

**Report to the UUA Board of Trustees
International Council of Unitarians and Universalists
Rev. Will Saunders, Board Liaison
December 14, 2008**

The Mission of the ICUU is to:

- Build relationships through communication and collaboration;
- Develop spiritual community among member groups and their leaders;
- Identify and nurture prospective and emerging groups;
- Foster our U*U faith for mutual inspiration, development and growth.

The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists is a member organization of national groups who identify themselves as U*U. Since the number of groups varies as the Executive Committee receives new groups into membership, I invite you to visit the ICUU website for up-to-date information on the current membership. The Council meets bi-annually. Between Council meetings, the work of the ICUU is carried on by the Executive Committee of seven persons: four officers and three at-large members. Typically, the ExCom meets face to face once a year and via conference call. The UUA is the largest member group by a significant margin and provides the majority of the funding. The funding protocol is 50 cents per member from developed nations; 5 cents per member from developing nations. Currently, the UUA is one of many member groups that does not contribute its fair share. The relationship between the UUA and the ICUU is Board to Council. Because of that, the Board Liaison is the primary link between the UUA and the ICUU. The role of the UUA administration is to collaborate in programmatic functions through the International Resources Office. The President relates to the ICUU as a member of the Board and as supervisor of the work of the International Resources Office.

Over the past few years, there has been tension between the UUA and the ICUU. Last year's election cycle was marked by miscommunication, misunderstandings, bruised egos and hurt feelings. Part of my role as board liaison has been to clarify some muddy matters and smooth some sharp edges. This effort has been complicated by the wide diversity of traditions about accountability, transparency, use of funds and nepotism. Add to this is the current suspicion that Americans generate world-wide, because of our history of imperialism and the policies of the Bush administration, and the challenges are significant. With all this in mind, I attended as an observer the Executive Committee meeting of the ICUU in London, October 22-25, 2008. I would make the following observations regarding that meeting:

- The finances of the ICUU are enormously challenging and complicated due to many factors – fluctuating exchange rates world-wide, poor stewardship from some developed nations, lack of resources among many developing nations, a history of poor financial management. My opinion is that the current Treasurer, Rev. David Shaw of the UK is doing an excellent job of trying to get a handle on the ICUUs finances. He deserves our appreciation and support.

- The ICUU and the UUA have completed a Memorandum of Understanding. It has been signed by the ICUU and is awaiting the signature of our Moderator in her role as Chair of the Board. I am happy to review it in detail for those who wish to learn such detail. It is the result of negotiations between a sub-committee of the ICUU and myself, with the assistance of Eric Cherry of the UUA. I am pleased with the result and as Board Liaison, I will use it as a template in reviewing the work of the ICUU.
- The election of new leadership at the Council meeting in Oberwesel, Germany in November, 2007 have been positive for the ICUU. Brian Kiely serves as President; Jill McAllister adds a great deal as an at-large member; Pauline Rooney from Australia brings a strong business background. And David Shaw is doing a wonderful job as Treasurer.
- John Clifford will retire as the single paid part-time staff person at the conclusion of the next Council meeting in Koloszvar, Romania, September 1-5, 2009. The ExCom hopes to move toward a full-time staff person, to provide not just administrative support but also programmatic oversight and initiative. It is clear to me that one important function of such an individual would be fund raising.
- Because of inadequate financial reporting at the Council meeting in Oberwesel, the budget adopted needed serious revision at the ExCom meeting. That was accomplished. If you wish a copy of the revised budget adopted by the ExCom, please ask me. It is a good budget and is, I believe, in alignment with the mission of the ICUU.
- The most recent significant accomplishment of the ICUU was the week-long leadership development program for African U*Us. Rosemary Bray McNatt participated in this event and can give you her first-hand appraisal. It is my hope that any future initiatives and engagements with African U*Us and U*Us elsewhere in the world will proceed in collaboration with the ICUU. We must be clear in our international work that a sub-text is to strengthen the ICUU. Things done without their participation subtly undermine the ICUU.
- A proposed slate of nominees for the next election cycle includes greater representation from developing national groups. I have communicated frequently with the Chair of the ICUU Nominating Committee, Richard Boeke, and feel confident that an excellent slate will be presented for election at the Koloszvar meeting.
- A new website has been constructed for ICUU (www.icuu.net). It is much improved. I recommend it to you

Of course, I am happy to receive your questions. The Board will need to appoint two delegates to the Koloszvar meeting in September. Typically, the delegates are the President and the Board Liaison. I recommend that we continue that pattern. Because the International Resources Office is involved in the programmatic side of ICUU, I trust that its Director, Eric Cherry, will also attend as an observer.

As there are developments in the work of the ICUU, I will keep you up to date with reports in the Board packet. I enjoy being the Board Liaison and hope to be able to keep this assignment through GA 2011, when I will conclude my service on the UUA Board.