

MINUTES**THIRTY NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION
HELD IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

The General Assembly was convened on Thursday, June 22, 2000 at 8:30 p.m. by Moderator Denise Taft Davidoff at the Nashville Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee.

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

Greetings were received from Lyn Conley, President of the Mid South District.

A list of the congregations entered into membership in the Unitarian Universalist Association during the past year was read:

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Church, Parker, Colorado; Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware, Lewes, Delaware; River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Sunrise, Florida; Nature Coast Unitarian Universalists of Citrus County, Florida; Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Rappahannock, White Stone, Va; Gaia Community of Kansas City, Missouri; Avalon UU Fellowship of St. John's, Newfoundland; Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clarksville, Tennessee; Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Beaufort, South Carolina, Unitarian Universalists of Transylvania County, NC.

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 the Reverend Calvin Dame, Chair of the Distinguished Service Award Committee, presented the annual Award for Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism to the Reverend Carl R. Scovel.

ACTION ON BYLAW AND RULE AMENDMENTS**VOTE ON ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW DISTRICTS**

The Assembly passed amendments to Bylaw Section 6.3 and to Rule G-12.1 that establish the Clara Barton and Heartland Districts, formed, respectively, by the mergers of the Connecticut Valley and Central Massachusetts Districts and the Michigan and Ohio Valley Districts. These changes establish the new districts, provide authorization for the two trustees currently representing the Connecticut Valley and Central Massachusetts to fill out their terms as representatives of the Clara Barton District, and set the boundaries of the new districts as the combined boundaries of the previous districts.

Section 6.3. Membership

The Board of Trustees shall consist of:

- (c) one trustee representing each district, except that a single trustee shall represent each of the following combinations:
 - (1) The Mid-South and Florida Districts;
 - (2) The Prairie Star and Western Canada Districts;
- (d) notwithstanding the provisions of clause (c) above and the provisions of Section 6.6 of these Bylaws, two trustees representing the Clara Barton District. This subsection (d) shall remain in effect only until the end of the 2001 General Assembly, at which time it shall expire and be automatically deleted from these Bylaws.

*Section C-12.2. Establishment**Rule G-12.2.1. Establishing Districts*

- (a) The districts shall be twenty- one in number and named Ballou Channing, Central Midwest, Clara Barton, Florida, Heartland, Joseph Priestley, Massachusetts Bay, Metropolitan New York, Mountain Desert, Mid-South, Northeast, New Hampshire-Vermont, Ohio Meadville, Pacific Central, Pacific Northwest, Pacific Southwest, Prairie Star, St. Lawrence, Southwest, Thomas Jefferson, Western Canada.

VOTE ON APPEALS TO MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE DECISIONS

The Assembly considered an amendment to Bylaw Section 11.8 that would have given ministers in preliminary fellowship or 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 AUTHORIZATION FOR LAY PREACHERS

The Assembly passed an amendment to Bylaw Section 11.4 which removes the authority of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee to make rules concerning the status and recognition of lay preachers—an authority that has never been implemented. Thus, the following language was deleted from this Bylaw Section 11.4, “The Ministerial Fellowship Committee may also with the approval of the Board of Trustees make rules pertaining to the status of, and recognition by the Association of, lay preachers and the granting of licenses to them.”

VOTES ON NON-SUBSTANTIVE BYLAW AND RULE CHANGES

The Assembly passed changes to the following Bylaws and Rules. These changes were passed collectively; they are non-substantive in nature and were recommended to the Assembly by the Board of Trustees. Explanations and revised text are show below.

In all Sections of the Bylaws and Rules, the word “society” has been changed to “congregation,” the word now more commonly in use.

In all Sections of the Bylaws and G-Rules, references to Life Members have been deleted. It is believed that there are no living life members. The General Assembly passed motions to delete Bylaw Section C-3.10 and to renumber Section C-3.11 as Section C-3.10. Also, the Assembly voted to amend Bylaw Section C-4.7 to read 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; and
- (b) trustees.

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

Final adoption of those changes to Bylaw Sections C-3.10, C-3.11 and C-4.7 according to Bylaw Section C-14.1 requires action by the 2001 General Assembly.

Additionally, the following Bylaw Sections 9.4 and 9.9(b) and Rules G-4.9.3 and G-4.9.9 have been amended to delete references to Life Members.

Section 9.4. Nomination by Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee shall submit one or more nominations for each elective position at large to be filled, except Moderator and President, including those to fill any vacancies occurring prior to October 1 of the year before the election. Only one person from any one member society shall be thus nominated to serve on the Nominating Committee. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be filed with the Secretary of the Association and be mailed to all certified member societies, associate member organizations, and trustees on or before December 10 of each even-numbered year.

Section 9.9. Conduct of Elections at Large.

(b) Persons Entitled to Vote. Ballots shall be cast only by accredited delegates from certified member societies and certified associate member organizations to the regular General Assembly at which the election is held and by trustees. No person shall cast more than one ballot.

Rule G-4.9.3. Mailing of Credential Cards.

Not less than forty-five days prior to each General Assembly, the Secretary of the Association shall send to each certified member society and associate member organization entitled to be represented by delegates the proper number of delegate credentials. The Secretary shall also furnish trustees with credentials.

Rule G-4.9.9. Payment of Registration Fee.

All delegates, alternates, and trustees must pay a registration fee in order to be admitted to the floor and vote at the General Assembly.

Bylaw Section 4.8(a) has been amended as follows to delete the reference to federated churches since there are some congregations that are not federated but belong to more than one denomination:

*Section 4.8**(a) Member Delegates*

The number of members of a certified member society which is a member of more than one denomination shall be determined . . .

Bylaw Section 4.11 has been amended as follows to substitute the word “item” for “resolution” since the Association no longer has general resolutions:

Section 4.11. Tentative Agenda for Regular General Assemblies.

(c) items referred by the preceding General Assembly;

Bylaw Section 4.11 has been amended as follows to give the authority to prepare the Tentative Agenda to the Executive Committee, whose authority is detailed in Section 7.5 of the Bylaws:

Section 4.11. Tentative Agenda for Regular General Assemblies.

The General Assembly Planning Committee shall prepare a Tentative Agenda for each regular General Assembly which shall include: . . .

- (e) all proposed amendments to Rules and all Business Resolutions as defined in Rule G-4.18.2, submitted by:
 - (1) the Board of Trustees or the Executive Committee;

Bylaw Section 4.12 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 4.12. UUA Statements of Conscience.

- (g) During the next regular General Assembly following the General Assembly referred to in (e) above, a mini-assembly shall be held during dedicated time during which proposed amendments to the revised UUA (U.S. or Continental) Statement of Conscience shall be accepted in writing. All such amendments shall be made available in writing to the General Assembly. The Commission on Social Witness shall finalize the UUA (U.S. or Continental) Statement of Conscience, and the moderator of the General Assembly, together with the parliamentarian, legal counsel and the chairperson of the Commission on Social Witness, shall prioritize unincorporated amendments for consideration by the General Assembly.

Rule G-4.12.1 was amended as follows to provide clarification and to change the reference from “amendments” to comments on” since the Commission on Social Witness submits a re-draft rather than a collection of amendments:

Rule G-4.12.1. Report of Comments on UUA Statements of Conscience.

The Commission on Social Witness shall report to the General Assembly in summary fashion those comments on UUA (U.S. or Continental) Statements of Conscience submitted to it by member societies and districts.

Bylaw Section 4.14 was amended as follows to add reference to the Executive Committee, whose authority is detailed in Section 7.5 of the Bylaws:

Section 4.14. Final Agenda for Regular General Assemblies.

- (c) Business Resolutions, amendments to Rules or Bylaws or other items submitted by the Planning Committee, the Board of Trustees or the Executive Committee which did not originally appear on the Tentative Agenda; provided, however, that any such items appear on the Final Agenda accompanied by an explanation of the delayed submission;

Rule G-4.18.3 was amended as follows to delete reference to proposed changes to Bylaws and Rules being subject to Congregational Directives since Bylaw Section 14.2 places such proposed changes automatically on the final General Assembly agenda:

Rule G-4.18.3. Congregational Directives for General Assembly Action.

The Planning Committee shall at the time of the mailing of the Tentative Agenda request each certified member society to report by April 15, if the General Assembly opens in June, or not less than 50 days before the General Assembly if the General Assembly occurs at any other time, on a form provided by the Planning Committee whether it recommends or does not recommend for action by the General Assembly the Business Resolutions and Study/Action Issues for Social Justice appearing on the Tentative Agenda, including the alternative versions of Business Resolutions (if any) submitted by the Planning Committee. The recommendation with respect to each proposed resolution or issue must be certified by the minister, clerk or president of that society as being within the procedures of that society.

For the same reason the last sentence of Rule G-4.18.3 was amended to read as follows:

All Business Resolutions that are included on the Final Agenda shall be discussed during the General Assembly in a mini-assembly.

Bylaw Section 5.3 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 5.3. Qualifications of Committee Members.

In order to qualify to be appointed or to continue as a member of a standing committee of the Association, a person must be a member of a member congregation.

Bylaw Section 5.4 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 5.4. Removal of Committee Member.

A member of any standing committee of the Association may be removed by a three-fourths vote of the Board of Trustees at a meeting at which not less than three-fourths of the Board is present, if in the opinion of the Board the member is incapacitated or otherwise unable to carry out the duties of the office.

Bylaw Section 5.5 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 5.5. Vacancies.

A vacancy created by the death, disqualification, resignation, or removal of an elected member of a standing committee of the Association shall be filled by the Board of Trustees until the next regular General Assembly held in an odd-numbered year. . The vacancy shall then be filled by election for the balance of the unexpired term, if any.

Section 5.10, Additional Committees, and Section 5.11, Ministerial Fellowship Board of Review, shall be switched and the Sections are renumbered accordingly.

Bylaw Section 6.5 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 6.5. Term.

Trustees shall take office immediately after the close of the General Assembly at or prior to which they are elected and shall serve for terms of four years or until their successors are elected and qualified. No trustee may serve more than two successive full terms of four years each. However, a trustee may at any time become one of the elected officers of the Association and serve as long in that office as if such trustee had not previously been a trustee. No person who has served as elected officer for a full term shall thereafter be elected a trustee without an interim of four years.

Bylaw Section 6.8 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 6.8. Vacancies.

- (a) Trustee at Large. A vacancy created by the death, disqualification, resignation, or removal of a trustee at large shall be filled by majority vote of the remaining trustees until the next regular General Assembly at which an election can be held. The vacancy shall then be filled by election for the balance of the unexpired term, if any.
- (b) Trustee Representing District. A vacancy created by death, disqualification, resignation, or removal of a trustee representing a district or by the creation of a new district entitled to be represented by a trustee shall be governed by the bylaws of the district and Section 9.11 of these Bylaws subject to the following limitations:
 - (1) If fewer than two regular General Assemblies have met and adjourned since the General Assembly at which the trustee took office, the governing body of the district shall make an interim appointment until the position is filled by a special election within one year from the date the vacancy occurs;

Bylaw Section 6.10 was amended as follows to correct grammar:

Section 6.10. Regular Meetings.

Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at such times as the Board may determine. No fewer than three regular meetings of the Board shall be held during each fiscal year of the Association.

Bylaw Section 6.11 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 6.11. Special Meetings.

Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the Moderator or President, and shall be called by the Moderator at the request of eight trustees. Notice of special meetings shall be given in writing not less than five nor more than sixty days before the meeting and shall state the agenda, time and place of the meeting.

Bylaw Section 7.2 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 7.2. Appointment and Term of Office.

Members of the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and Investment Committee, and board-appointed members of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee shall be appointed by the Board at its first meeting following the regular General Assembly in each odd-numbered year except as otherwise provided herein. Members of such committees shall serve for terms of two years and until their successors are appointed and qualified.

Bylaw Section 7.3 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 7.3. Removal of Committee Member.

Standing committee members appointed by the Board of Trustees serve at the pleasure of the Board and may be removed by it at any time.

Bylaw Section 7.5 was amended as follows to provide clarification regarding the role of the Executive Committee:

Section 7.5. Executive Committee.

If between meetings of the Board of Trustees, matters arise which (1) in the opinion of the Executive Committee are not current and ordinary business but in the best interests of the Association must nevertheless be acted upon, or (2) the Executive Committee has been authorized by the Board to be acted upon, then the Executive Committee may act thereon for the Board of Trustees, but only if four or more members vote the action.

Bylaw Section 7.10 was amended as follows to provide clarification and to allow the Board of Trustees, if it wishes, to provide that an ad hoc committee appoint its own chair:

Section 7.10. Presiding Officer.

The Board of Trustees shall appoint one member of each standing committee of the Board to be its presiding officer.

Bylaw Section 7.11 was amended as follows to give the Board of Trustees the authority to designate a time and place for meetings of ad hoc committees:

Section 7.11. Time and Place of Meetings.

Each standing committee of the Board shall hold meetings at such times and places as it may determine.

Bylaw Section 7.12 has been amended as follows to give standing committees the power to determine the manner and time of notice of their meetings unless the Board of Trustees has determined them:

Section 7.12. Call and Notice of Meetings

Meetings of standing committees of the Board may be called by the presiding officer and shall be called by the presiding officer at the request of a majority of the members of the entire committee. Unless the Board of Trustees otherwise provides, notice of meetings of each standing committee shall be given in such a manner and within such time as the standing committee determines.

Bylaw Section 8.1 has been amended as follows to delete reference to non-salaried vice presidents or assistant treasurers since “such other officers” would include them should they ever be needed:

Section 8.1. Officers Enumerated.

- (a) Elected Officers. The elected officers of the Association shall be a Moderator, a President, and a Financial Advisor.
- (b) Appointed Non-salaried Officers. The appointed non-salaried officers of the Association shall include one or more Vice Moderators, a Secretary, and a Recording Secretary and may include such other officers as the Board of Trustees may appoint.
- (c) Appointed Salaried Officers. The appointed salaried officers of the Association shall include a Treasurer, and may include one or more vice presidents, assistant treasurers, and such other officers as the Board of Trustees may determine.

Bylaw Section 8.3 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 8.3. Term of Office.

- (a) Elected Officers. The elected officers shall be elected at a regular General Assembly in an odd-numbered year and shall take office immediately after the close of such General Assembly.

Bylaw Section 8.6 was amended as follows to provide clarification about the process for resignation by an officer of the Association:

Section 8.6. Resignation.

An officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Moderator, who shall immediately forward copies to the Board of Trustees. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, or, if no time is specified, then upon delivery.

Bylaw Section 8.13 has been amended as follows to make clear the authority of the President:

Section 8.13. Vice Presidents.

Any Vice President appointed shall have such powers and shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Board of Trustees or as assigned by the President in conformity with any provisions of the Board appointment.

Bylaw Section 9.5 has been amended as follows to correct grammar:

Section 9.5. Nomination by Petition.

(a) For Moderator and President. A nomination for the office of Moderator or President, or to fill a vacancy in an unexpired term occurring prior to December 1 of the year before the election shall be by petition signed by no fewer than twenty-five certified member societies, including no fewer than five certified member societies located in each of no fewer than five different districts.

Rule G-9.12.1 has been amended as follows to provide clarification:

Rule G-9.12.1. Preparation and Mailing of Ballot.

Unless no ballot is required according to Section 9.9(a), prior to each regular General Assembly at which an election is to be held, the Secretary shall prepare ballots upon which shall appear the names of all persons who have been nominated for office in accordance with these Bylaws. One such ballot shall be sent with each credential card issued by the Secretary.

Rule G-9.12.3 has been amended as follows to provide clarification:

Rule G-9.12.3. Write-ins Prohibited.

In any election, the use of stickers or the writing in of the name of any person on a ballot shall not be permitted, and no vote so attempted shall be counted.

Bylaw Section C-10.7 has been amended as follows for grammar and accuracy:

Section C-10.7. Responsibility for Investments.

(a) Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall have ultimate responsibility for investing the funds belonging to or held by the Association.

In accordance with Bylaw Section C-14.1, final adoption of the above amendment to Section C-10.7 requires action by the 2001 General Assembly.

The last sentence of Bylaw Section 11.3, which contained reference to accredited directors of religious education, was deleted because the process for admission of religious educators to ministry was changed when the Modified Residency Program for becoming Ministers of Religious Education was instituted.

Rule G-12.2.1 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Rule G-12.2.1. Establishing Districts

(b) Each district is composed of the societies assigned to that district by the Board of Trustees. A list of the societies that are members of each district is published in the annual Directory.

Bylaw Section 13.1 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Section 13.1. Adoption and Amendment of Rules by General Assemblies.

A General Assembly may adopt Rules not inconsistent with these Bylaws. Adoption or amendment of Rules by a General Assembly shall be by two-thirds vote. Each Rule adopted by a General Assembly shall be identified by a "G" preceding its Rule number. A General Assembly may amend or repeal Rules adopted by prior General Assemblies or by the Board of Trustees, if the proposed Rules or amendments have been placed on the agenda. Rules and amendments thereto shall be submitted for inclusion on the agenda in the same manner as other resolutions. The provisions of this Section 13.1 do not apply to the Rules of Procedure contemplated by Section 4.19.

The Assembly voted on a proposed amendment to Bylaw Section C-14.1 which would delete sub-section (d), which calls for Section C-14.1 "to apply only to amendments to these Bylaws proposed subsequent to final adoption of this Section." Since Section-14.1 has been adopted by a prior General Assembly, this sub-section is obsolete. In accordance with the terms of Bylaw Section C-14.1, the result of this action is to place this Bylaw amendment on the Final Agenda of the 2001 General Assembly for final adoption.

Rule G-14.2.1 was amended as follows to provide clarification:

Rule G-14.2.1. Form of Submission.

A proposed amendment to the Bylaws submitted by certified member societies or a district must include:

- (a) the Article and Section which it is proposed to amend or repeal;
- (b) a concise summary of the principal arguments on which the proponents rely; and
- (c) other Articles (or Sections) or "G" Rules affected by the proposed amendment and proposed text of any necessary conforming amendments and "G" Rules.

VOTE ON THE PROCESS FOR AMENDING BYLAWS

The Assembly considered an amendment to Bylaw Section C-14.1 that would have made all bylaw amendments subject to a two-year process, with the second year approval similar to the current election process, with absentee ballots permitted and would have eliminated the distinction between C and non-C bylaws. This proposed amendment was defeated.

VOTE ON MINI-ASSEMBLIES

The Assembly passed an amendment to Section 4.12 that removes dedicated time status for mini-assemblies during General Assemblies. The revised text is as follows:

Section 4.12. UUA Statements of Conscience

(g) During the next General Assembly, a mini-assembly shall be held during which amendments to the revised UUA (U.S. or Continental) Statement of Conscience shall be accepted in writing. All such amendments shall be made available in writing to the General Assembly. The Commission on Social Witness shall finalize the UUA (U.S. or Continental) Statement of Conscience, and the moderator of the General Assembly, together with the parliamentarian, legal counsel and the chairperson of the Commission on Social Witness, shall prioritize unincorporated amendments for consideration by the General Assembly.

VOTE ON CHANGES IN THE PROCESS AND LANGUAGE FOR ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

The Assembly passed amendments as follows to Bylaw Sections 4.12 and 4.16 that change the process for prioritizing unincorporated amendments to Statements of Conscience for consideration by a General Assembly. Other proposed changes to Section 4.16 and to Rule G-4.16 which would have changed the name of “Actions of Immediate Witness” to “Statements of Immediate Witness and would have reduced the number of Actions of Immediate Witness from six to four, failed.

Section 4.12. UUA Statements of Conscience.

(g) During the next General Assembly following the General Assembly referred to in (e) above, a mini-assembly shall be held during which amendments to the revised UUA (U.S. or Continental) Statement of Conscience shall be accepted in writing. All such amendments shall be made available in writing to the General Assembly. The Commission on Social Witness shall finalize the UUA (U.S. or Continental) Statement of Conscience, and the chairperson of the Commission on Social Witness in consultation with the moderator of the General Assembly, the parliamentarian and legal counsel, shall prioritize unincorporated amendments for consideration by the General Assembly.

Section 4.16. Additions to the Agenda of Regular General Assemblies

(4) During the General Assembly, a mini-assembly shall be held during which each admitted action shall be discussed and amendments shall be accepted in writing. All such amendments shall be made available in writing to the General Assembly. The Commission on Social Witness shall finalize each General Assembly (U.S. or Continental) Action of Immediate Witness, (year) and the chairperson of the Commission on Social Witness in consultation with the moderator of the General Assembly, the parliamentarian and legal counsel, shall prioritize unincorporated amendments for consideration by the General Assembly.

VOTE ON ESTIMATED INCOME FOR UUA BUDGETS

The Assembly passed an amendment to Rule G-4.12.3 that removes the option of making excess Annual Fund income available for the budget of the succeeding fiscal year. The revised text is as follows:

Rule G-10.1.3 Estimated Income

Income amounts in the budget for the Current Fiscal Year shall represent the Board's best estimates of income from all sources. Income from the Annual Fund as so estimated shall be an amount which is not more than 7 per cent greater than the actual Annual Fund income of the fiscal year preceding the Current Fiscal Year. In the budget for the Succeeding Fiscal year income from the Annual Fund shall be estimated at an amount which represents the Board's best estimate of the achievable results for such year. The Estimate of the Annual Fund income for the Succeeding Fiscal Year recommended by the Board or adopted by the General Assembly shall become the Annual Fund goal for the Current Fiscal Year.

VOTE ON OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Assembly passed an amendment to Sections 8.14 and 8.16 that distinguishes the duties of the Secretary of the Association from those of the Recording Secretary and, generally, spells out the duties of the Recording Secretary. The revised text is as follows:

Section 8.14. Secretary.

The Secretary shall be appointed from among the members of the Board of Trustees and shall perform all duties usually pertaining to the office, except those of Clerk under Massachusetts law. The Secretary shall represent the Association on special occasions and shall assist in promoting the welfare of the Association.

Section 8.16. Recording Secretary.

The Recording Secretary shall at all times be a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and upon being appointed shall be sworn to the faithful performance of the duties of the office. If the Recording Secretary ceases to be a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, such person shall be disqualified and the office declared vacant. The Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all meetings of the Association and the Board of Trustees, shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board, and shall perform the duties of a Clerk under Massachusetts law.

VOTE ON ELECTION CAMPAIGN PRACTICES COMMITTEE

The Assembly passed a change to Rule G-9.12.10 that provides for a more timely notification to at-large candidates and includes candidates for Moderator or President who have filed their petitions pursuant to Section 9.5(a). The revised text is as follows:

Rule G-9.12.10 Election Campaign Practices Committee

- (b) The duties of the Election Campaign Practices Committee shall be:
- (1) to distribute the campaign practices guidelines and financial disclosure rules to candidates for at-large elective positions not later than thirty days after nomination by the nominating committee or receipt of petition;

VOTE ON ELECTION OF DISTRICT TRUSTEES

The Assembly passed a change to Bylaw Section 9.11 that provides for a clear method of electing district trustees in the event that a district's bylaws do not provide for an elective process. The revised text is as follows:

Section 9.11. Nominations and Elections of Trustees Representing Districts.

- (a) District Bylaws. Each district shall in its bylaws set forth the method by which the certified member societies of the Association within that district shall nominate and elect a trustee. Where two or more districts are required to share a single trustee, each such district shall adopt compatible bylaw provisions. In the absence of valid district bylaw provisions, the trustee representing that district or group of districts shall be elected in accordance with the Bylaws and Rules of the Association. . . .
- (d) Method of Election. If a district's bylaws do not include a provision for the election of the trustee representing that district or the group of districts of which that district is a part, the trustee for that district or the group of districts of which that district is a part shall be elected using one of the following methods:
- (1) at large within the district, with each member of a certified member society casting a ballot by mail;
 - (2) by delegates at a district meeting at which each certified member society is entitled to the same number of voting delegates as specified in Section 4.8(a) of these Bylaws, with absentee ballots by the delegates permitted;
 - (3) by each certified member society, acting at a legal meeting of such society, casting that number of votes equal to the number of delegates specified in Section 4.8(a) of these Bylaws, allocated among the candidates as it shall determine;
 - (4) by delegates at a district meeting at which each certified member society is entitled to the same number and kind of voting delegates as specified in Section 4.8(a) and (b) of these Bylaws with absentee ballots by the delegates permitted; or
 - (5) by each certified member society, acting at a legal meeting of such society, casting that number of votes equal to the number of delegates specified in Section 4.8(a) of these Bylaws, with the votes of the society allocated among the candidates as it shall determine and by each minister and Director of Religious Education, who meets the criteria for delegate status set forth in Section 4.8(b) of these Bylaws, casting a vote.

UUA STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE

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

ECONOMIC INJUSTICE, POVERTY, AND RACISM: WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, hereby rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of economic justice, an end to racism, and an end to poverty. We recognize that racism is a major contributor toward economic injustice. We pledge ourselves to strive to understand how racism and classism perpetuate poverty and to work for the systemic changes needed to promote a more just economy and compassionate society. Together, we can make a difference.

Economic injustice persists in spite of the longest period of economic prosperity in our history. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. Tens of millions, particularly children, women, and the elderly live in poverty, a disproportionate share of whom are ethnic and racial minorities.

Working for a just society is central to our Unitarian Universalist faith. An economically just society is one in which 1) government and private institutions promote the common economic good and are held accountable; 2) all people have equal opportunity to care for themselves and their families; and 3) individuals take responsibility for the effects of their actions on their own and others' lives. Conversely, racism encourages people to perpetuate a system of privileges and economic rewards that opens the door of opportunity much wider for some than for others. This should be intolerable.

We must look both inward and outward as we organize ourselves for action within our congregations and beyond. Looking inward, the 1997 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urged Unitarian Universalists to examine carefully our own conscious and unconscious racism and to work toward our transformation to an anti-racist, multi-cultural institution. The Unitarian Universalist community has only begun its soul-searching toward the goal of becoming more inclusive and affirming. We acknowledge the lack of racial and economic diversity within most of our congregations. However, having diverse congregations is not the only way to understand injustice in our society. Looking outward, our 1997 General Assembly also called upon Unitarian Universalists to work for a more just economic community. We can learn much and accomplish much by joining and creating community organizations in which diverse groups of people work together on economic justice issues, hold community leaders accountable, and monitor those leaders' efforts toward achieving systemic improvements. Our work for economic justice must include support for

- fair wages and benefits;
- access to adequate housing, social services, child care, adult daycare, education, health care, legal services, financial services, and transportation;
- the removal of environmental and occupational hazards that disproportionately affect low-income people;
- respect for treaty rights of First Nations and Native American Tribes;

- government and corporate policies that promote economic investment in the urban core and rural communities;
- a more equitable criminal justice system;
- tax systems that prevent affluent individuals and corporations from sheltering assets and income at the expense of those less privileged; and
- campaign reforms that ensure equal access to the electoral process regardless of wealth.

As Unitarian Universalists, we have a religious and moral obligation to challenge complacency in ourselves and in our communities. We commit to fighting injustice wherever we find it. We acknowledge that this may disturb our own comfort and require us to broaden our interest to include the greater good of an economically just and compassionate community. We will learn much as we do this work.

Historically, Unitarians and Universalists have often been in the forefront of social reform. Our history teaches that social change does not come easily and is not without risk. Nevertheless, at the beginning of this new century, let us recommit to justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. Let us embrace our responsibility to help create a more just world. Let us continue to reflect and organize for action within our congregations and beyond our doors. Let us not concede that economic injustice, poverty, and racism are tolerable.

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):

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE “WAR ON DRUGS”

Issue: How can Unitarian Universalists contribute to a reformulation of drug policies which would reduce drug use without infringing on civil liberties, scapegoating minority communities, interfering with the internal affairs of other countries, or dehumanizing drug users?

ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

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

SUPPORT TIBET AND THE DALAI LAMA

On April 26, 2000, the exiled Tibetan government issued a report on Environment and Development Issues since the invasion of Tibet by China in 1949, documenting widespread environmental damage from mining, deforestation, colonization, development, permanent military and nuclear installations, and hazardous disposal of nuclear waste, which is increasing at an alarming rate. Unchecked hydro-power development and pollution threaten rivers in ten neighboring countries. The local religion and culture have been suppressed and sacred places have been desecrated and destroyed. Tibetans are an indigenous people with their own unique religion, culture, language, and writing. They have protected the environment of their homeland for two thousand years.

On May 24, 2000, the United States House of Representatives granted China permanent most-favored-nation status, and a bill is pending in the Senate. China's admission to the World Trade Organization will inevitably follow, increasing pressures on the Tibetan environment and natural resources to further China's economic growth.

The Unitarian Universalist Association has long been an advocate of recognizing The People's Republic of China as a full participant in the United Nations and in world affairs, but it is critical that such recognition require certain responsible actions by China as a world leader.

Prosperity and reforms can result from China's expanded trading status, but the resulting tensions from the continued presence of China in Tibet will make it difficult to fully realize the potentials of existing and pending free trade agreements with the United States and other countries.

The 2000 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association acknowledges the rights of the native people of Tibet to independently guide their own destiny with full autonomy; and we support the efforts of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues appointed by the United States Secretary of State to promote negotiations between the Dalai Lama and China.

We call for immediate confirmation of the well-being of the eleven-year-old Panchen Lama and his release.

We request immediate withdrawal of all nuclear weapons and installations from Tibet and immediate cessation of dumping of nuclear waste there.

We request that the World Bank stop plans to fund Chinese resettlement projects in Tibet.

We call for a return to the pre-1949 relationship of an independent neutral Tibet and an independent People's Republic of China with full withdrawal by China from Tibet and full management of Tibet's ecological resources and development returned to the indigenous people and their freely acknowledged leaders.

We affirm that such a relationship will enable Tibet and China to co-exist peacefully and prosper and is in the best interests of the world community.

We ask our member societies in the United States and Canada to work with local Tibetan refugee support, and we ask independence groups to ease the pressures on the refugees and help preserve their culture.

PROTEST AGAINST RACIAL PROFILING

Whereas the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. to aid in the fight against legal segregation, has proposed a "Redeem the Dream" rally to oppose racial profiling;

Whereas racial profiling, harassing, arresting, and discriminating against people because of their race or color violates our Principles;

Whereas the Unitarian Universalist Association has endorsed the concept of anti-racism as a primary focus for the Association's work and as a chief expression of its moral, ethical, and theological activities;

Whereas Unitarians and Universalists, such as Bayard Rustin, Whitney Young, James Reeb, and countless others, supported or took part in the 1963 march; and

Whereas this march will be an expression of multiracial unity that underpins our commitment to anti-racism;

Therefore the 2000 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, which affirms the inherent worth and dignity of all peoples, calls for an end to racial profiling by all law enforcement agencies in the United States; and it calls upon Unitarian Universalist congregations to encourage participation in the rally to be held at noon on Saturday, August 26, 2000, at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC.

HANDGUN LEGISLATION

Because Unitarian Universalists believe in the worth and dignity of everyone and have respect for all life;

Whereas General Assemblies of the Unitarian Universalist Association have proposed national handgun legislation in past years (1972, 1976, 1991);

Whereas handguns are too easily available in the United States through gun shows and second-party purchases;

Whereas the number of deaths and injuries in the United States as a result of handguns, whether intentional or unintentional, is many times greater than in any other industrialized nation in the world;

Whereas the number of suicides by handguns in the United States exceeds the number of other deaths involving handguns; and

Whereas handgun owners need to be held responsible for the possession of handguns and consequences of their use, which process will be facilitated by handgun registration;

Therefore the 2000 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges its member congregations to demand federal legislation requiring registration and licensing of handguns and to urge the passing of legislation applicable to handguns such as H.R. 4066, a bill currently under consideration in the United States House of Representatives, the passing of which would result in improved oversight of current gun laws.

END THE DEATH PENALTY

As the 39th Annual General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association held its Opening Ceremony the evening of June 22, 2000, Gary Graham was executed by lethal injection in Huntsville, Texas, the 222nd person to be executed in Texas since that state reinstated the death penalty eighteen years ago, and the 135th person to be executed in that state in the past five years.

Gary Graham, an African American, was convicted of murder nineteen years ago, as a teenager, on the testimony of a single witness. Multiple appeals were filed on his behalf at state and federal levels. They were repeatedly denied. Graham did not go gently to his death. Claiming innocence to the end, he fought legally, physically, spiritedly. Malcolm X was the inspiration for his final words: "There'll be one hundred more years of lynching unless we do something fast and by any means necessary."

The State of Tennessee, on April 19, 2000, carried out the death penalty for the first time in forty years. There is reason to fear that, having broken this precedent, Tennessee will move forward rapidly in capital punishment cases.

Since the death penalty was declared constitutional by the United States Supreme Court in 1976, the number of states exercising the death penalty and the number of prisoners executed have increased yearly. A similarly increasing number of religious and secular organizations, as well as public officials, have questioned the fairness of the death penalty.

A moratorium on executions in Illinois was recently issued by the Governor of that state. Too many capital convictions had been overturned to permit his conscience to stay clear if one more person took that long walk.

Holding capital punishment as inconsistent with human life on account of its retributive, discriminatory, and non-deterrent character, General Assemblies of the Unitarian Universalist Association have opposed capital punishment restoration or continuance in any form (1961, 1966, 1974, and 1979).

How much longer will we, as a nation aspiring to democracy and fair play, condone capital punishment? How much longer will we, as a nation aspiring to liberty and justice for all, condone the ultimate loss of liberty for so many, whose numbers include a disproportionate percentage of persons of color?

As a community of faith promoting justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, we call for an end to the death penalty. The 2000 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges

- the Governor of the State of Tennessee to commute all existing death sentences;
- governors of all other states to similarly commute death sentences and to prevent the restoration or continuance of capital punishment in any form; and
- its member congregations to engage actively in efforts to eliminate the death penalty, to work with other organizations in this effort, and to increase efforts to persuade governors to forego capital punishment.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The health and integrity of the American democracy at the national, state, and local levels depends, in large measure, on fair and open elections that command public confidence and encourage full citizen participation.

Currently, the costs of campaigns for public office and the system of financing these campaigns give disproportionate influence to wealthy individuals and narrowly focused interest groups. Average citizens are so disadvantaged in this process that the resulting cynicism and alienation have led to severely diminished levels of voter participation and confidence in governmental institutions.

Unless the current system for financing political campaigns is significantly reformed, the future of American democracy is in severe jeopardy. Access to political power will increasingly be concentrated in the hands of fewer people, and government will lose the support of the majority of its citizens.

The more that access to elected officials is linked to wealth, the greater the likelihood that the civil rights of the poor and minorities will be eroded. Without major campaign finance reforms (i.e., clean money reforms that provide public financing of elections), the prospects for future public policies that support social and economic justice are extremely limited.

Four states (Arizona, Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts) have already passed campaign finance reform laws that provide for voluntary public financing of state and local elections. Immediate support is needed to pass similar laws that will be on the ballots this fall in Oregon and Missouri. This state-by-state strategy may be the single best hope for stimulating meaningful change at both the state and federal levels.

At the federal level little progress has been made to date. However, two bills entitled “Clean Money, Clean Elections” are being sponsored in the United States Senate by Senators Paul Wellstone and John Kerry and in the United States House of Representatives by Congressman John Tierney. These bills would, among other things, provide for voluntary public financing of national election campaigns much like the provisions of the state laws.

Because the use of the democratic process is a cherished fundamental of Unitarian Universalism, the 2000 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges

1. individual Unitarian Universalists in the United States to inform their representatives and senators of their strong support for the “Clean Money, Clean Elections” bills (S. 982 in the Senate and H.R. 1739 in the House);
2. individual Unitarian Universalists in Oregon and Missouri to support voluntary financing of state and local elections and individuals in other states to promote similar reforms;
3. the Unitarian Universalist Washington Office for Faith in Action to support and encourage those working for clean money campaign finance reform at both the state and federal levels and, in particular, to seek free television and radio time for candidates on the ballot; and
4. Unitarian Universalist congregations in the United States to encourage, support, and facilitate such actions by their individual members.

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM

Because we as Unitarian Universalists strongly affirm the high ideal of a peaceful world community, recognizing the crucial interdependence of all peoples as well as of all creation;

Whereas the U.S. Department of Defense is working on a National Missile Defense system for North America, following in the tradition of the Strategic Defense Initiatives (“Star Wars”) which to date has cost \$60 billion by Center of Defense Information estimates; and

Whereas President Clinton will be making his decision on whether or not to approve this project this fall;

Whereas the United States government is pressuring the Canadian government, as an ally of the United States, to participate in a National Missile Defense system;

Whereas this system undermines forty years of nuclear arms control, especially the U.S.-Russian Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, and is likely to provoke Russia and China to reject the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and to engage in a renewed nuclear arms race;

Whereas, in response to the proposed National Missile Defense system, nuclear weapons states (such as India, Pakistan, and Israel), as well as many non-nuclear weapons states, are likely to refuse to ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and, in fact, the National Missile Defense System would further promote proliferation of nuclear weapons among nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states;

Whereas NATO allies, particularly France, insist that any ballistic threat must be considered in the context of a broader concern for the international community;

Whereas the U.S. Department of Defense has claimed that the National Missile Defense system is designed to protect against rogue states (such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq) yet has planned to position missiles on the Russian border in Alaska and Norway; and

Whereas the non-military scientific community has pointed out that this system will be ineffective and easily made inoperable, making this project a waste of money;

Therefore, we, the 2000 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, strongly urge:

- the United States government to abandon any National Missile Defense system and cease its pressure on the Canadian government to become involved;
- members of Unitarian Universalist congregations to write to President Clinton and Prime Minister Chrétien to persuade them not to approve this system; and
- the Canadian government to reject the United States' pressures to become involved in the system.

RESPONSIVE RESOLUTIONS

Two resolutions in response to the President's report were passed by a vote of two-thirds or more:

RESOLUTION ON UUA ELECTIONS

Because we value the inherent dignity of every person and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and within our Association; and

In response to the report of the President delivered on June 23, 2000 in which deficiencies and inequities in the process of the nomination and election of the Moderator and President of the Association were addressed;

Be it resolved that the 2000 General Assembly recommends that the Board of Trustees appoint a task force to recommend revisions to Bylaw Section 9.5(a) Nomination by Petition for the Moderator and President for the election in the year 2005 and following;

Be it further that the charge to the task force be to identify procedures and reduce the expense and the time of the present process and to expand the opportunity for the nomination of the most capable individuals for these two positions.

RESOLUTION ON SUPPORT FOR THE CLEVELAND, OHIO NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Resolved that this General Assembly urge the Planning Committee and the Board of Trustees to consult and cooperate with the United Church of Christ's ongoing efforts to support the Cleveland Native American community in their struggle against the Cleveland Indians baseball team and the racism implicit in the use of the symbols, names and mascots which Native American people find offensive.

CREDENTIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

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

Accredited and attending the 39th General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association were 1666 member delegates, 475 ministerial delegates, 6 associate member delegates, 26 members of the Board of Trustees (not included as registered delegates from congregations), and 16 delegates from the Church of the Larger Fellowship for a total of 2189 delegates representing 612 congregations, 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Mexico, and 6 Canadian provinces. Total registration for the Assembly was 4011, including 406 youth.

The Assembly then voted to adjourn *sine die*.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kathleen Montgomery
Recording Secretary