

## MINUTES

### **FORTY FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION HELD IN QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC**

The General Assembly was convened on Thursday, June 20, 2002 at 8:30 p.m. by Moderator Diane Olson at the Quebec Convention Centre, Quebec City, Quebec.

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

A list of the congregations entered into membership in the Unitarian Universalist Association during the past year was read: Sedona Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Sedona, AZ; All Souls Unitarian Universalist Community, Lacey, WA; All Souls Community Church, Grand Rapids, MI; Namaqua Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Loveland, CO; Unitarian Universalist Church of the Hill Country, Kerrville, TX; The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Salina, Salina, KS; UU Congregation of the Swannanoa Valley of Black Mountain, Black Mountain, NC.

The Assembly received written, and in some cases oral, reports 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 General Assembly Planning Committee, the Commission on Appraisal, the Commission on Social Witness, the Nominating Committee, the Committee on Committees, the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, Beacon Press, the Unitarian Universalist Washington Office, the Annual Program Fund Continental Committee, the Whitney Young Fund, the Committee on Socially Responsible Investing, and the Canadian Unitarian Council.

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 William G. Sinkford, Moderator Diane Olson, and Larry Ladd, Chair of the Distinguished Service Award Committee, presented the annual Award for Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism to Natalie Gulbrandsen.

### **ACTION ON BYLAW AND RULE AMENDMENTS**

#### **VOTE ON CHANGES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION AND THE CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL**

The Assembly passed amendments to Bylaw Sections 6.3, 6.6, and 9.5 and to Rule G-12.2.2 that relate to changes in the relationship between the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Canadian Unitarian Council. The amended text is as follows:

**Section 6.3. Membership.**

The Board of Trustees shall consist of:

- (a) the President, without vote, the Moderator and the Financial Advisor;
- (b) four trustees elected at large, including a youth trustee at large;
- (c) one trustee representing each district, except that a single trustee shall represent the Mid-South and Florida Districts.

Notwithstanding the foregoing and anything else to the contrary contained in these Bylaws, the Board of Trustees shall have five, as opposed to four, trustees at large until the earlier to occur of the expiration of the current term of the present trustee at large from Canada or the resignation of the present trustee at large from Canada. The foregoing sentence and this sentence shall automatically expire and be deleted from these Bylaws upon the first to occur of the aforementioned events.

**Section 6.6. Qualifications of Trustees.**

Each elected trustee shall be a member of a member congregation. An elected trustee representing a district shall reside in that district and shall be a member of a member congregation located in the district. A trustee who ceases to meet these qualifications shall be disqualified and the office declared vacant. The youth trustee at large shall be an individual aged 14 to 20 inclusive years at the time of election. Not more than one trustee shall be a member of the same member congregation. If a trustee becomes a member of a member congregation in which another trustee is already a member, such trustee shall be disqualified and the office declared vacant. The Board of Trustees shall adopt rules for the application of this section to persons holding membership in more than one member congregation. Notwithstanding anything else to the contrary contained in these Bylaws, each of the trustees currently representing the Prairie Star district and the St. Lawrence district shall be deemed to qualify as a trustee under this Section until the earlier to occur of the expiration of his or her current term or his or her resignation. The foregoing sentence and this sentence shall automatically expire and be deleted from these Bylaws when both trustees currently representing the Prairie Star District and the St. Lawrence District no longer qualify as trustees, by reason of expiration of term or vacancy created as referred to in Section 6.8(b).

**Section 9.5. Nomination by Petition.**

- (b) For Other Elective Positions at Large. A nomination for any other elective position at large or to fill a vacancy in an unexpired term occurring prior to December 1 of the year before the election may be by petition signed by not less than fifty members of certified member congregations, with no more than ten signatures of members of any one congregation counted toward the required fifty. A separate petition, in form prescribed by the Secretary, shall be filed for each nomination not later than February 1 of the year of the election and not earlier than the preceding October 1. Nominations for youth trustee at large shall be so designated.

**Rule G-12.2.1. Establishing Districts.**

- (a) The districts shall be twenty 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, and Thomas Jefferson.
- (b) Each district shall be composed of the congregations assigned to that district by the Board of Trustees.

**VOTE ON ESTABLISHING DISTRICTS**

The Assembly voted in favor of an amendment to Section C-12.2 that makes more clear the ways in which congregations are assigned to districts. The effect of the vote is to place this Bylaw amendment proposal on the Final Agenda of the 2003 General Assembly for final adoption which will require a two-thirds vote. The proposed text is as follows:

**Section C-12.2. Establishment.**

The establishment of districts and the manner of determining which congregations are included in each district shall be in accordance with rules adopted by the General Assembly.

**VOTE ON CERTIFICATION**

The Assembly considered an amendment to Section C-3.5 that would have set a minimum of 10 members as a requirement for congregations to be certified. After discussion, the proposed amendment was referred to the Board of Trustees for further study.

**VOTE ON MID-SOUTH / FLORIDA TRUSTEE**

The Assembly passed an amendment to Bylaw Section 6.3 (c) that would result in each district having its own representative trustee and, specifically, changing the joint Mid-South / Florida Trustee to one trustee representing each district. The amended text is as follows:

**Section 6.3. Membership.**

- (c) one trustee representing each district.

**VOTE ON SUPERVISION OF ELECTIONS**

The Assembly passed an amendment to Bylaw Section 9.8 that requires neutrality by the UUA Secretary in UUA elections and establishes the Secretary rather than the Moderator as the interpreter of questions arising during elections. The amended text is as follows:

**Section 9.8. Supervision of Elections.**

The Secretary shall supervise all elections for elective positions at large. The Secretary may appoint a committee of tellers to count ballots and perform other routine duties. The Secretary shall decide any question arising during such an election concerning:

- (a) the interpretation of any provision of these Bylaws or of Rules made hereunder relating to election procedures;
- (b) any procedural problem relating to the election which is not covered by these Bylaws or by the Rules; or
- (c) the interpretation of the intent of a voter in marking the ballot.

The Secretary's decision shall be final. The Secretary shall remain neutral in the election and shall not engage in electioneering, except for advocacy of his or her own candidacy for offices for which he or she is nominated.

**VOTE ON ELECTION CAMPAIGN PRACTICES COMMITTEE**

The Assembly passed amendments to Rule G-9.12.10 that require neutrality in UUA elections by the Election Campaign Practices Committee and makes persons nominated for UUA elections by the Nominating Committee or by petition ineligible to serve on the Election Campaign Practices Committee. The amended text is as follows:

**Rule G-9.12.10 Election Campaign Practices Committee.**

- (a) An Election Campaign Practices Committee is hereby established and shall consist of three persons to be appointed by the Board of Trustees at its October meeting following those regular General Assemblies at which elections occur. Two members of the Committee shall be members of the Board of Trustees at the time of their appointment and one shall be a non-Board member. The non-Board member shall be the chair of the Committee. Persons appointed to the Election Campaign Practices Committee shall remain neutral in the election and not engage in electioneering. A person nominated pursuant to Bylaw Sections 9.4 or 9.5 is ineligible to serve on the Committee.

**UUA STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE**

By a vote of two-thirds or more, the Assembly adopted the following Statement of Conscience:

## **OUR CALL TO END THE “WAR ON DRUGS” AS A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE**

For more than thirty years, American public policy has advanced an escalating “war on drugs” that seeks to eradicate illegal drugs from our society. It is increasingly clear that this effort has failed. Our current drug policy has consumed tens of billions of dollars and wrecked countless lives. The costs of this policy include the increasing breakdown of families and neighborhoods, endangerment of children, widespread violation of civil liberties, escalating rates of incarceration, political corruption, and the imposition of United States policy abroad. For United States taxpayers, the price tag on the drug offensive has soared from \$66 million in 1968 to almost \$20 billion in 2000, an increase of over 30,000 percent. In practice the drug war disproportionately targets people of color and people who are poverty-stricken. Coercive measures have not reduced drug use, but they have clogged our criminal justice system with non-violent offenders. It is time to explore alternative approaches and to end this costly war.

The war on drugs has blurred the distinction between drug use and drug abuse. Drug use is erroneously perceived as behavior that is always out of control and harmful to others. Illegal drug use is thus portrayed as threatening to society. As a result, drug policy has been closed to study, discussion, and consideration of alternatives by legislative bodies. Yet many people who use both legal and illegal drugs live productive, functional lives and do no harm to society.

As Unitarian Universalists committed to a free and responsible search for truth, we must protest the misguided policies that shape current practice. We cannot in good conscience remain quiet when it is becoming clear that we have been misled for decades about illegal drugs. United States government drug policy makers mislead the world about the purported success of the war on drugs. They tell the public that success is dependent upon even more laws restricting constitutional protections and the allocation of billions of dollars for drug law enforcement. They mislead the public about the extent of corruption and environmental degradation that the American war on drugs has left in its wake in other countries.

As Unitarian Universalists committed to affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, we call for thoughtful consideration and implementation of alternatives that regard the reduction of harm as the appropriate standard by which to assess drug policies. We seek a compassionate reduction of harm associated with drugs, both legal and illegal, with special attention to the harm unleashed by policies established in the war on drugs.

As Unitarian Universalists committed to respecting the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part, we find irresponsible and morally wrong the practices of scorching the earth and poisoning the soil and ground water in other countries to stop the production of drugs that are illegal in the United States.

As a community of faith, Unitarian Universalists have both a moral imperative and a personal responsibility to ask the difficult questions that so many within our society are unable, unwilling, or too afraid to ask. In asking these questions and in weighing our findings, we are compelled to consider a different approach to national drug policy.

### **A DIFFERENT APPROACH**

To conceive and develop a more just and compassionate drug policy, it is necessary to transform how we view drugs and particularly drug addiction. Drug use, drug abuse, and drug addiction are distinct from one another. Using a drug does not necessarily mean abusing the drug, much less becoming addicted to it. Drug abuse issues are essentially matters for medical attention. We do not believe that drug use should be considered criminal behavior. Advocates for harsh drug policies with severe penalties for drug use often cite violent crime as a direct result of drug use. Drugs alone do not cause crime. Legal prohibition of drugs leads to inflated street value, which in turn incites violent turf wars among distributors. The whole pattern is reminiscent of the proliferation of organized crime at the time of alcohol prohibition in the early twentieth century. That policy also failed.

We believe that the vision of a drug-free America is unrealistic. Many programs for school children have misled participants and the public by teaching that all illicit drugs are equally harmful in spite of current scientific research to the contrary. “Just Say No” is not a viable policy. The consequences of the current drug war are cruel and counterproductive. At issue here are the health and well-being of our families and our communities, our society, and our global community. Alternatives exist.

### **ALTERNATIVE GOALS**

Based on this perspective, we believe appropriate and achievable goals for reformed national drug policies include

- preventing consumption of drugs, including alcohol and nicotine, that are harmful to the health of children and adolescents;
- reducing the likelihood that drug users will become drug abusers;
- minimizing the harmful effects of drug use, such as disease contracted from the use of contaminated needles and overdoses resulting from the unwitting use of impure drugs;
- increasing the availability and affordability of quality drug treatment and eliminating the stigma associated with accessing it;
- significantly reducing violent and predatory drug-related crime;
- minimizing the harmful consequences of current drug policy, such as racial profiling, property confiscation without conviction, and unnecessary incarceration; and
- reducing the harm to our earth now caused by the practice of destroying crops intended for the production of drugs.

### **ALTERNATIVE POLICIES**

Instead of the current war on drugs, we offer the following policies for study, debate, and implementation:

- Shift budget priorities from spending for pursuit, prosecution, and imprisonment of drug law offenders to spending for education, treatment, and research.
- Develop and implement age-appropriate drug education programs that are grounded in research and fact and that promote dialogue without fear of censure or reprisal.
- Undertake research to assess the effects of currently illegal drugs. Ensure that findings and conclusions are publicly accessible, serving as a basis for responsible decision making by individuals and in arenas of public policy and practice.

- Research the sociological factors that contribute to habitual, addictive, and destructive drug use, such as poverty, poor mental health, sexual or other physical abuse, and lack of education or medical treatment.
- Research and expand a range of management and on-demand treatment programs for drug abuse and addiction. Examples include nutritional counseling, job training, psychiatric evaluation and treatment, psychological counseling, parent training and assistance, support groups, clean needle distribution and exchange, substitution of safer drugs (e.g. methadone or marijuana), medically administered drug maintenance, disease screening, and acupuncture and other alternative and complementary treatments. Publish the results of studies of these programs.
- Require health insurance providers to cover in-patient and out-patient treatment for substance abuse on the same basis as treatment of other chronic health conditions.
- Make all drugs legally available with a prescription by a licensed physician, subject to professional oversight. End the practice of punishing an individual for obtaining, possessing, or using an otherwise illegal substance to treat a medical condition. End the threat to impose sanctions on physicians who treat patients with opiates for alleviation of pain.
- Prohibit civil liberties violations and other intrusive law enforcement practices. Violations of the right to privacy, such as urine testing, should be imposed only upon employees in safety-sensitive occupations.
- Establish a legal, regulated, and taxed market for marijuana. Treat marijuana as we treat alcohol.
- Modify civil forfeiture laws to require conviction before seizure of assets. Prohibit the eviction of family, friends, and co-habitants or the loss of government entitlements based on drug law violation.
- Abolish mandatory minimum prison sentences for the use and distribution of currently illicit drugs. Legislation should specify only maximum prison sentences.
- Remove criminal penalties for possession and use of currently illegal drugs, with drug abusers subject to arrest and imprisonment only if they commit actual crimes (e.g., assault, burglary, impaired driving, vandalism). End sentencing inequities driven by racial profiling.
- Establish and make more accessible prison-based drug treatment, education, job training, and transition programs designed for inmates.
- End the financing of anti-drug campaigns in Central and South America, which promote the widespread spraying of herbicides, contribute to the destruction of rainforests, and are responsible for uprooting peoples from their homelands.

### **OUR CALL TO ACT AS A PEOPLE OF FAITH**

We must begin with ourselves. Our congregations can offer safe space for open and honest discussion among congregants about the complex issues of drug use, abuse, and addiction. Through acceptance of one another and the encouragement of spiritual growth, we should be able to acknowledge and address our own drug use without fear of censure or reprisal.

We can recognize that drugs include not only currently illegal substances but also alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, over-the-counter pain relievers, and prescription drugs. We can learn to distinguish among use, abuse, and addiction. We can support one another in recognizing drug-related problems and seeking help. We can seek to understand those among us who use drugs for relief or escape. With compassion, we can cultivate reflection and analysis of drug policy. In the safe space of our own congregations, we can begin to prevent destructive relationships with drugs. We can lend necessary support to individuals and families when their loved ones need treatment for addiction problems. We can encourage our congregations to partner with and follow the lead of groups representing individuals whose lives are most severely undermined by current drug policy—people of color and people of low income. We can learn from health care professionals what the unique patterns of substance abuse are in our local areas. We can go beyond our walls and bring our perspective to the interfaith community, other nonprofit organizations, and elected officials.

Our Unitarian Universalist history calls us to pursue a more just world. Our faith compels us to hold our leaders accountable for their policies. In calling for alternatives to the war on drugs, we are mindful of its victims. Drug use should be addressed solely as a public health problem, not as a criminal justice issue. Dependence upon any illegal drugs or inappropriate use of legal drugs may point to deep, unmet human needs. We have a moral obligation to advocate compassionate, harm-reducing policy. We believe that our nations have the imagination and capability to address effectively the complex issues of the demand for drugs, both legal and illegal.

We reaffirm the spirit of our social witness positions taken on drugs in resolutions adopted from 1965 to 1991. Recognizing the right of conscience for all who differ, we denounce the war on drugs and recommend alternative goals and policies. Let neither fear nor any other barrier prevent us from advocating a more just, compassionate world.

### **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):

**Issue:** What can Unitarian Universalists do to protect civil liberties against governmental violation in the name of “homeland security” and in the wars against terrorism and drugs?

### **ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS**

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

## TOWARD PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**Because** our Unitarian Universalist Principles call us to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person, justice and equity in human relations, and the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; and

**Whereas** Rev. William Sinkford, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, has spoken out on the Middle East conflict in a pastoral letter of March 27, 2002, calling for “our congregations to educate themselves on [the] issues and to engage in honest conversation”;

**Whereas** in 1982 the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly adopted a General Resolution encouraging a comprehensive peace settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and calling on all parties to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the others;

**Whereas** Unitarian Universalists have supported and affirmed the rule of law and the positive role of the United Nations in building a world community;

**Whereas** United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 emphasizes “the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace,” and other United Nations resolutions have re-affirmed Israel as the “Occupying Power” bound by the Fourth Geneva Convention, “which is applicable to all the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967”;

**Whereas** the United States government is responsible for a significant portion of arms sales to this over-armed region, thus furthering its instability;

**Whereas** the Middle East situation has been deteriorating with increased violence on both sides and increased military oppression;

**Whereas** United States diplomacy has not led to peace or security for the region; and

**Whereas** the World Conference on Religion and Peace, an organization co-founded by the Unitarian Universalist Association, has responded to requests from the Prime Minister of Israel and the President of the Palestinian Authority by calling for a “religiously sanctioned cease-fire” and recognition of Israel and Palestine as states with secure, internationally recognized borders;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the 2002 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges the following principles as a basis for action by the governments of the United States and Canada:

- Freedom from occupation and equal rights for all, including the right to exist in peace and security.
- Opposition to Israeli settlements, land confiscation, house demolitions, and other violations of international law.
- Opposition to all attacks on civilians, whether by suicide bombers, F-16 or helicopter gunships, or any other means.
- Support for a central United Nations role in efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace.

**Be it further resolved** that the 2002 General Assembly calls on

- the Israeli government to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention and international law;
- Palestinians to immediately stop suicide bombings and all attacks on Israeli civilians;
- the United States government to:
  - o “suspend all transfers of those types of weapons and munitions used to commit human rights violations until Israel is clearly in compliance with the terms for arms transfers as expressed in United States law and bilateral agreements,” as Amnesty International has called for, and
  - o work within the United Nations for a just peace that includes two viable secure states, Israel and Palestine, based on the 1967 borders, with mutual relations based on sovereignty and equality; and
- our congregations to:
  - o become educated on Middle East issues and engage in honest conversation; redouble their efforts for peace based on the goal of justice and human rights for all;
  - o support actions of the anti-occupation Israeli peace activists, including Rabbis for Human Rights and the Israeli reserve officers who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories;
  - o encourage Jewish Americans and others who support Israel but oppose its occupation of Palestine; and
  - o condemn and oppose expressions and acts of anti-Semitism and acts of terror against Jews, Palestinians, or Arabs and their legitimate institutions wherever they may occur.

### **SUPPORT THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

**Because** Unitarian Universalists affirm and promote the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all and challenge the powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and love; and

**Whereas** the International Criminal Court, as the first permanent international institution to try individuals for the horrendous crimes of genocide, war crimes, and other crimes against humanity, will become a powerful new international instrument to pursue this goal and meet this challenge;

**Whereas** the International Criminal Court will begin its jurisdiction on July 1, 2002, hold the first session of the Assembly of States Parties in September 2002, and inaugurate its judges in March 2003, and is expected to begin hearings in its first cases in June 2003;

**Whereas** the United States, by its major role in the establishment and support of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, recognized the need to prosecute genocide, war crimes, and other crimes against humanity through international courts of law;

**Whereas** the Rome Statute contains numerous safeguards, including precedence to national courts and prosecutors, thus assuring that Americans who might be charged by the International Criminal Court can be tried under their own legal system;

**Whereas** the International Criminal Court will apply the rule of law to many types of terrorist acts when terrorism is of primary concern to the United States and the international community;

**Whereas** the United States, having signed the Rome Statute, which under international law signifies support for the basic concepts and principles of a treaty, on May 6, 2002, officially acted to nullify its signature and formally announced that it will not cooperate with or participate in any activities of the International Criminal Court; and

**Whereas** this action, which is unique in international relations, may result in the United States actively seeking to undermine the International Criminal Court and by this precedent weaken its commitments that support international law;

**Be it resolved** that we, the 2002 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, request the President and Moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association 1) to strongly urge the President of the United States to support and cooperate with the International Criminal Court, 2) to direct the Washington Office of the Unitarian Universalist Association to pursue the International Criminal Court as a priority activity in concert with other non-governmental organizations in Washington; and 3) to communicate this Action of Immediate Witness to the international Unitarian Universalist, Universalist, and Unitarian communities.

**Be it further resolved** that the General Assembly urges member congregations 1) to encourage their congregants to press their Representatives and Senators to eliminate legislation opposing the International Criminal Court and to support laws actively promoting it; 2) to call regularly on the United States administration to work closely with the International Criminal Court; and 3) to cooperate locally with other like-minded persons in these efforts and efforts to educate and inform Americans about the importance of the International Criminal Court in establishing the rule of law.

### **QUEBEC'S *UNION CIVILE* LAW PASSES, GIVING SAME SEX COUPLES FULL LEGAL EQUALITY**

**Because** for the past three decades Unitarian Universalist congregations in Canada and in the United States have spoken out in favor of the rights of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender persons and against homophobia and all forms of discrimination against such persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or identity; and

**Whereas** love between two men, two women, or one man and one woman creates deep and caring relationships and families in a diversity of configurations and provides nurturing environments for couples and their children; and

**Whereas** in an historic decision, the National Assembly of Quebec defended these rights on June 7, 2002, by passing into law *Union Civile*, a bill legalizing same-sex unions, and gave these couples equal rights to those enjoyed by heterosexual couples, including parental rights, the rights of adoption, and equal access to fertility clinics;

**Therefore be it resolved that** on this historic occasion we the delegates of the 2002 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, Canadians and Americans together

- **commend** the Government of Quebec and in particular the Minister of Justice, M. Paul Bégin, for progressive thinking and political courage in bringing into law progressive legislation giving same-sex couples full legal equality;
- **commend** the people of Quebec for their openness and leadership in showing the world that embracing diversity is our strength;
- **encourage** Unitarian Universalist congregations in the rest of Canada and in the United States to follow this bold example and to promote similar legislation in their own communities.

### **LEGISLATION TO CREATE A DEPARTMENT OF PEACE**

**Whereas** on July 11, 2001, Congressman Dennis Kucinich introduced H.R. 2459, a bill to create a cabinet-level Department of Peace, which would embody a broad-based approach to peaceful, non-violent conflict resolution at both domestic and international levels;

**Whereas** the bill would establish a Secretary of Peace, who would report to the President of the United States;

**Whereas** the bill would *require* the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State to consult with the Secretary of Peace regarding non-violent means of conflict resolution prior to initiating any conflict between the United States and any other government or entity;

**Whereas** the bill is comprehensive in scope, establishing the following offices:

- Office of Peace Education and Training
- Office of Domestic Peace Activities
- Office of International Peace Activities
- Office of Technology for Peace
- Office of Arms Control and Disarmament
- Office of Peaceful Coexistence and Non-violent Conflict Resolution
- Office of Human Rights and Economic Rights;

**Whereas** the bill would require the appropriation of one percent (1%) of the defense budget for funding the operations of the Department of Peace; and

**Whereas** the Department of Peace would serve to promote non-violence as an organizing principle in our society and help to create the conditions for a more peaceful world;

**Therefore be it resolved** that the delegates to the 2002 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association pledge to

- raise awareness by organizing public programs to occur on dates to be determined by the individual societies but prior to the vote on the bill in Congress; gather support for this legislation in our congregations, youth groups, and local communities by organizing public programs, contacting local media, and joining with local, national, and international organizations to create or support initiatives and programs regarding the passage of H.R. 2459;
- urge Unitarian Universalist congregations and districts to establish a continuing dialogue with their representatives in Congress to support H.R. 2459 and maintain contact with the UUA Washington Office to secure its passage.

**Be it further resolved** that the President and Moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the UUA Washington Office support the establishment of the Department of Peace through public witness and other means as they determine appropriate.

### **ENDORSE THE EARTH CHARTER**

**Because** Unitarian Universalists affirm and promote the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; and

**Because** our Unitarian Universalist Principles affirm “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”; and

**Whereas** many biologists predict that up to half of all existing species on our planet may disappear within the coming century unless urgent steps are taken to prevent this irreparable disaster;

**Whereas** global warming is likely to increase the surface temperature of the earth in our lifetimes, melting icepacks, flooding island nations, expanding deserts, and disrupting stable ecosystems;

**Whereas** environmental destruction most severely affects the poor, indigenous people, subsistence farmers, and others directly dependent on nature for their livelihood;

**Whereas** the Earth Charter, an outgrowth of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, will be presented to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, August 26 – September 4, 2002;

**Whereas** the Earth Charter’s inclusive vision recognizes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and inseparable;

**Whereas** the Earth Charter draws upon the world’s great religious and philosophical traditions to create a statement of human responsibility toward creation that will offer a moral foundation for the development of international law;

**Whereas** adoption of the Earth Charter provides a tool for policymakers, business leaders, educators, and faith communities to understand the critical choices facing humanity and the urgent need for commitment to a sustainable way of life; and

**Whereas** numerous religious, civic, and environmental organizations have already endorsed the Earth Charter document, including the United Nations Association of Canada, the Sierra Club, the Humane Society of the United States, Pax Christi, the National Wildlife Federation, and International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War;

**Therefore be it resolved** that the 2002 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association endorses the Earth Charter and urges all the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association to do likewise;

**Be it further resolved** that the 2002 General Assembly requests that the Unitarian Universalist Association communicate the Assembly's endorsement of the Earth Charter to all members of the United States Congress and that member congregations that endorse the Earth Charter communicate their action to their representatives in Congress; and

**Be it further resolved** that the 2002 General Assembly encourages the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office to seek endorsement by the United Nations in 2002, the tenth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit.

### **RESPONSIVE RESOLUTION**

A resolution in response to the reports of officers was passed by a vote of two-thirds or more:

#### **RESOLUTION ON BEACON PRESS**

Mindful of the connection between Beacon Press book sales and Beacon Press deficits and heeding the admonitions of the UUA Finance Committee and our President that the publication of unsold books is neither useful to our mission or supportive of our finances;

We, the representatives of the member congregations of the UUA, resolve at this 2002 General Assembly to:

- 1) seek ways to vigorously promote the Beacon Press in our congregations and communities;
- 2) urge our brother and sister congregants to each buy two Beacon books during fiscal year 2003 and to continue that spiritual practice thereafter;
- 3) pay attention to news of Beacon Press publications and promotion;
- 4) employ all means possible to take responsibility for the health and future of the Beacon Press; and
- 5) join the work of the newly formed Beacon Press Preservation Committee.

### **CREDENTIALS REPORT**

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

Accredited and attending the 41st General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association were 1853 member delegates, 397 ministerial delegates, 6 associate member delegates, 25 members of the Board of Trustees (not included as registered delegates from congregations) for a total of 2271 delegates representing 627 congregations, 48 states, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Mexico, France and 8 Canadian provinces. Total registration for the Assembly was 4059, including 438 youth and 84 children.

### **CLOSING**

The Assembly then voted to adjourn *sine die*.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kathleen Montgomery  
*Recording Secretary*