickly become friends. That evening the village showed off their traditional culture with a dance performance; afterwards, everyone joined in the dancing.

The next day we finished the murals and saved three more headstones. The labyrinth path was marked with river rocks hauled up by Transylvanian pickup truck. The cardinal points of the labyrinth were marked with stones that had fallen from the church fortification wall. Finally the purpose of the masonry fixture was revealed when a kopjafa was mounted on top. That evening our worship service included travelers and villagers in a very moving candlelight labyrinth walk singing *Dona Nobis Pacem*. The labyrinth was a synthesis of two traditions; the result was a wonderful blend of the two.

Day three brought us to our Sunday bilingual church service. We had four ministers and one seminary student to provide pastor power. After the service Rev. Szombatfalvi and Crystal dedicated the labyrinth "The Path of Friendship."

Briefly, in the next three days we became much closer to our hosts. We

visited area villages, churches and sites. We visited village elders who emptied their closets to show us their beautiful costumes and fabric art handed down for many generations. We had many discussions with our hosts to explore our religion and found there was much in common and much to learn from each other. We quickly used up 200 balloons making hats for the village kids who had never seen a balloon hat. When it was time to leave, all the travelers and villagers felt the stay was too short and wished to have a little more time with their new friends.

Now that we are back we are starting a youth pen pal program, a village high school student sponsorship program and a project to bring some villagers to San Jose in two years. We plan to return to Homoródszentmárton in four years. We feel blessed to have our partnership with the members of the Unitarian Church of Homoródszentmárton. ●●

Excerpt from article for *Unitárius Közlöny* written by Rev. Szombatfalvi Jr. about our visit — Translated by Dr. Judit Gellérd:

"This extraordinary pilgrimage is a new milestone in our long partnership, for it has created lasting friendship, warm memories. Each of our congregations finally has human faces. From now on when we talk about the San Jose Partner Church, we don't understand some abstract community on the shores of the Pacific, but real flesh and blood people, our sisters and brothers, our dear friends who now live in our hearts as long as we live."

### "Creators of a New Reality"

BY RICHARD VAN DUIZEND, UUPCC BOARD;  
UU CONGREGATION OF FAIRFAX VA

*Together we have felt the fire, struggling  
with the poor*

*Together seen the bonds that hold us down,  
Together hear our people cry, call us to be  
Creators of a new reality.*

This is the chorus of a hymn sung in the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Aquino the Sunday I visited this

small agricultural community near a volcano on Negros Island in The Philippines. It captures the remarkable spirit and resolve I found at the denominational and congregational levels as I traveled to seven congregations during an all-too-brief trip.

I met with a group of women from the Bonbon congregation in Metro Manila. The meeting was held under a tarp stretched across an alley. I heard their determination to build a church on the cement posts rising from the wetland which underlays their homes, as well as how they plan to use micro-finance loans to start or expand businesses in their community and surrounding areas selling vegetables, bananas, and other staples. The loans are from the Unitarian-Universalist Church of the Philippines' (UUCP) "Livelihood Program."

In Bicutan, another congregation in Metro Manila, I attended the first of two workshops on how to make, use and market *tempeh* (a soy-based meat substitute). There was also the biomass farm raising trees for energy production near Nataban, the Learning Center (pre-school) in Aquino, and the mango orchard at Nagbinlod—all UUCP-initiated efforts to better the lives and livelihood of the communities and generate income for the Church.

Nagbinlod is also where Dr. Richard Ford led the Community Capacity Building program that resulted in the village partnering with the local government and its partner church in the US to build a gravity-fed water system that for the first time made safe drinking water available within the village. The success of that effort generated additional village/local government improvement efforts including a new elementary school, a renovated town hall, an improved town park, and extension of the water system.

In talking with Rev. Rebecca Quimada-Sienes, Chair of the UUCP's Planning and Finance Department, and Rev. Nihal Attanayake, Chair of the UUCP's Faith in Action Department, I

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learned of other plans and dreams for applying U\*U principles to increase the well-being and education of the U\*U community in self-sustaining, environmentally respectful ways. I heard about the efforts of the U\*U women's organization *Buhata Pinay* ("Do It, Filipina!") to improve health care and education and advocate for women, and from the newly certified lay U\*U minister in Bicutan who is teaching the National Police U\*U principles and community capacity building techniques to improve police/community relations. Bob Guerrero, the President of the Bicutan congregation, told me about his weekly text-message-in radio show with guests from U\*U and other progressive religious groups in the area. At every turn, I was struck with how our faith not only provides sustenance to those in difficult circumstances, but also hope and encouragement for changing those circumstances for the better.

When I asked Rev. Quimada-Sienes how UUs in the United States could assist the UUCP, the first response was more partnerships. I have heard the same from the leaders of the Unitarian Union of Northeast India and the Unitarian Church in Transylvania. True partnership between congregations provides us with a real opportunity to join in creating a new reality—providing a hand up, not simply giving a hand out—and in the process, deepening our understanding of the meaning and power of our collective faith. ••

## Food in Transylvania

BY HARRY NAGEL, FIRST UU CHURCH OF HOUSTON

*There is a complete report of Harry Nagel and Don Smith's October trip, titled "Transylvania 10\_2007, it is available on the PCC website at [www.uupcc.org/doce/Transylvania10\\_2007.pdf](http://www.uupcc.org/doce/Transylvania10_2007.pdf).*

While there's a lot more to tell about our visit, I thought I'd concentrate on some of the wonderful food we ate while we were there not only because I'm a big fan of food, but

also because I think this is going to be a good way for me to learn the language and maybe this approach will help others. Enikő is a wonderful cook and she prepared many fine dishes for us during our stay. I unintentionally caused her more work on our first night: she was well into food preparation when she made the mistake of asking me if I liked liver. Without thinking, I answered "no." This was followed by silence, then a hurried discussion with Csilla, her daughter-in-law, who was helping her. To make a long story short, we didn't have liver for dinner and I will be more circumspect should a question about food likes and dislikes come up again.



Pretty red-with-white-spots—not-to-be-picked mushrooms (*gombas*)!

For Sunday dinner we were joined by the new President of the congregation and his wife and several old friends we had met on previous trips. Zsuzsa, the President's wife, brought over home made *kürtöskalács* (horn or tree cakes) for dinner but we didn't wait for dinner before we started eating. They appeared again on the table as an appetizer and I had no problem at all with having dessert first! Zsuzsa is an excellent baker.

That evening we had grilled pork and *miccs* (a type of beef sausage). Enikő and János' eldest son Ede was the chef and he spent a good part of the afternoon getting the wood fire just right before grilling the meat. It was wonderful. As we've noticed before, the Hungarians selected the fattiest pieces of pork, the pieces we typically eschew. This is not a demonstration of company manners but an expression of culture and taste and, most likely, wis-

dom. These folks are farmers and even us city folks have heard tales of good years and lean. *And* they've lived under Communist rule—we've all heard about the privations they suffered during those years. There's a lot of energy stored up in those fatty pieces of meat and, if you've grown up with your next meal being something less than a certainty, I believe you'd be wise to put a little something away for the lean times, even if it's an accumulation of fat cells. And, besides, if truth be told, that piece of grilled or smoked fat is pretty tasty! We've been indoctrinated to think that ingestion of a little piece of pork fat is an invitation to a cardiac infarction but it's undoubtedly a whole lot more complicated than that.

The next morning, while paging through my rudimentary Hungarian-English dictionary, I came across the word *szalonnasütés*, which was translated as "barbecue." I asked János if what we had last night was *szalonnasütés* and he said "*nem*" and went into the pantry and brought out a piece of the fatty bacon that he likes for breakfast. This is a dish I am familiar with as my maternal grandparents, Germans who emigrated about 100 years ago from an area of Austria/Hungary known as Vojvodina, often kept a piece of what they called *paprika speck* (*speck* is not a Hungarian word) in the freezer. This looks like pure white fat covered in red but when I got a little older and a little bolder I found it to be quite tasty. Anyway, János cut off a slice of the *szalonna*, i.e., the bacon, and made some cuts along one edge so that when bent it resembled a cockscomb. If you then skewer this slice on a stick, cook it over an open fire making sure you catch all the fat dripping off the bacon on a piece of bread, you're enjoying Hungarian barbecue.

We got pretty close to the end of the *szilvapálinka* (plum brandy) that evening. János had earlier shown us the house that a former congregant had left him in her will. It's very close to the church but right next to the road and the

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traffic can make it somewhat noisy and dusty. János and Enikő are planning to build a new house, a bit more modern, perhaps a bit larger, toward the back of the lot for their retirement. János took us to the basement where he was fermenting apples. This past summer was a poor season for *szilva* (plums) so they had to rely on the next best alternative. Even apple *almapálinka* is better than no *pálinka*!

On our last day we went *gomba* (mushroom) hunting in the parish woods. When we had finished we had filled two large bags. That evening we had *rántott sertésszelet* (breaded pork cutlet) and French fries and Enikő cut up one of the larger mushrooms and fried it for us. Yum!

Here are some more of the dishes we ate during our visit (and they were all very, very good): *sóskaleves* (sorrel soup), something I've never eaten before; *paprikás csirke* (chicken paprika); *töltött káposzta* (stuffed cabbage), one of my all-time favorites; and *juhtúrós puliszka* (polenta with curds and cheese). This was something entirely new to me and entirely delicious. I've never been particularly fond of polenta, but this was incredibly rich and flavorful. Unlike all the other dishes I've mentioned, I don't think this can be made here in the US because milk curd is one of the ingredients and I've never seen anything like that at the supermarket. We accompanied János to a supermarket in Szentgyörgy to buy the *miccs* and some bread. Other than the obvious differences in brands and labels, I think even we monolingual Americans could find our way around and pick up enough food to make a meal.

To sum up, we had a great visit: we met some more neat people, ate a lot of great food and even got some good ideas for some projects that might involve our young people and theirs. When we return we hope to be able to start working on them hand-in-hand with the folks in Árkos. ●

## PARTNERING WITH TRANSYLVANIAN UNITARIANS

### "That Inviting Darkness"

REV. FRED HOWARD, HIGH STREET UU CHURCH, MACON, GA

In his book, *Why We Travel*, Pico Iyer compares foreign travel with a love affair, since both require entering a realm "where you can't quite speak the language, and you don't know where you are going, and you're pulled ever deeper into an inviting darkness." To me, Iyer's phrase "inviting darkness" perfectly captures what a pilgrimage to Transylvania is like. For me, it definitely was the beginning of a love affair. It was so easy to fall in love with this country and these people.

Let me illustrate. One evening toward the end of my stay, I was with my host family on the sofa, their teenage kids sitting on either side of me, showing me pictures of themselves dressed up in their folk costumes as they participated in one of the many cultural festivals they have every year. The kids were so animated as they described how the boys and men sprinkle their girlfriends and female relatives with perfume during their Easter celebration and dance around them and sing a little poem. They were also excited to explain some of the history of their town and their region of Transylvania. They did not just know the history so well, but they were actually interrupting each other in their exuberance to tell me the stories and legends. It was such fun listening to them because the stories were interesting and they told them with such enthusiasm. But what really got to me was watching the parents take such pride in their children's participation in these cultural events. ●

(This is an excerpt of a longer reflection. To read it in full, please go to the UUPCC website [www.uupcc.org/docs/ThatInvitDarkness.pdf](http://www.uupcc.org/docs/ThatInvitDarkness.pdf).)

### Youth Trip

BY EMMA RICHARDS AND MEG YOUNG  
The following sermon was delivered at Champlain Valley UU Society in October 2007

**MEG:** For those of you less familiar with the UU-Transylvania connection, I'll

review. Dávid Ferenc, or Francis David in English, was a religious man living in Transylvania in the 1500s. He combined the teaching of many religious thinkers of the time, including Michael Servetus, to form Unitarianism. His version of Unitarianism, while based on Christianity, encouraged personal spiritual journeys, self-examination, and freedom of religious choice. Legend has it that Dávid converted the entire city of Kolozsvár to Unitarianism with one speech, and who are we to argue?

At the time that Dávid was doing all this, the king of Transylvania, John Sigismund, decided to hold a council in the city of Torda, at which representatives of the four major religions of Transylvania would speak: Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Unitarian. Whoever was most compelling, the king would adopt his religion. Since Dávid could convert all of Kolozsvár with one speech, needless to say he converted King Sigismund. However, not only did Sigismund convert to Unitarianism, he decreed that since Unitarians taught freedom of choice, that Transylvania would have freedom of religion, making Transylvania the first country to experiment with this concept. Religious freedom died with King Sigismund, but the Unitarian faith in Transylvania did not, and Unitarian churches there date back to the Reformation.

**EMMA:** Sanyi, a minister traveling with us, explained briefly the beliefs of Transylvanian Unitarians. The core of their faith is a belief in one unified God, as opposed to the Catholic Trinity. Jesus, while a great prophet, was not the son of God. He was wise, and his teachings are still considered valuable, but he was only a man.

**MEG:** Before we left for Transylvania, I was a little dubious about the title of "youth pilgrimage" that the UUPCC had attached to our trip. "Pilgrimage" put me in mind of white clad Muslims heading to Mecca or austere puritans landing on Plymouth Rock. I didn't really see where a group of ten curious American teenagers fit into the mix. I still didn't make the connection until we landed in Transylvania on Wednesday morning, and immediately began to explore our Unitarian heritage there.

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**EMMA:** Organized religion has never appealed to me, and though I'd thought briefly and occasionally about the idea of God, I'd always assumed I didn't believe. I considered the idea of God a crutch for the spiritually shaky. And Unitarian Universalism? Frankly, it didn't quite fit my definition of "religion." Growing up, I always considered it more of a club than anything else, a club that welcomed, as a friend of mine once put it, "refugees from organized religion." I planned to finish religious education and leave the church without looking back. It was without history, without heritage, something put together by generations still living. Its history stretched only as far back as e.e. cummings, Thoreau, maybe even back to some of the Unitarian founding fathers, but no further. Consequently, it was quite a surprise to find out the Unitarianism had history dating from 16th century Transylvania.

**MEG:** It was learning about this history, and seeing the rock where Dávid spoke in Kolozsvár and the church where the Council of Torda was held that lead me to believe that yes, this was a pilgrimage as legitimate as pilgrimages could be, for what is a religious pilgrimage if not a journey where one learns about his or her religious beliefs, history, and heritage? One need not wear different clothes, participate in age-old rituals, or even believe that he or she is traveling in the light of God to be a pilgrim. As I see it now, having made my pilgrimage, I simply had to set out with a conviction in my heart to learn and think about my religion, and since I did this, and traveled with a group similarly motivated, my spirituality could not help but grow.

**EMMA:** The first Sunday of our trip, our group attended a Unitarian service given by the same minister who'd explained Unitarianism to us. It was in Hungarian, and as the sermon went on, my mind started to wander away from the words I was unable to understand. As I was looking at the dusty painted panels that made up the ceiling of the church, I simply realized that I believed in God. Not the God of the Christians, perhaps, but something. God was just the convenient name for what I knew with illogical, unshak-

able certainty existed. It wasn't tangible or provable, it hadn't created the heavens and the earth, and I was fairly certain it didn't have any direct control over my life; it simply was. It was the spirit of life, love, forgiveness, and truth in humanity. It was what inspired beauty and kindness. It was that perfect good that no human can ever attain, but which no one is ever without a piece of. It was all that is wise and wonderful about humankind, and it was conscious, and it loved. I knew all these things, yet I could never articulate them. Sitting there, I also knew that my belief was not a finished work. I had only a piece of the truth; more searching was still required.

**MEG:** At the start of our trip, while reminiscing about past youth pilgrimages to Transylvania, the leader of our group,

**... yes, this was a pilgrimage ...  
for what is a religious pilgrimage  
if not a journey where one learns  
about his or her religious beliefs,  
history, and heritage?**

Cathy Cordes, told us that once a girl had come to her after a hike near the city of Torda and said "I found God today in the Torda Gorge." I felt a little skeptical, doubting that "finding God" could be so easy as just a contemplative walk in the mountains. In fact, I almost hoped that my personal quest for any sort of deity would be slightly more involved.

About a week later, Emma and I were ambling through the Torda Gorge, and, maybe because of Cathy's comment about the Gorge beforehand, maybe of our own accord, we began discussing our views about God, pounding out our personal theologies with each foot fall. I found my self blurting out statements that I didn't even realize I believed until they were ringing in the misty air.

*"I think God is the spirit of consciousness of love and life".*

*"I think God inspires".*

Was this finding God, I wondered. Was I experiencing the same thing as the girl I had been so doubtful of just a week prior? Had the divine spirit come to me, just like that, entering my mind as I trudged under the deciduous trees? Somehow, I doubted it.

Indeed, I had voiced realizations about God which were all new, and indeed, I will keep those realizations with me for a long time to come, but honestly, I look forward to not finding God and, in true UU fashion, I look forward to continuing the search.

**EMMA:** I never realized how deeply I missed having a rich heritage in my church until I found it. I never understood how profoundly that lack of heritage had influenced my dislike of Unitarian Universalism until I discovered that heritage and began to love the liberal religious tradition of which I was a part. These firm roots in the past anchor me to my present faith; it validates Unitarian Universalism for me as a religion. It makes me feel a part of something larger and more concrete; it gives me faith.

Unitarianism provides half of our church, but only half. Universalism is an equally important part of our faith. It is the source of our belief in the universal goodness of humanity. It is important to learn about the past of our religion, every part of it. The history of Unitarian Universalism is richer than anyone might think. It is an indispensable, inescapable part of who we are as a religious community. It defines us.

**MEG:** I was inspired by learning about my heritage, seeing the prison cell where Dávid Ferenc died a martyr, going into Unitarian churches that date back to the 1500s. I traveled to tiny villages tucked in the mountains where the Unitarian church was the only church in town. We met people, young and old, who, in one way or another, lived for the Unitarian faith.

However there was one thing about the experience that perturbed me. Why hadn't I heard about all of this before? Sure, before I traveled to Transylvania I had always known that UUs had some nebulous connection to the place having to do with the innovation of religious freedom, but that was as far as my prior knowledge extended. The specific stories of John Sigismund and Dávid Ferenc, not to mention other Unitarian predecessors like Michael Servetus, were unknown to me until this summer, and frankly, I don't think I am unique in that respect, at least among the UU youth I know. This frustrated me a little. Learning these stories,

(Continued on page 23)

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## Reports, News & Travel Stories

*(Continued from page 21)*

hearing these myths and facts, finding out that Unitarianism has a heritage that dates just a bit further back than Henry David Thoreau, this served to strengthen my faith immeasurably. I want to share these stories with the UUs I know in the United States, especially the youth, in hopes that maybe it will inspire their faith as well. As amazing as our pilgrimage was, it shouldn't take a trip to a far-off land to find out about heritage. Unitarian history in something that we can learn about here. It's something that countless

RE classes can be taught about. It's something that a year's worth of children's stories can be devoted to. UU kids should be brought up knowing UU history, from Thoreau to Dávid, Channing to Sigismund. The way I see it, to have a faith that can grow, it must first know its roots, not only in Transylvania, but in the rest of Europe, in the Philippines, in the Reformation, with the Puritans, in the Transcendentalist movements, in the civil rights movement, and in the teachings of wise people around the globe. ●●

*Emma Richards and Meg Young were participants on the 2007 UUPCC Youth Pilgrimage.*

## Thank You to Generous Congregations

The UU Partner Church Council would like to acknowledge and thank the following congregations, which have chosen to pay their 2007–08 annual dues at the "Supporting" level.

- Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna, BC, Canada
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- Unitarian Church, Los Alamos, NM
- West Shore Unitarian Universalist, Cleveland, OH
- Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA

*We are grateful for their generosity.*



## NEW ADULT ED CURRICULUM AVAILABLE

### GLOBAL LITERACY PROJECT: WEAVING THE U\*U GLOBAL VILLAGE NETWORK

*Part of the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women  
to be held in Houston, February 26-March 1, 2009*

As a way to prepare for the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women, the Global Literacy Project: Weaving the U\*U Global Village Network provides a process and resources for educating ourselves and each other in global and cultural literacy, encouraging individuals, families, congregations, and women's groups to:

- Examine how we are connected with others around the world
- Explore the impact our connections have on others
- Consider ways to be in right relations with people in our global village
- Learn about U\*U and United Nations organizations that are working globally
- Consider what we know and what we need to know to be competent global citizens
- Strengthen our U\*U global village network

The program may be used by individuals and families or by congregations and women's groups, and is designed as six two-hour sessions, with time in between for individual research and reflection. It will be published on the ICUUW Convocation website at [www.icuuw.com](http://www.icuuw.com) in February 2008. • You can order the curriculum online at a cost of \$25 for individuals and families and \$50 for congregations.

*This curriculum is great for any congregation - or small group within a congregation - to expand their knowledge of the larger family of Unitarian Universalists, Unitarians and Universalists (U\*U) around the world.*



This list of Donors covers donations  
between April 1, 2007 – January 1,  
2008

## UUPCC Pilgrimages: Ten Years of Bringing People Together

For more than a decade the UUPCC Pilgrimage Service has helped to cement the bonds between North American UUs and their partners overseas. In recent years we have expanded our portfolio of travel services in order to provide multiple and varied pilgrimage opportunities for Unitarian Universalists of all ages. However, the focus and core offering of our service remains Congregational Pilgrimages. The past 5 years have seen nearly a 1000 North American UUs representing more than 150 congregations travel with us to visit partners around the globe. These pilgrimage groups ranged in size from 4–40 and we worked with each of them to customize an itinerary that met their time frame and interests. To begin planning your pilgrimage, email our travel coordinator John Dale at [jdaleuupcc@yahoo.com](mailto:jdaleuupcc@yahoo.com). For more-independent travelers we also offer a la carte services such as airport/village transfer, car & driver services, car rental, and experienced guides/interpreters. If your church is not partnered or you are not able or willing to organize your own group we offer a number of group tours for UUs of all ages and interests which are described below.

Toward this end, we are happy to help groups and individuals with travel plans in Transylvania and Hungary. Our services include:

**Congregational Pilgrimages**—Travel aboard the UUPCC van on a life-changing visit to your partner church. Low all-inclusive price includes transportation, meals, lodging, guide(s), and translator(s). Our in-country experts will work with you to develop a customized itinerary that fits your interests and timeframe.

**Choir Concert & Large Group Tours**—Looking to expand the horizons of your music program? UUPCC Travel Services can facilitate your choir's international tour. Buses, performance venues, hotel arrangements, and side tours are all part of our large group service portfolio.

### Other Services

• Guides & Translators • Bucharest Airport Pickup & Drop-off • Accommodations (Home stays, Hostels, and Hotels)

For more details or to schedule your trip please contact our travel coordinator John Dale at [jdaleuupcc@yahoo.com](mailto:jdaleuupcc@yahoo.com), or visit our website at [www.uupcc.org/trips.html](http://www.uupcc.org/trips.html).

## 2008 Travel Opportunities

### Visit the UUs of the Philippines

In March of 2008 there will be a UUPCC sponsored trip to visit the UUs of the Philippines. This adventure will include visits to our fellow UUs in Metro-Manila and on the large tropical island of Negros. You will have an opportunity to deepen your awareness of a culture and people who are living out their UU faith with courage and hope and have a lot to teach us. Please mark your calendar and be prepared to have your assumptions challenged and your sense of who you are as a UU deepened!

The trip begins in Manila on the 4th of March and concludes on the 15th. Cost per person is \$1450 which includes an \$150 non-refundable registration fee. It does not include your air travel expenses to and from Manila, alcoholic beverages, gifts, airport fees on your trip home or meals before the 5th or after the 14th. A single supplement of \$200 will be added if you choose this option. There will be an add-on expense for the optional trips to Apo Island or Seguijor (either \$25 or \$45).

Watch the UUPCC website for updates or contact Lee Boeke Burke for more information, [chickadeetree@earthlink.net](mailto:chickadeetree@earthlink.net) 920-729-9182

### Spring/Pentecost Transylvanian Pilgrimage

May 2–13 2008

*Unitarian History & Sacred Places* Spring is a beautiful time to visit Hungary and Transylvania, with the fields and hills in full bloom. At this time of renewal for the earth, come and renew your

spirit as well as you discover the historic roots of Unitarianism. Beginning and ending in Budapest this tour includes Torda, the Alabaster Village of Mészkö, a worship service at First Church in Kolozsvár, and a visit to the frescoed Unitarian church at Székelyderzs—one of only two Unitarian UNESCO World Heritage sites. You will also experience the warmth and loving hospitality of Transylvanian Unitarian families during a three-day home stay in your partner village. If your church is not partnered, we will arrange a home stay for you in a Unitarian village.

\$1,480 per person, double occupancy plus a \$150 non-refundable registration fee. (Add \$275 single supplement).

### UUPCC Annual Youth Pilgrimage

July 21–August 05, 2008.

*Our Ninth more-or-less-Annual Youth Trip for North American UU Youth ages 15–19.*

Travel with other UU youth from around the country accompanied by long-time UUPCC Networker Lee Boeke Burke. Learn about Unitarian history in Transylvania and get to know the people in your partner village. Prior trips have had rave reviews from parents and youth alike. The trip starts with an overnight stay in the Boston area where you meet your fellow travelers and get oriented before your departure for Romania. The trip includes a 3-day visit to your partner

church. Along the way you will learn about the roots of our Unitarian faith, hike in some beautiful country, meet and work alongside Transylvanian Unitarian youth and have a great time. Don't pass up this life-changing travel experience. \$1,870 per person,

### Transylvanian Thanksgiving Pilgrimage

September 23 – October 3, 2008

Eleven days of spectacular scenery, loving hospitality, and unique architecture in Southeastern Transylvania. Discover the singular beauty of the Carpathian Alps and the fascinating history of the walled churches of the region. Beginning and ending in Bucharest, this tour will visit the walled Unitarian churches of Székelyderzs (a UNESCO World Heritage site) and Árkos, and the Reformed church & model village at Illyefalva. You will spend a weekend with your partner congregation and worship on this special Őszi háladas Sunday—the traditional Transylvanian Unitarian Thanksgiving. The tour also includes two nights at mountain resorts, architecture as varied as Peles Castle, Black Church in Brassó, and the Saxon fortress church at Biertan (a UNESCO World Heritage site). You will also participate in discussions with local ministers about life under Communism and with local experts about the Transylvanian Unitarian Church today and the future of the Unitarian villages.

10 days, \$1,450 per person, double occupancy + \$150 registration fee. (Add \$250 single supplement).

For complete details on all these trips please visit our web site at [www.uupcc.org/trips.html](http://www.uupcc.org/trips.html)

## Notices

In addition to these Group Tours we also have space on a number of congregational pilgrimages this coming Spring and Summer that will have space for additional travelers. We have more than 20 congregational trips in the works for the 2008 season below is just a sampling. Contact John Dale, [jdaleuupcc@yahoo.com](mailto:jdaleuupcc@yahoo.com) with your desired travel dates and we can help you find a trip that fits your interests and your budget.

### Transylvania, Maramures & Painted Monasteries of Bucovina

May 30–June 7

This trip begins and ends in Cluj/Kolozsvár, Romania. There are 3 days on the front end of the trip programmed for your partner church stay. The remainder of the trip goes into the remote northern regions of Romania near the Ukraine border to visit the wooden churches of Maramures and the Painted Monasteries of Bucovina. If you are interested in this trip let me know and I can send you the itinerary and url should you wish to register.

### Unitarian Tour of Transylvania & Budapest

June 8–20

This trip begins in Bucharest and ends with 2 nights in Budapest (can be extended). In between, it visits many UU places of interest and provides for a 3-night stay in your partner village.

### Transylvania, Maramures & Painted Monasteries of Bucovina

August 2–13

Repeat of the Transylvania, Maramures & Painted Monasteries Tour. The 4 day partner church stay is programmed at the end of the trip and coincides with the annual Unitarian World Gathering outside of Székelyudvarhely.

### Travel Grant Program

This program is funded by proceeds from the UUPCC Pilgrimage Service and individual donations from our travelers. The intent of the program is to help facilitate travel between partners by providing monetary grants to prospective travelers. We have two funding rounds each year—in October and then again in April. The Pilgrimage Committee will be convening in April (deadline for submissions is March 31) to review the applications and make the awards. If you are planning to bring the minister or a delegation from your overseas partners to North America, or you have an innovative reason for travel from the US/Canada to visit your partners, now is the time to submit your application. A complete description of the program and all the materials can be found on the UUPCC travel webpage at:

[www.uupcc.org/trips/application/index.html](http://www.uupcc.org/trips/application/index.html)

### Erdély Maps:

Two maps of Transylvania. Both give place names in Romanian, Hungarian, and German: Erdély, covers all of Transylvania. The scale is 1:500,000 and the map lists cities, towns, and most villages. \$15.

Székelyföld is a newer map, covers the Székely area where most Unitarian churches in Romania are concentrated. The scale is 1:250,000—twice as large. Every village is shown. \$15.

Send your check to: Emery Lazar,  
18 Mountain Laurel Lane, Castleton VA  
22716. All profits go to the UUPCC.

### Flaming Chalice Art Glass:

Art glass ornaments to stained glass panels of flaming chalices. For gifts, recognition to members, ministers, volunteers. 70% of revenue to Transylvania partner church. [www.flaming-chalice.com](http://www.flaming-chalice.com). Al Wambach, 610-613-1390.

### UUPCC Staff Changes

**Elizabeth Hacala** Our former office coordinator and web mistress has gone on to bigger and better challenges. She is now the Executive Director for the Minuteman Library Group in Massachusetts. We will miss her and we wish her well.

**Margot Fleischman** We are happy to welcome Margot (pronounce the “t”) to our office. Margot is a new UU. She has two children and lives in Bedford, MA and attends the UU church there. She is highly skilled at running an office, having done so for several different departments at Harvard U. She is a professionally trained soprano—our very own diva! She is also the voice on the new DVD about Community Planning/Capacity Building.

**Lisa Gillispie** has agreed to become the UUPCC Web Mistress. Lisa is a member of the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church in Alexandria, VA. She has been to Transylvania and to India as her church is one of the churches that has two partnerships. We are ever grateful for her taking on this responsibility.

*Much of the work that is done for this organization is done by volunteers. We consider many of them staff because of the time they give to this work - such as Lisa Gillespi and Nancy Daugherty (who does the newsletter) and Pat Rodgers (who keeps our records straight) and Ann Gary who coordinates our networkers. But these are all volunteer positions, so please thank these folks for their work if you are in touch with them.*

### INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP HANDBOOK



It gives us great satisfaction to announce the publication of the long-awaited UUPCC International Partnership Handbook. We know this resource will be referred to again and again by your committee as you continue your work with your partnership. Each partner church has been sent a copy of the handbook so they can use it to broaden and expand their partnership.

This handbook represents the efforts of many, many people; it truly has been a grassroots project. We are grateful to all who worked to bring this volume to publication. You can download the handbook from our web site ([www.uupcc.org](http://www.uupcc.org)) or download an order form to purchase additional copies.

Our mission is to support partnerships. Let us know how we can help support your partnership. We look forward to our continued connections with you and your church and encourage you to write or call us with any questions you might have.

Download the Gift Form from our web site: [www.uupcc.org/services.htm](http://www.uupcc.org/services.htm) (or use the form below)

**NOTE:** Funds transmission is a benefit of UUPCC membership. A transferor of funds should make sure that her/his/its dues are up to date. If your church is not a UUPCC member, dues will be deducted (\$50 for churches under 100 members, \$150 for churches over 100 members).

## PARTNER CHURCH GIFT FORM FOR TRANSMISSION OF FUNDS

FOR TRANSFER OF FUNDS THROUGH THE U U PARTNER CHURCH COUNCIL

Please enclose a form with each check for funds to be transferred. Please type or print clearly.

*Note: Funds transmission is a benefit of membership in the U. U. Partner Church Council*

Make check payable to: *UU Partner Church Council* Mail to: UU Partner Church Council, PO Box 88, Bedford, MA 01730

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Transferor is:**  Church  Individual  Other Organization

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Transfer Is:** Total US\$ Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

**Recipient(s) is (are):**  Partner Church  Other Church  Individual(s)  Other Organization *(Please check all that apply)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Church, City/Town, Country Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

**PURPOSES—DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS—OTHER INSTRUCTIONS** *(please be explicit and concise):*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Transfer Process: How to Send Money

### INDIA

UUPCC is now processing transfers for churches partnered with UUNEI churches in the Khasi Hills in India. We will process checks as they come in, and will do the actual transfers every 3 months. The schedule in 2008 will be the end of January, April, July and October.

### THE PHILIPPINES

We do not have a regular schedule for transfers yet, as there has not been demand for this. If you wish to transfer money to your partner in the Philippines, please contact the office first at 781-275-1710 to discuss.

### TRANSYLVANIA

The transfers are done monthly from the UUPCC office between the 26th and 30th of each month. Transferred funds are wired from Headquarters directly into the local church bank account. **Please make sure that you contact someone in your partner village/town to let them know that the money is coming.**

### ALL TRANSFERS

Checks must arrive at the office at least one week before the transfer date. Please use the above Transfer Form or download one from the website at <http://www.uupcc.org/>. Click on **Programs & Services**, then **Fund**

**Transfer.** Then select the Fund Transfer Form. Please include this form along with the check. Please send whole dollars only—no cents. Make checks payable in US dollars.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *This Transfer Form is for use by the office staff in preparing the bank transfer, which is done electronically. The paper copies of the forms are not sent to India or Transylvania. Therefore, please make sure that you contact someone in your partner village to let them know that the money is coming. Transfers take as long as 5–7 business days for the transfer to arrive at church headquarters there.*

# UU Partner Church Council

## Board

Rev. Harold Babcock, Chair (*Term to 2010*)  
Newburyport, MA 978-465-0602 x402 (w)  
hebabcock@yahoo.com

Lawrence Coburn, Vice-Chair (*Term to 2009*)  
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Beverly Moore, Secretary (*Term to 2009*)  
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George Davenport, Treasurer (*Term to 2008*)  
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Pat Rodgers, Database Manager  
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Ann Gary, Network Coordinator  
508-529-6107  
ak.gary@verizon.net

UU Partner Church Council  
P.O. Box 88 Bedford, MA 01730  
781-275-1710 fax 781-275-7008

*Please contact Ann Gary to join the ranks of networkers!*

To find the UUPCC networker assigned to your church, go to [www.uupcc.org](http://www.uupcc.org) and click on "Who Is My Networker?"

## UU Partner Church Council Vision & Mission Statement

**Vision:** The vision of the UU Partner Church Council is that partner relationships between North American congregations and churches around the globe will be forged and sustained wherever they are desired—and that these relationships will be of high quality, firmly based, mutually beneficial, responsibly sustained, and linked by a joint and mutual covenant. We envision a commitment to international engagement as a moral and spiritual principle that is integral to Unitarian Universalist congregational life.

**Mission:** The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council is to foster and support partner relationships between North American congregations and congregations, schools, and agencies in all other countries where partnering is sought and welcomed. At present, active partnerships exist between North American UU congregations and the Czech Republic, Hungary, India, the Philippines, Poland, and Romania.

## We will:

- BE a bridge that connects congregations around the world;
- REACH across boundaries to collaborate with old and new partners;
- CREATE transformational opportunities for pilgrimage and hospitality, for learning and for service;
- CHALLENGE ourselves theologically and open ourselves to changed values and behaviors;
- INITIATE partnerships that promote global friendships, international awareness, human rights, and a better world; and
- SUSTAIN this global vision, enlarging and renewing it as new occasions teach new duties.



ADOPTED AT THE  
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE UUPCC,  
JUNE 24, 2006.

# Invitation to Membership

*If you or a friend wish to receive this newsletter three times a year and to support and participate in Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council programs and goals, please fill out this form to join us.*

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ —ONE YEAR MEMBERSHIPS—  New Membership  Renewal

\$30\* Individual Membership  \$50\* Family\*\* Membership  \$\_\_\_\_\_ Individual or Family Membership *PLUS* gift for UUPCC program support

\$50 Congregational\*\*\* (*under 100 members*)  \$150 Congregational\*\*\* (*over 100 members*)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please add my email address to the PCC-Chat list so I can keep up to date on the latest UUPCC news! \*\*\*\*

UUA Church Name/City \_\_\_\_\_

\* Canadian members please send \$28 for an individual membership or \$47 for a family membership in U.S. funds by check or USD money order to the UUPCC address below.

\*\* A family membership consists of two adults residing at the same address (receiving one newsletter).

\*\*\* A "congregational subscription" provides you with up to four newsletters mailed to the church.

\*\*\*\* *Your contact information will be used solely by the UUPCC and will not be shared with other organizations.*



Make your tax-deductible check payable to  
**UU Partner Church Council**

Mail your invitation and check to:  
UU Partner Church Council / P.O. Box 88 / Bedford, MA 01730-0088



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