



Project Harvest Hope

Fall 2007

President's Message: The Work Ahead

Dear Friends,

Thank you for creating hope. Thank you for reaching out to brothers and sisters half a world away. Thank you for helping us to preserve and protect the villages where Hungarian Unitarians have lived for generations.

PHH is facing some big questions these days, as we move forward from tangibles to intangibles: How can we best assure that our partnership with Transylvanian foundation Civitas will result in our mutual goal of building civil society and sustainability for the villages of Transylvania? How is civic life in the villages transformed by the new institutional arrangements brought about by the accession into the European Union? How best to foster a sense of agency, the rebuilding of trust, the renewal of cooperative activity and community hope in the Székelyföld?

In cooperation with the University of Minnesota, PHH recently funded a study by board member Gary DeCramer to examine these questions. Gary is a former state director for the US Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development. He now teaches and directs a mid-career master of public affairs program at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

Gary and fellow board member Olga Zoltai traveled to the Homoród Valley in June, 2007 with our questions. Most of all, they asked: *How best to use our limited resources in a region of the world where many large and well-funded development agencies have tried and given up in frustration?* (PHH, by contrast, is small, flexible, determined and blessed with no red tape.)

Gary and Olga went to listen, to learn and to evaluate our pilot program of supporting "Local Developers" (LDs). What do LD's do? Slowly and patiently, LDs help villages determine how to position themselves in the face of Romania's accession to the European Union, globalization, demographic changes and modernization. The result may be the construction of a milk collection point that meets EU standards or developing a program to attract tourists. It may be learning how to apply for a grant. But the subtext is equally important: mutuality, shared decision-making and common purpose.

And what have we learned? Many things:

1. Civitas is a splendid partner,

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All photos courtesy of Jacquie Jones and Carl Vandervoort.

Find out all the latest news about Project Harvest Hope at www.projectharvesthope.org.

Help Save the Unitarian Homelands!

Give the Gift of Hope!



Children of the Homorod Valley imagine a new future.

PHH Welcomes Bishop Szabó to GA!

We were very excited to host Dr. Árpád Szabó, Bishop of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania, Romania at this year's Unitarian Universalist General Assembly. Bishop Szabó presented the Annual Project Harvest Hope Lecture, and was the honored guest at our Annual Dinner as well. Bishop Szabó is a long-time friend of PHH, and we were most honored and pleased that he accepted our invitation to GA.



Dr. Árpád Szabó, Bishop of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania.

Bishop Szabó's lecture, "Ecological World View and Ethics Are the Only Way for Sustainable Development," stressed the importance of a religious perspective in responding to the ecological and ethical issues of our times. "Reverence, responsibility, frugality and ecojustice form the minimal core of intrinsic values for right conservation and sustainable development," he said, and elegantly explained each of these values. "Ecological values are exactly like other traditional values," Bishop Szabó stated. "They are imperatives for action. The fact they may be difficult to implement in practice in no way negates their importance and desirability." Afterwards, participants said the lecture reminded them of the writings of

Wendell Berry, and several offered to send the Bishop one of Berry's books. Copies of the lecture are available through our website, projectharvesthope.org.

PHH was also delighted to assist the Bishop with some fundraising for a cafeteria at the Unitarian High School in Kolozsvár. During a lively reception, initial pledges were made, and the UU Partner Church Council and PHH agreed to work together with the Transylvanian Church to complete this project. More information about this joint project will be available on our website soon.

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Services, Saint Paul MN.

Washington, D.C. Events, November 15-17 2007

The November meeting of the Project Harvest Hope Board will be held at All Souls Unitarian Church at 1500 Harvard Street, NW, Washington, D.C. As part of our visit to the area, PHH will host a program on *Sustainable Development and Democracy: Hope for the Unitarian Homelands*. All are invited; details will be forthcoming on our website, projectharvesthope.org.

A special feature of the visit will be a fundraising reception on Thursday evening for friends and persons interested in PHH. The reception will be at Kossuth House, headquarters of the Hungarian America Foundation, 2001 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. Representative Tom Lantos (R-CA) has been invited. We seek your assistance in developing an invitation list as we work to enhance our presence

and visibility in the greater Washington area. If you know of persons whom you believe we might invite, please let us know by e-mailing us at info@projectharvesthope.org. If you would like to attend this event, please let us know!

Letter, cont. from pg. 1

building, in the words of Civitas founder (and Unitarian Church President) Gabor Kolumban, “a spiritual bridge between the pre-modern and postmodern.”

2. Faith-based (congregation sponsored) LD’s are more likely to generate trust than those sponsored by the civic authorities.

3. PHH must find new ways to support LD’s within Civitas’ commitment to volunteerism.

4. Old models of cooperation, or “old narratives of how people joined together for public work,” are now re-emerging and offer a unique opportunity for us to help villagers connect their traditions and culture with the realities of the twenty-first century.

5. Pilgrimages remain essential. The presence, care and concern of people from overseas continues to be a vital source of hope.

Three members of the PHH Board, Cecilia Kingman Miller, Bev Smrha and myself, are preparing to travel to Transylvania to develop and cement a new phase in our relationship with

Civitas. We will go on retreat with the leadership of Civitas, most particularly Gábor Kolumbán, its President. We will meet with Bishop Árpád Szabó and other Unitarian leaders at their Consistory in Kolozsvár. We will meet with Local Developers. We will take two American Unitarian Universalist leaders: the Rev. Laurel Hallman, Minister in Dallas, Texas and Charlie Clements, President of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

This is an exciting time for Project Harvest Hope as we continue to move from tangibles to intangibles, from cows to civil society, from calves to cooperation, from pre-modern to postmodern, taking our lead from the expressed needs of our Transylvanian brothers and sisters, building on the rich and remarkable culture and traditions of the Székelyföld.

Later this fall, I will send each of you an update on our trip and our relationship with Civitas. (If you anticipate that such a letter would be



PHH President Will Saunders presents former President Rob Eller-Isaacs with a plaque naming him the first ever Project Harvest Hope Fellow. Story on page 4.

a fundraising letter, you are indeed wise.) Stay tuned.

In hope,
Will Saunders
for the PHH Board of Directors

Thank You, West Seattle Youth

An eager group of young people gathered at the PHH booth at General Assembly in Portland, carrying a large hand-colored cow poster. With proud grins, the youth of West Seattle UU Church presented a check for \$1000 to PHH President Will Saunders. A large delegation of parents and other adults, including West Seattle minister the Rev. Peg Morgan, the PHH Board and Bishop Árpád Szabó, cheered and clapped as the young people explained their efforts to assist the Unitarians of Transylvania.

The children and youth of the congregation used PHH’s “Kids and

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Cows” lesson plan as a service project, aided by Director of Religious Education Kari Kopnik.

Like other church youth groups, these young people were excited about helping Unitarians, and the lesson plan was a fun way to learn about these brothers and sisters far away. PHH President Will Saunders thanked the youth for their gift, and said, “By giving this gift, you are helping the people of Transylvania restore their society and create hope for their future.”



West Seattle Youth Group members with Bishop Árpád Szabó and PHH President Will Saunders.

For more information about how your church can participate in our Service Projects, visit our website!

Feasting, Celebrating, Singing at PHH Annual Dinner

The award winning Simpatica Restaurant was the setting for PHH's annual dinner this year in Portland, Oregon. Fifty friends and supporters filled the small restaurant, and the festivities kicked off with glasses of aged pálinka hand-carried over from Transylvania by PHH President Will Saunders. The meal was prepared in the style of a Transylvanian farm dinner, and guests enjoyed fresh local produce and a celebratory atmosphere. Bishop Árpád Szabó, of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania, Romania, was the featured guest.

Rob Eller-Isaacs was recognized as the first Fellow of Project Harvest Hope for his co-founding of PHH and his leadership during its first 13 years. In presenting the plaque memorializing Rob's selection as Fellow, President Will Saunders lauded him and

reminded us of Rob's vision for the work of PHH, using Rob's own words: "Work that grows out of heart-to-heart meetings, moving beyond the traditional liberal largesse, creates depth of transformation which we could not have imagined."

Under Rob's leadership, PHH was formalized as a not-for-profit organization in 2001. Our first projects, the flour mill, bakery, and dairy farm, were established based on the needs and requests of our partners in the Homoród Valley. Rob was instrumental in developing these ideas and in raising funds to realize the dreams, and pledged his continued support to PHH in his new role as PHH Fellow.

To the delight of the assembled guests, PHH Board Member Olga Zoltai presented Bishop Szabó with a Transylvanian formal men's suit in the style of the Middle Ages. The suit dates from 1942 and was a special gift to a mayor of Szeben, one of the



Above: PHH friends Brian Rogers, Sherry Modrow, Anna Foss and PHH President Will Saunders celebrate.

Right: Board Member Katalin Voros and PHH friend Herb Ogden enjoy dinner.



The Ministers Sing: Bishop Szabó, and the Revs. Erika Orbán, Will Saunders, and József Kászoni join in a Hungarian folk song.

loveliest historic towns in Transylvania. Olga felt that it was time for this treasure to be returned to its home, and the party cheered as Bishop Szabó modeled the full costume.

In addition to the sumptuous meal, guests had another treat in store: the presentation of a trailer for a new documentary film. PHH has engaged the services of Viewpoint Media to create this film about sustainable agriculture in Transylvania, and guests at the dinner were among the first to view the initial footage.

After a dessert of chocolate hazelnut torte, the evening ended in a songfest of old favorites from the U.S. and Hungary. The three Transylvanian born ministers were the superior singers, but the Americans made up for it with a rousing round of "Oklahoma!" As the party broke up, all proclaimed their firm desire to learn more folk songs before next year's dinner in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

For more photos of this event, visit our website at www.projectharvesthope.org.

PHH Pilgrimages

Travel with us and give of yourself!

Our learning and service pilgrimages are an opportunity to:

- Witness the daily joys and struggles of village life
- Give and receive the gift of engaged listening
- Share stories, bread and work
- Reflect upon our vocation as a people of privilege
- Explore a spiritual commitment to justice-making and sustainable living

SUMMER 2008: Family Camp and History Trip

Attend a Transylvanian children's summer camp, and teach English while learning folk songs and traditional crafts. This trip is for families and others who would enjoy a cross-cultural camp and service experience. Share a work project with local hosts, enjoy day trips to Unitarian historical sites, hike in the Carpathian Mountains, and visit the mysteriously beautiful cities of Transylvania. Children 7 years and up are welcome!

FALL 2008: Exploring a Theology of the Table

As we walk village roads and sit at plank tables, we will dwell for a time in the intersections of land and people, farmers and eaters, host and guest, and work and hope. We will meet local farmers, cheese-makers, and others whose livelihood is tied with food and farms. We'll reflect on issues of sustainability, globalization and solidarity. We'll harvest vegetables, roll pastry dough, drink local wines, and celebrate the table!

CONTACT US: For more information, and to apply for these trips, visit our website at www.projectharvesthope.org.

To request a copy of our new pilgrimage video, see page 7.



Thank You to All Our Donors This Year!

Congregations

Aiken Unitarian Universalist Church, Aiken, SC
All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, Kansas City, MO
First Unitarian Church, Oakland, CA
First Unitarian Church, Rochester, NY
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, GA
(in honor of the Rev. Dr. David Keyes)
Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn, MA
(Religious Education service project)
Unitarian Universalist Church of Saco, ME
Unitarian Universalist Church of Utica, NY
Unity Church-Unitarian, Saint Paul, MN
West Seattle UU Fellowship, WA



Individuals

Rev. Meredith U. Anderson	Jim Hulse	Peter and Karen Lowry Reed
Brad and Julia Bradburd	Rev. Leon and Dorothy Hopper	Andrew and Cecilia ReKay
Rachael Balyeat	Kathryn Hughes	Jay Roller
Bill Bateman	Andrew C. Janos	Iren Romoda
Sally Benson and Stephen Nichols	David Jarrett	Michael and Wendy Ross
Stephanie Ann Blythe	Phyllis Gene Jones	Catharine and Rev. Robert Jordan Ross
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John L. and Lynne Cahoon	Melody Kercheval	Gladys and Robert Rudolph
Sr Rosemary Chinnici	Rev. Dr. David Keyes and Judith Droz Keyes	Beverly Sadownick Smrha
John Cillag and Eva Gero	Donna A. Kimmel-Lake	Stan and Liz Salett
Fred Cox	R. Bruce and Jane King	Nanette Salisbury
Carolyn Crowell	Rev. Naomi King	Rev. William Saunders
Csilla Csoboth	Rev. Cecilia Kingman Miller	Marilynn Schuyler and John Miller
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Rev. Mark and Ruth Evens	Laszlo Nadasdi and Krisztina Pongracz	Catherine Thomas and Herbert Ogden
Emily Fekete	Richard Orlando	Ruth Tretbar
Anna Foss	Elvira Orly and Philip G. Machell	Lara Tushla
Linda Friedman	Joyce Maeder	Eva and Paul Voisin
Agnes Kozak Gabris	Sanat and Flora Majumder	Diane and Baard Webster
Margaret and Tsuyoshi Goka	Ms. Judith A. Mayer	Lois D. Whealey
Susan Goll	George and Laurel McLaughlin	Bruce Williams and Carol Byrne
Anne Greenwood and John Tucker	Tom and Sharon Merritt	Richard Williamson and Mona Warner
Rev. Frank Hall	Beverly Montgomery	Vera and Paul Winston
Bill and Laurie Hammons	Rev. Preston Moore	Christel E. Zeilinger
Catherine and Dick Harris	Dr. Katalin Muray	Olga Zoltai
Rev. Sandra Hart and Florence Jessup	Marilyn Nelson	
Tom and Mary Ann Haw	Richard Orlando	
Lois Hayward	Elvira M. Orly	
Mary P Hepokoski	Jo Anne Park	
Russ Heuckendorf		

*Donations received since July 1, 2006
Fall 2007*

Saving Unitarian Homelands: Sowing Seeds of Hope

Your gifts are needed today to –

- *Restore trust and cooperation in a region torn apart by totalitarianism.*
- *Save Unitarian Homelands from European Union over-regulation and corporate land grabs. (It can be done and our partners know how to do it!)*
- *Preserve family farming, the landscape, and a way of life that has endured for generations.*

Sowers Circle

___ Yes, I/we want to sow the seeds of hope in the Unitarian Homelands with a gift of \$1000 or more! We understand we will receive a beautiful landscape photo as an acknowledgement of this gift.

Sustainers Circle

___ Yes, I/we want to preserve the Transylvanian environment and sustainable agriculture with a gift of \$500.

Supporters Circle

___ Yes, I/we want to help villagers shape their own future by giving \$250 to help train and support a local development agent.

Friends Circle

___ Yes, I/we would like to be listed and known as Friends of Harvest Hope by making a contribution of at least \$100.

___ I/we know that all gifts help. Enclosed is \$_____.

___ I would like to know more about how my congregation or organization can participate in Project Harvest Hope, through service projects, farm dinners, and more.

___ My company has a Matching Gift Program. Please contact me for more information.

___ This gift is in memory or in honor of: _____

___ I would like a copy of PHH's new pilgrimage video "Back to Transylvania."

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please use the enclosed envelope to mail your contribution to:



Project Harvest Hope
c/o Unity Church-Unitarian
732 Holly St.
St. Paul MN 55104

Or donate on line at www.projectharvesthope.org

PHH Greeting Cards

Help protect the Unitarian Homelands—buy cards from PHH!

We have a lovely set of cards professionally produced by Stonehenge Designs. Share the beauty of Transylvania with your loved ones, or frame these photos for yourself. They make great Christmas presents!

Visit our website to order these gorgeous scenes.

Pilgrimage Video

Our new pilgrimage video, “Back to Transylvania” is now available! This 11 minute film was produced by Viewpoint Media, and is a look at the spiritual values of pilgrimage with PHH. Share it with your congregation or youth group, particularly if you are hoping to create a pilgrimage for your church.

To order the video, see page 7.



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