

MINUTES**THIRTY EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION
HELD IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

The General Assembly was convened on Thursday, June 24, 1999 at 8:00 p.m. by Moderator Denise Taft Davidoff at the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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

Greetings were received from Barry Pyle, President of the Mountain Desert District.

A list of the congregations entered into membership in the Unitarian Universalist during the past year was read: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice, Venice, Florida; Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Marquette, Marquette, Michigan; Comal County Unitarian Universalist Society, New Braunfels, Texas; Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Winona, Minnesota; Lake Tahoe Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, South Lake Tahoe, CA; Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Sheridan, Wyoming; Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Pagosa Springs, Colorado; Spirit of Life Unitarian Universalists, Oldsmar, Florida; Prairie Unitarian Universalist Church, Parker, Colorado; and Unitarian Universalist of Southern Delaware, Lewes, Delaware.

The Assembly received written reports or, in some cases, oral, from the President, the Moderator, the Executive Vice President, the Treasurer, the Financial Advisor, the Secretary, the Chair of the Finance Committee, the Board of Trustees, the Planning Committee, the Commission on Appraisal, the Commission on Social Witness, the Nominating Committee, the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, and the Church of the Larger Fellowship.

On the basis of an initial report by the Secretary of the Association, a quorum was declared present from the time the meeting was called to order.

President John Buehrens and Jean Kapuscik, Chair of the Distinguished Service Award Committee, presented the annual Award for Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism to the Rev. Dr. Til Evans.

ACTION ON BYLAW AND RULE AMENDMENTS**VOTE ON REPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF STATEMENTS OF CONSCIENCE**

The Assembly passed an amendment to Rule G- 4.12.3 which would require the Administration of the UUA to report at each General Assembly on any actions that the member congregations, Districts, UUA staff and other UU groups have taken towards the implementation of the most recently adopted UUA Statement of Conscience. The new text is as follows:

Rule G-4.12.3 Report on Implementation of UUA Statements of Conscience.

The UUA Administration shall report at each regular General Assembly regarding implementation of UUA Statements of Conscience with particular reference to the most recently adopted Statement of Conscience. Such report shall summarize implementation by member congregations, Districts, UUA staff and other Unitarian Universalist groups.

VOTE ON APPEALS TO MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE DECISIONS

The Assembly considered an amendment to Bylaw Section 11.8 which would have given candidates for fellowship, ministers in preliminary fellowship, and ministers in final fellowship the right to appeal adverse decisions of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee to the Ministerial Fellowship Board of Review. This proposed amendment was defeated.

VOTE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATES

The Assembly passed an amendment to Bylaw Section 4.8 (a) which would change the apportionment of member delegates by which societies are entitled to be represented at General Assemblies. The new text is as follows:

Section 4.8 Delegates.

(a) Member Delegates. Each certified member society is entitled to be represented at each General Assembly by delegates who are members of such society, selected in accordance with its bylaws or procedures. The Church of the Larger Fellowship is entitled to 22 such delegates. Other certified member societies are entitled to that number of such delegates determined as follows: the number of delegates of a certified member society shall be equal to the number of members of the society divided by fifty, plus one delegate for any fraction remaining; provided that each certified member society shall be entitled to at least two delegates.

1-100	2
101-150	3
151-200	4
201-250	5
251-300	6
301-350	7
351-400	8
401-450	9
451-500	10
Over 500	One for each additional 50 members or fraction thereof.

The number of members of a certified member society which is a federated church shall be determined for the purposes of this section either (i) by dividing the number of members of the federated church by the number of denominations included in the federation or, at the option of the federated church, (ii) by reporting the actual number of members who identify themselves as Unitarian Universalists.

VOTE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCES DISCLOSURE

The Assembly passed an addition to Rule G-9.12.8 which would clarify the policy on indirect contributions to campaigns. The new text is as follows:

Rule G-9.12.8 Campaign Finances Disclosure.

All candidates for at-large elective positions shall keep detailed and accurate records of:

- a. their campaign expenses (stated in United States dollars) by categories of travel, postage, telephone, printing and other such categories as seem appropriate;

- b. the number of contributors to their campaigns, including the number of contributors in each of the following categories:
1. under \$50.00,
 2. \$50.00 to \$100.00,
 3. \$101.00 to \$250.00,
 4. \$251.00 to \$500.00, and
 5. over \$500.00, and
- c. the number of contributions and the total amount of contributions received from each group or organization supporting the campaign.

No candidate for any elective position shall solicit or knowingly accept any contribution that is given through a tax-exempt entity with the purpose of conferring tax-exempt status to the contribution to which it would not otherwise be entitled. Such exempt entities include but are not limited to member societies, associate member organizations and independent UUA affiliates.

The names of contributors shall be disclosed. Each such report shall identify by name any member society, associate member organization or independent affiliate of the Association and any other tax exempt organization (including specifically, but without limitation to, any minister's discretionary fund or similar account) that has made any contribution to the campaign and shall state the amount of each such contribution. Such reports shall be filed with the Secretary of the Association. A preliminary report shall be due at the close of the first day of the regular General Assembly at which the election occurs. A final report shall be due 60 days thereafter. The Secretary shall upon written request from a member of a member society furnish such information from these reports as requested. These reports shall be made available for inspection by any member of a member congregation at the principal offices of the Association and shall be brought by the Secretary to the next General Assembly and made available for inspection there by any delegate.

VOTE ON INDEMNIFICATION

The Assembly passed an addition to Bylaw Section 10.2 which would expand the current indemnification practices that cover trustees and officers to include UUA employees and volunteers. The new text is as follows:

Section 10.12. Indemnification of Trustees, Officers, Employees, and Volunteers.

The Association, to the extent legally permissible, shall indemnify any trustee, officer, employee of the Association or volunteer elected by a General Assembly or appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Association to serve the Association, or persons formerly holding such positions, against all liabilities and expenses (including court costs, attorney's fees, and the amount of any judgment or reasonable settlement, fines and penalties) actually and necessarily incurred by any such person, subsequent to the adoption hereof, in connection with the defense of any claim asserted or threatened to be asserted against any such person, or any action, suit or proceeding in which any such person may be involved as a party, by reason of being or having been such trustee, officer, employee or volunteer or by reason of any action alleged to have been taken or omitted by any such person as such trustee, officer, employee or volunteer, except with respect to any matter as to which he or she shall have been adjudicated in any proceeding not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that his or her action was in the best interests of the Association; provided, however, that as to any matter disposed of by a compromise payment by such person, pursuant to a consent decree or otherwise, no indemnification either for said payment or for any other expenses shall be provided unless such compromise and indemnification therefore shall be approved:

- a. by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of disinterested trustees;
- b. if such quorum cannot be obtained, then by a majority vote of a committee of the Board of Trustees consisting of all the disinterested trustees;
- c. if there are not two or more disinterested trustees in office, then by a majority of the trustees then in office, provided they have obtained a written finding by independent legal counsel appointed by a majority of the trustees to the effect that, based upon a reasonable investigation of the relevant facts as described in such opinion, the person to be indemnified appears to have acted in good faith and in the reasonable belief that his or her action was in the best interests of the Association;
- d. if not resolved by (a), (b) or (c), above, by a court of competent jurisdiction.

If authorized in the same manner specified above for compromise payments, expenses, including attorney's fees, actually and necessarily incurred by any such person in connection with the defense or disposition of any such action, suit or other proceeding may be paid from time to time by the Association in advance of the final disposition thereof upon receipt of (a) an affidavit of such individual of his or her good faith belief that he or she has met the standard of conduct necessary for indemnification under this Section and (b) an undertaking by such individual to repay the amount so paid to the Association if such person shall be adjudicated to be not entitled to indemnification under this Section, which undertaking may be accepted without reference to the financial ability of such person to make repayment. The right of indemnification herein provided shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of each such trustee, officer, employee or volunteer and shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which any such person may be entitled under any statute, bylaw, agreement, vote of members or otherwise or to which any such person might have been entitled were it not for this provision. As used in this Section, an "interested" trustee or officer is one against whom in such capacity the proceeding in question, or other proceeding on the same or similar grounds, is then pending.

UUA STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE

The Assembly adopted by two-thirds or more the following Statement of Conscience.

BEYOND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: THE CHALLENGES OF INTERFAITH COOPERATION BEGIN WITH US

We live in a global village that brings people of diverse economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds into close and interdependent contact. The resulting challenges are immense. They defy traditional efforts to ensure socio-economic fairness. While we hear the plea for a more just society in the teachings of many faiths, intolerance towards people of other faiths inhibits cooperative efforts.

The commitment of Unitarian Universalism to religious tolerance dates back to the first guarantee of religious freedom in Europe, issued in 1568 by the Transylvanian King John Sigismund, a Unitarian. Today, we accept others' rights to their own religious beliefs. However, our acceptance does not extend to tolerance of actions flowing from those beliefs that violate individual human rights and dignity. Acceptance thrives only where mutual respect exists, understanding is encouraged, and dialogue is nurtured among people of different faiths and philosophical traditions.

Contemporary Unitarian Universalism is a pluralistic faith, drawing its strength from its openness to many different sources. While religious interdependence is an integral characteristic of our living tradition, we are not immune to religious intolerance. There is still hard work to be done within our ranks to ensure that Unitarian Universalists with different theological and philosophical beliefs feel equally at home in our congregations. We need to grow beyond the stereotypes, symbols, and semantic barriers that divide Unitarian Universalists from one another.

We try to advance our Unitarian Universalist principles through our social justice agenda. We try to bring about mutual understanding, appreciation, and respect among people of faith--all people of faith. Recognizing shared values may help us avoid either accepting the intolerable or unquestioningly embracing interfaith cooperation. We want to foster cooperation among people of faith as a way of discovering shared values. These shared values may become a workable base on which to build a better world.

Interfaith cooperation sets a high standard of thought, feeling, and action for each individual and for each community that by its nature goes beyond the boundaries of self. It invites us to reach beyond ourselves into the world to confront fear, ignorance, and hatred wherever we find them. It also invites us to reach deep within ourselves to assess our own prejudices. This work begins with living our principles, thereby modeling what is possible in the broader community.

Therefore we are called to:

Educate Ourselves. Let us commit ourselves to increasing our own and our children's understanding and appreciation of other faith traditions. Let us search for deeper meanings and shared values that underlie our common humanity. Let us come to know who we are in a world of many different beliefs. Let us use our long-standing commitment to liberal education to overcome fear, ignorance, and hatred.

Honor Our Internal Religious Pluralism. Within our congregations, let us come to understand that the identity of our evolving faith is rooted in the free expression of our varied religious beliefs and deepest yearnings. Let us celebrate our differences as contributing to our creativity and to the unique fabric of our Unitarian Universalist heritage.

Converse with Other Faith Communities. Let us find the courage to explore through dialogue the values and goals we share with others. Let us listen to others carefully, avoid premature judgments, and speak only for ourselves. Let us speak out about who we are and be sure we are heard. Let us build from our conversations a network for collective action. Let us become involved as individuals, as congregations, and as a faith community in cooperative interfaith activities.

Participate in Interfaith Service Projects. Let us recognize and encourage those among us who reach out beyond themselves to take part, as Unitarian Universalists, in cooperative interfaith service projects and who embody our principles in their involvement.

Work for Social Justice. Social justice work, in addition to its intrinsic merit, can bring faith communities together and provide opportunities for personal transformation. Through the discovery of mutual interests, let us help build personal and institutional alliances that open channels of communication for further cooperative work.

Celebrate Diversity. Let us go beyond tolerance to build mutual understanding with respect, appreciation, and love for people whose religious traditions, symbols, and beliefs may differ from our own.

The Unitarian Universalist Association dedicates itself to the challenges of interfaith cooperation and calls upon its member congregations and individual Unitarian Universalists, within the dictates of conscience, to accept these challenges. May our commitment to building a better world begin with ourselves as we work with others to make the world awaited a world attained.

STUDY/ACTION ISSUE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The following Study/Action Issue for Social Justice received a majority vote of the Assembly and was referred for study in accordance with Bylaw Section 4.12(c):

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AS A MORAL IMPERATIVE

Issue: Irresponsible consumption endangers our future as it wastes raw materials and precious resources, depriving people in other countries as well as our own future generations. Can Unitarian Universalists and their congregations influence people to become more responsible in our consumption of resources?

Actions of Immediate Witness

The Assembly adopted by two-thirds or more the following three Actions of Immediate Witness:

A MORAL RESPONSE TO YOUTH VIOLENCE AT COLUMBINE

On April 20, 1999, at about 11:21 a.m., two students, heavily armed with firearms and pipe bombs, entered Columbine High School in Jefferson County, Colorado. Over the next few horrifying hours, twelve students were killed, a teacher lay dying while protecting those students in his care, some twenty students were wounded, and the two ended their acts of terror with their own suicides.

A shock wave spread across the Denver metropolitan area, across the state, and out over the nation, finally reaching every corner of the world. In a terrible list of school attacks, Columbine became almost instantly a symbol and a cause. Bills in the Colorado Legislature, easing the requirements for concealed weapons, disappeared. The United States Senate, reeling under public reaction, reversed its vote and passed a measure requiring background checks for all gun sales everywhere. Vice President and Mrs. Gore visited the emotional and spontaneous memorials in Clement Park, next to the school, and on May 20, President and Mrs. Clinton met with the families of the slain children, then spoke to the Columbine community.

The copycat violence in Taber, Alberta, heightened the shock.

Now it is time for the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association to speak our truth as a community of justice and compassion in which the worth and dignity of all people are affirmed.

There is no single cause for such a complex situation as the attack on innocent students at Columbine, but some factors in our society stand out as major contributors:

- a) The complacency and tacit approval of adults and peers who witness cruel and cynical behaviors toward others and take no action; the bullying and cliques in our schools are a reflection of the society outside and give rise to violence, both mental and physical;
- b) The availability to our youth of hand guns and automatic rifles;
- c) The popularization of violent role models in television and film and the apparent celebration of gratuitous violence and death with casual indifference; and
- d) The video games that desensitize youth to the horrors of senseless violence.

We note with sorrow and shame that the event which motivated public concern about youth violence is not the almost daily violence in our communities of poverty and communities of color.

More of us must begin to address youth violence in all of its complexity.

The rising numbers of suicides, acts of violence, and other antisocial behaviors in general demonstrate an increasing sense of hopelessness among our youth and in society.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 1999 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges the Association and its member congregations:

- a) to communicate with national, regional, and local school authorities to call for the development of nonviolent conflict resolution training programs for K-12 education;
- b) to work for legislation in the United States and Canada to increase the legal age for possession of hand guns, and to prohibit the manufacture, import, and sale of all assault weapons, except for law enforcement and military use, and to require that parents be held responsible for weapons they know to be in the possession of minor children; and
- c) to communicate with major film and television studios and television networks, and to work in concert with other religious groups, to demand the reduction of violent images prevalent in our society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 1999 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges individual Unitarian Universalists:

- a) to work in their communities through such groups as parent-teacher associations and school boards, in concert with others from any religious denomination, to press for the introduction of conflict resolution training programs as a way to help bring about universal understanding and acceptance of the fundamental concept of respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- b) to preview videos and motion pictures to be viewed by their children, and to refuse to support entertainment based strictly on the excitement of violent images;
- c) to stop purchasing video games in which human or human-like figures are targets to be killed for higher scores, causing, however unwittingly, a gradual but certain reduction in feelings of revulsion or guilt in the act of discharging a deadly weapon toward a human being;
- d) to provide in our congregations youth programming and activities for member families and other youth in our communities;
- e) to provide youth advisor training within our congregations;
- f) to encourage our children to participate in organized youth programs and to be active participants in and supporters of those programs;
- g) to work in our wider communities to foster a positive image of hope for the future of civilization; and
- h) to commit to giving of our time and gifts to the young people in our communities whether these young people are members of our immediate families or congregations or members of the greater communities.

CONDEMNATION OF ARSON AT SACRAMENTO SYNAGOGUES

In the early morning hours of Friday, June 18, 1999, three synagogues in Sacramento, California, were set on fire. The three synagogues--Congregation B'nai Israel, Congregation Beth Shalom, and Knesset Israel Torah Center--suffered over \$1,000,000 worth of damage, including a library with a 2,000-year-old bible and videos of holocaust survivors. Anti-Semitic flyers were left at each scene, and the FBI is investigating the arsons as hate crimes. Immediately after the events, the Sacramento interfaith community rose as one in support and solidarity with the three congregations.

These acts of violence strike at Unitarian Universalists' most deeply held principles. We condemn all such acts of hatred and intolerance. The 1996 General Assembly decried the burning of churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship. We do so again.

As Unitarian Universalists, we want our voices to be heard.

Therefore the 1999 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association requests that:

- a) individual Unitarian Universalists continue to speak out in condemnation of such acts of desecration and destruction;
- b) the Unitarian Universalist Association convey our sympathy to and solidarity with the congregations of the three synagogues; and
- c) the Unitarian Universalist Association, in conjunction with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, on behalf of the Unitarian Universalist movement as a whole, make an appeal to all Unitarian Universalist congregations to assist Sacramento Interfaith projects, such as the proposed Museum of Tolerance, which will address the climate of intolerance and hate which led to these crimes.

WORK TO CHANGE DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES OF BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

WHEREAS Unitarian Universalists affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person and a free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

WHEREAS Unitarian Universalists have consistently affirmed the rights of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender persons;

WHEREAS anti-gay violence has been on the rise, with a dramatic increase at public schools and with 19% of gay youth reporting having suffered physical attacks based on their sexual orientation;

WHEREAS the Boy Scouts of America's policy is to "not allow for the registration of avowed homosexuals as members or as leaders of the Boy Scouts of America";

WHEREAS the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) requires all Boy Scouts to affirm a duty to God;

WHEREAS many individual UUs are involved with the BSA, either as youth involved in the program or as adult leaders;

WHEREAS the BSA and many Boy Scout troops use public facilities;

WHEREAS the BSA dropped the UU Religion in Life emblem from its religious emblem program in May 1998 in response to the UUA's inclusion in the Religion in Life program pamphlet a copy of the UUA Board's 1992 resolution and other material mentioning the conflict between UU values and BSA policy;

WHEREAS the BSA rejected the newly revised version of the Religion in Life program on May 7, 1999, with Lawrence Ray Smith, Chairman of the BSA's Religious Relationships Committee, stating that the supplemental information the UUA wanted to provide with the Religion in Life program would be "using boys as a venue to air your differences with the policies of the Boy Scouts of America";

WHEREAS the BSA has maintained since the inception of the religious awards programs that the requirements are set by the denomination, the training in and certifying of the completion of the requirements is by local religious leaders, and the presentation of the award is by the local religious group and not by the BSA; and

WHEREAS we believe any attempt by the BSA to define what any religion can or cannot teach its Scouting youth is a clear interference with religious freedom;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 1999 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges the Association to:

- a) continue efforts to seek the reinstatement of the Religion in Life emblem and to offer the program and award the emblem to UU and other Scouts in the meantime.
- b) publicize the Religion in Life program through *Synapse*, *UU+Me*, and other publications that are read by UU youth.
- c) publicize the Religion in Life program through the *World*, *REACH*, and other publications that are read by parents and religious educators.
- d) continue to use all appropriate venues to communicate this information to Unitarian Universalists and others about these conflicts.
- e) encourage the BSA to monitor troops nationwide to be sure that all Scouts are being treated equally and fairly despite their religions beliefs or the degree to which their families may practice them.

- f) support UU churches that choose to continue their charters with BSA troops while they work to try to change BSA's discriminatory policies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 1999 General Assembly urges U.S. Unitarian Universalists and U.S. Unitarian Universalist congregations to:

- a) support the efforts of "Scouting for All" and other groups that seek to overturn the Boy Scouts' discriminatory national policies.
- b) continue to present the Religion in Life award to UU Scouts, and to encourage Scouts to wear it on their uniforms.
- c) urge individual UU Scouts to remain in Scouting, and to encourage UU members to join Scouting, in order to work for change within the BSA.
- d) engage in educational programming within our communities to inform UUs and others about these issues.
- e) encourage the Boy Scouts of America to monitor troops nationwide to be sure that all scouts are being treated equally and fairly despite their religious beliefs or the degree to which their families may practice them.
- f) encourage UU scouts to include their congregations in Scouting rites of passage such as the Religion in Life award and Eagle rank ceremony, and encourage the UUA and member congregations to develop Unitarian Universalist support materials for these ceremonies.
- g) engage in dialogue with local Scout troops, councils, and the BSA on these issues.
- h) ask local Scout troops to adopt anti-discrimination policies that include religious belief, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- i) provide the necessary tools to empower youth to take action on these issues.
- j) speak out about these issues in our communities.

Elections

The Assembly, by voice vote, elected the following board and committee members:

Board of Review

Paul Johnson (6-year term)
Silvio Nardoni (8-year term)
Sandra Shaw (8-year term)

Board of Trustees

Herman Boerma (4-year term)
Norma Poinsett (4-year term)

Commission on Social Witness

Barbara Child (4-year term)

General Assembly Planning Committee

Ervin Barrios (2-year term)
Marc Lousteau (4-year term)
Charles King (4-year term)
Lynda Friedman (4-year term)
Douglas Morgan Strong (4-year term)

Commission on Appraisal

Joyce Gilbert (6-year term)
Janice Johnson (6-year term)
Earl Holt (6-year term)

Nominating Committee

James Kepler (6-year term)
Joel High (6-year term)
Young Kim (6-year term)
Jane Bramadat (4-year term)

Credentials Committee Report

The final credentials report of the Secretary of the Association was as follows:

Accredited and attending the 38th General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association were 1270 member delegates, 395 ministerial delegates, 5 associate member delegates, 24 members of the Board of Trustees (not included as registered delegates from congregations), and 10 delegates from the Church of the Larger Fellowship for a total of 1726 delegates representing 595 congregations, 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Mexico, New Zealand, and 8 Canadian provinces. Total registration for the Assembly was 3538, including 344 youth.

The Assembly then voted to adjourn *sine die*.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kathleen Montgomery
Recording Secretary