

MINUTES

TWENTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION HELD IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

The General Assembly was convened on Friday, June 22, 1990 at 8:30 p.m. by Moderator Natalie Gulbrandsen at Bruce Hall, MECCA, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Assembly adopted, by a two-thirds vote, Rules of Procedure for the conduct of the meeting.

Rule 10 was extensively rewritten to read:

Rule 10. Resolutions Not on the Final Agenda. A Resolution not on the Final Agenda may be considered only under the following circumstances:

- a. pursuant to Bylaw Section 4.16, which permits the addition of Resolutions of Immediate Witness to the Agenda and consideration of non-substantive resolutions; and
- b. after being brought to the floor by motion in response to a specific call for adoption of a particular resolution by an officer or committee reporting to the Assembly; and
- c. by a motion that is incidental to and related to a bylaw or rule change on the Agenda.

Greetings were received in person from Mayor John O. Norquist of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Jack M. Murtaugh of the Interfaith Council of Greater Milwaukee; Joe Gano, President of the Central Midwest District; Dr. Roy Smith, General Secretary of the General Assembly of the Unitarian and Free Churches of Great Britain; Dr. O. Eugene Pickett, President of the International Association for Religious Freedom; Professor Arpad Szabo of the Romanian Unitarian Church; and the Reverends Jun Yamamoto and Hitoshi Iwasaki of the Shinto Tsubaki Grand Shrine in Japan. The Honorable Chester G. Atkins, Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Massachusetts, addressed the Assembly on the current state of affairs in Romania.

The Moderator read a list of the following congregations entered into membership in the Unitarian Universalist Association during the past year: Auckland Unitarian Church, Auckland, New Zealand; Dakota Unitarian Universalist Church, Bloomington, Minnesota; Northwest Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Tucson, Tucson, Arizona; Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Minocqua, Wisconsin; Panthea, Chicago, Illinois; Tidewater Unitarian Universalist Society, Virginia Beach, Virginia; Unitarian Fellowship of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Statesboro, Georgia; Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation, Lanoka, New Jersey; Unitarian Universalists of Richmond, Indiana.

On the basis of a preliminary report of the Credentials Committee, a quorum was declared present from the time the meeting was called to order.

The Assembly received written reports (as well as oral, in some cases) from the

President, the Moderator, the Treasurer, the Financial Advisor, the Secretary, the Chair of the Planning Committee, the Chair of the Commission on Appraisal, the Chair of the Commission on General Resolutions, the President of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, the Co-Executive Directors of the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, the Chair of the Finance Committee, a member of the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Memorial Fund Committee, the President of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, and the Minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship.

The following awards were presented: the Award for Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism to the Rev. Dr. Harry B. Scholefield; the O. Eugene Pickett Award to the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Society of Mandeville, Louisiana; the UUSC Social Action Leadership Award to Ferd Haverly; the Holmes-Weatherly Award, posthumously, to the Rev. Robert E. Jones; the Clarence R. Skinner Award to the Rev. Bruce Southworth; the Unsung Unitarian Universalist Award to Dr. Doris A. Meeks; the Angus H. MacLean Award to the Rev. Wayne B. Arnason; the IARF/US Award, posthumously, to Dr. Shinichiro Iamaoka; and the Clayton Raymond Bowen Prize for Biblical Scholarship to Roberta Finkelstein.

ACTION ON C-BYLAW AMENDMENTS

ASSOCIATE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS

By a vote of two-thirds or more, the Assembly voted final approval of an amendment to Bylaw Section C-3.7 to spell out the qualifications for admission for membership as an Associate Member Organization. Section C-3.7 now reads as follows:

Section C-3.7. Associate Member Qualifications.

The Board of Trustees may admit to associate membership in the Association any major organization whose membership or constituency consists of individuals located throughout the Association and whose purposes and programs it finds to be auxiliary to and supportive of the principles of the Association and which pledges itself to support the Association. The Board of Trustees may terminate such associate membership upon a finding that the organization no longer meets the foregoing qualifications.

The Board of Trustees may adopt rules governing the requirements for admission to and retention of associate membership. An associate member organization shall be recognized as certified during the fiscal year in which it becomes a member, and during each subsequent fiscal year if it has made a financial contribution to the Association during the immediately preceding fiscal year. The Association shall neither exercise control over nor assume responsibility for the programs, activities or finances of any associate member.

PROXY VOTING

The Assembly voted first step approval of an amendment to Section C-4.7 which would prohibit proxy voting. An exception to the ban on proxy voting is provided for in the case of an amendment to the articles of organization. The text of the version that was approved on a preliminary basis is as follows:

Section C-4.7. Voting

Voting at each regular and special General Assembly shall be by:

- (a) accredited delegates from certified member societies and certified associate member organizations;
- (b) trustees; and
- (c) life members.

Each delegate, trustee, and life member shall have only one vote, even if present in more than one capacity. Proxy voting is prohibited except when the amendment being proposed is an amendment to the articles of organization.

LIFE MEMBERS

The Assembly voted first step approval of an amendment to Section C-3.10 which would confirm that the category of life member will end with the death of the last of the current life members. The text of the version that was approved on a preliminary basis is as follows:

Section C-3.10. Life Members.

The life members of the Association shall comprise only (a) those individuals who became life members of the American Unitarian Association on or before May 1, 1925, and (b) those individuals who served as president of the Universalist Church of America on or before May 1, 1961. This category of membership shall end upon the death of the last person qualifying for such membership.

MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP

The Assembly voted first step approval of an amendment to Section C-11.1 which would establish the category of community minister as a third category of accredited ministry. The text of the version that was approved on a preliminary basis is as follows:

Section C-11.1. Ministerial Fellowship.

Each member society has the exclusive right to call and ordain its own minister or ministers, but the Association has the exclusive right to admit ministers to ministerial fellowship with the Association. Fellowship may be for the purposes of parish, religious education, and/or community ministry as determined by action of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. No minister shall be required to subscribe to any particular creed, belief, or interpretation of religion in order to obtain and hold fellowship.

ACTION ON BYLAW AMENDMENTS AND RULE CHANGES

The Assembly defeated a proposal to incorporate in the Bylaws detailed campaign practice rules for at-large elections. The Assembly also defeated proposals to establish sunset rules for General Resolutions and Resolutions of Immediate Witness.

The Assembly approved a change in Rule G-4.12.2 by changing the format of the report filed by the Commission on General Resolutions that explains the choices of resolutions included in the Parish Poll. The rule now reads:

Rule G-4.12.2. General Resolutions not on Tentative Agenda

The Commission on General Resolutions shall prepare and the Planning Committee shall include with the Tentative Agenda a report summarizing the numbers and topics of the resolutions submitted by the certified member societies and districts and the criteria which it used in selecting General Resolutions included in the Parish Poll.

The Assembly voted to postpone indefinitely proposed bylaw and rule changes that, if adopted, would have changed the governance of the Association, created a Presidential Nominating Committee and altered the President's term of office. Pursuant to Rule of Procedure 10, the Assembly adopted a resolution urging the Board of Trustees to appoint a study commission to review the governance of the Association. The text of the resolution is as follows:

RESOLUTION ON GOVERNANCE

WHEREAS our basic form of governance has not been reviewed since the founding of the UUA in 1961; and

WHEREAS such a review of governance would help to insure the continued health of the Association;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 1990 General Assembly strongly urges the UUA Board to create and fund at a cost not to exceed \$50,000 a Commission, no later than at their October, 1990 meeting, to review the governance of the Association, providing information and gathering feedback from churches and fellowships on our form of governance, and presenting such amendments as are deemed appropriate, if any, to the 1992 General Assembly, so as to be in place for the 1993 election.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the review be focused on (but not limited to) a consideration of the structure of the Association, the process of selection of and the roles of the President, the Moderator, and the Board of Trustees.

ACTION ON BUSINESS RESOLUTION

The Assembly defeated a proposal that, if adopted, would have urged the Board of Trustees to ensure funding of the annual salary and benefits paid each field staff person.

ACTION ON SECOND YEAR GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

The following three General Resolutions were adopted by a vote of two-thirds or more:

YOUTH IN CRISIS

GUIDED by our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every human being; and

RECOGNIZING our commitment and responsibility to provide youth with basic nurturing, support, encouragement, and protection; and

WHEREAS young people embody humanity's hope for the future; and

WHEREAS a growing number of North American youth, especially but not exclusively in inner cities, suffer from problems including physical, sexual, and emotional violence and abuse, neglect, gangs, substance abuse, unemployment, unwanted pregnancies, lack of adequate housing and education, and a lack of loving familial and other support structures; and

WHEREAS the problems facing youth are symptomatic of the problems of the larger society;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) deplores the debilitating conditions of poverty, discrimination, or racism faced by growing numbers of youth, and affirms the urgent need for enhanced national, state, provincial, and local advocacy and action on behalf of youth;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UUA calls upon its member congregations and individual Unitarian Universalists to work with youth to promote the establishment of, and to involve themselves in, programs that empower the voices of youth, especially those of the inner city, by:

1. Fostering school-based clinics and other health care facilities with special concerns for family planning services, effective parenting skills, AIDS, and other health needs pertinent to the young adult population;
2. Providing affordable daycare;
3. Supporting excellent education appropriate to the needs, abilities, and aspirations of youth, including alternative schools, high school equivalency programs, and preparation for college as well as vocational and literacy training;
4. Providing adequate, low-cost housing that would permit families and independent youth to live in reasonable safety, comfort, and dignity;
5. Encouraging governmental and private agencies, unions and companies to investigate models of extensive employment and training options, such as apprenticeship and internship for young people; and
6. Establishing other locally determined services, as necessary;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the UUA calls upon its members to address the empowerment of youth in resolving these socioeconomic issues.

CHOICES AFFECTING POPULATION

BECAUSE we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every individual;

BECAUSE we cherish the earth and seek to preserve the environment for future generations;

BECAUSE we hold a deep reverence for all life; and

BECAUSE we recognize that what we choose today will affect the quality of life for our children, our grandchildren, and all generations to come; and

WHEREAS tens of thousands of children die of starvation every day;

WHEREAS 500 million more children suffer homelessness, poverty, and malnutrition;

WHEREAS our current exponential rate of population growth would add one billion people to the world population in the next twelve years;

WHEREAS increasing population is frequently associated with increasing the pollution of the water, air, soil, and ozone shield, and further depleting the earth's finite resources;

WHEREAS the crush of overpopulation often contributes to aggressive and destructive behavior; and

WHEREAS the United States government has cut back its support for family planning programs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), in order to protect the environment and promote quality of life for future generations, calls upon its congregations and individual Unitarian Universalists to:

1. Promote education on the morality and ultimate economic, environmental, and social necessity of couples planning their family size;
2. Promote age-appropriate sex education for all children;
3. Encourage the use of contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancies and support the right to choose abortion;
4. Promote medical research, accelerated governmental approval, and the commercial development of safe and more effective means of birth control, such as RU486, currently unavailable in both Canada and the United States;
5. Advocate in legislatures, courts, media, and schools the ethical position that the well-being of future generations requires the right to choose contraception and abortion now; and
6. Advocate that the US government restore funding and support for family planning programs, including those which may offer the choices of contraception and abortion.

REAFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

BECAUSE we believe in the ideal of one world, in which nations coexist with mutual respect, in which nations protect the rights of their citizens, and in which people of different nations work together to solve the problems of all humankind; and

BECAUSE we affirm the democratic process not only within our congregations but also in society at large; and

WHEREAS the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has resolved repeatedly in recent years to support and strengthen the United Nations (UN);

WHEREAS UN agencies are involved in work such as health, environment, and economic development which is vital to the survival of humankind, and the UN has initiated and supported international agreements to promote peace and protect human rights;

WHEREAS the United States government has not only failed to ratify some of these agreements but also failed to pay dues and assessments to the UN;

WHEREAS the UN has in place a program of volunteer specialists in technical fields which is of benefit to both those who serve and those who are served, and which might be enlarged into or supplemented by a "Peace Corps" type of organization; and

WHEREAS many citizens are poorly informed about the important work in which the UN is engaged;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UUA calls upon its member congregations, affiliated organizations, and individual Unitarian Universalists to induce their governments in the US and Canada to ratify, if not already done, each of the UN instruments for protection of human rights cited below insofar as the instrument does not conflict with the policies of the UUA on reproductive rights;*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UUA urges the US to strengthen the International Court of Justice and the rule of international law by rescinding the Connally

Amendment and submitting to the Court's jurisdiction on a continuing basis;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UUA urges the US government to make prompt and full payment of all monies owed by it to the UN and its agencies, and particularly to rejoin United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and to resume full-share payment to the UN Population Fund;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UUA calls on its congregations and individual Unitarian Universalists to explore the possibility of supplementing the UN Volunteers program by a broad-scale "Peace Corps" type of organization which might include provision by sponsoring governments of post-service benefits such as college tuition, comparable to those earned by equivalent terms of military services;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UUA calls upon its member societies and individual Unitarian Universalists to advocate better education about the UN (its purpose, history, and programs) in their local schools and communities; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the UUA calls on individual Unitarian Universalists to become supporters of and educators for the UN and calls on all member societies to support the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) by appointing a UU-UNO envoy, by observing UN Sundays, and by contributing financial support to the UU-UNO.

* Explanatory Note:

As of June 1990 the following have been ratified by Canada but not by the US:

1. The Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
2. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
3. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights;
4. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and
5. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The following have not been ratified by either Canada or the US:

6. The Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity; and
7. The Convention on the Rights of the Child.

DRAFT GENERAL RESOLUTIONS REFERRED FOR STUDY

The Assembly approved by a two-thirds or more vote three draft General Resolutions (as amended) to be referred to member congregations and districts for review and study.

The member congregations and districts may submit comments about proposed

amendments to the draft resolutions to the Commission on General Resolutions by no later than March 1, 1991. Final action on each of the resolutions is scheduled for the 1991 General Assembly.

The text of each of the three draft General Resolutions approved for study is set forth in Attachments A-1, A-2, and A-3.

ACTION ON RESOLUTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

The assembly adopted by a two-thirds vote or more the following two Resolutions of Immediate Witness:

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1990

GUIDED by the Unitarian Universalist Association's commitment to justice, equity, and compassion in human relations and the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and

INSPIRED by our special responsibility to promote the full participation of persons in the full range of human endeavor without regard to race, color, sex, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or to any particular religious belief or creed; yet

ACKNOWLEDGING the great distance yet to be traveled by our own denomination and our own congregations to overcome institutional racism; and

WHEREAS the highest court in the United States, the US Supreme Court, has removed protections against workplace discrimination; and

WHEREAS leaders in the US Congress have introduced the Civil Rights Act of 1990 (Bills S. 2104 and H.R. 4000), legislation that would restore protections against workplace discrimination that the Supreme Court took away last year;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) calls upon all members of the US Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1990 and to return the guarantee of workplace justice to every citizen of the United States of America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly urges UUA member congregations and individual Unitarian Universalists to inform themselves on today's civil rights issues, and to make every effort to convince legislators to ensure the reinstatement of legal protection against racism and discrimination.

KEEP THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS ALIVE

WHEREAS the cause of peace in the Middle East will be advanced only when all interested parties have the opportunity to participate in negotiations;

WHEREAS President Bush on June 20, 1990, suspended official dialogue between the United States government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO); and

WHEREAS some Israeli peace leaders and moderate nonviolent Palestinians have warned that the recent suspension of contacts with the PLO, in the words of Faisal Husseini, peace negotiator and president of the Arab Studies Society, "open the way to another war. . . . No one can bear it. No one can win it. Everyone will be the loser";

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly, while condemning violence by all parties, urges the Bush administration to resume official dialogue immediately with the PLO and all other parties to the Middle East conflict.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

The final report of the Credentials Committee was as follows:

Accredited and attending the 29th General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association were 1161 lay delegates, 357 ministerial delegates, 4 certified directors of religious education (ministerial delegates include ministers of religious education), 6 associate member delegates, and 25 members of the Board of Trustees (not included as registered delegates from congregations), for a total of 1553 delegates representing 545 congregations, 49 states and the District of Columbia, 6 Canadian provinces, and 1 delegate representing the Philippines. Total registration for the Assembly was 2519.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Assembly voted, by unanimous consent, to express its appreciation to the General Assembly Planning Committee, the Commission on General Resolutions, the Volunteer Committee, the General Assembly Administrator, and to the Moderator. A closing worship service was held.

The Assembly then voted to adjourn sine die.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Kathleen C. Montgomery
Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT A-1

REDIRECTING ECONOMIC RESOURCES TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY

RECOGNIZING the inherent worth of every human being; and

BELIEVING that extreme poverty deprives people of the basic dignity which is the right of every person; and

WHEREAS the social and political changes in Middle and Eastern Europe give hope that the United States will reduce military spending and create a "peace dividend";

WHEREAS there are realistic proposals for action that would alleviate poverty, malnutrition, and hunger at home and abroad (e.g. The Global Poverty Reduction Act Bill, H.R. 594); and

WHEREAS redirecting economic resources to alleviate poverty and its social consequences will be achieved only through active lobbying and civil action;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), its member congregations, and individual Unitarian Universalists in the United States advocate that their government move at a rate of 5% per year toward the goal of reducing military expenditures by 50%, with the monies so released being allocated toward the alleviation of poverty and its social consequences;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UUA, its member congregations and individual Unitarian Universalists in the United States, and the Unitarian Universalist Washington Office and other affiliated organizations ask all candidates for public office to pledge to use their influence to achieve the 5% goal; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the UUA encourages its member congregations and individual Unitarian Universalists to study the underlying causes of poverty and the means by which Unitarian Universalists may most effectively act to alleviate poverty and its social consequences.

ATTACHMENT A-2

A BALANCED APPROACH TO THE DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM

BE IT RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist Association, its member congregations, and individual Unitarian Universalists study and discuss the demand and supply side of the drug abuse problem--emphasizing education, prevention, and rehabilitation.

ATTACHMENT A-3

GUN CONTROL

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists affirm the inherent worth of every human life;

BECAUSE safe coexistence within society requires reasonable compromise with the concept of absolute personal liberty; and

BECAUSE we hold that regulation firearm possession is consistent with the above principles; and

WHEREAS individual ownership of handguns and automatic, repeating, and other excessively dangerous firearms poses an undeniable threat to human life;

WHEREAS every year many thousands of children and adults in the United States are killed or disabled in accidents, suicides, and homicides involving handguns;

WHEREAS most victims injured or killed by the use of handguns are members of gun-owning families rather than perpetrators of crime;

WHEREAS in the United States a recent study of 500 accidental shootings of children showed that 98% of the guns involved belonged to the victims' parents, other relatives, or family friends; and

WHEREAS in 1985 alone, 8,092 people were killed by handguns in the United States, in contrast to 46 killed in Japan, 8 in Great Britain, 31 in Switzerland, 5 in Canada, 18 in Israel, and 5 in Australia (all countries with effective gun control laws);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist Association encourages Unitarian Universalists to inform themselves and others on this problem and to petition their legislators to enact and support effective laws to place safe limits on individual possession of handguns and other excessively dangerous firearms.