

**Condolences from the UU-United Nations Office to the Rev. Olivia Holmes, Director, UUA International Relations Office**

Sept. 18, 2001

Dear Friends,

We at the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office want to express our shock and revulsion at the terrorist acts committed Tuesday, September 11, 2001 against innocent people in New York City, Washington DC, and Pennsylvania.

As a New York City resident, and minister of the Unitarian Church of Staten Island, I will be performing the memorial service of a young man who perished in the attack on the World Trade Center, a person whose wedding I conducted a few years ago, the father of a two and a half year old.

We extend our deep condolences to all who lost family members or friends in these horrendous attacks. We hope that the perpetrators of these heinous actions can be apprehended. It is gratifying that both Secretary General Kofi Annan, and UN General Assembly President Han Seung-Soo have spoken out forcefully against the despicable assaults of September 11th, and have offered their co-operation in rooting out terrorism.

At the same time, we fervently hope that the response to the awful occurrences of September 11th will not result in yet more innocent victims, namely non-combatants living in places like Afghanistan. We hope that the legitimate effort to locate terrorists does not entail indiscriminate bombing of civilians, or a large-scale and tragic shooting war.

We also dread and emphatically warn against hostility toward people of Arabic background or Islamic persuasion, living in the United States and elsewhere, who had no relation whatsoever to the terrorist acts of a little over a week ago. It is of note that the Islamic Society of North America expressed, in a statement September 12th, "its deep sorrow over the deliberate air-crashes in New York and Washington, DC that have led to the loss of countless innocent lives." That organization asked for "swift apprehension and punishment of the perpetrators."

I am all the more pleased at Elaine Harvey's and John Washburn's fine work, laying the foundation for an International Criminal Court, which, if it were in place, could play a critical role in response to the horrible events we have just experienced.

Amid the tragedy, it was moving to see so much generosity, self-sacrifice, and heroism here in New York City, from residents and people elsewhere.

Our sympathies to any of you who lost family members or friends, and again, our hope that this crisis can be addressed without further loss of innocent life.

Sincerely,

Rev. Ben Bortin  
President, UU UNO