

## Proposed Congregational Study/Action Issues

Five proposed Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAIs) appear on the Final Agenda as a result of the 2010 Congregational Poll. Discussion of these CSAIs takes place in a workshop on Friday at 1:00 p.m. in room 200 FG of the Minneapolis Convention Center prior to voting in the Plenary Session. One issue will be chosen for study and action during the coming four years.

### CSAI 1: Energy, Peace, and Justice

148 **Issue**

149 Nations fight with each other to control natural resources. Energy use is essential for human survival. How can  
150 Unitarian Universalists help all people, in all nations, to secure an adequate supply of energy that is safe, affordable,  
151 and sustainable? How can we prevent energy conflict while promoting energy justice?

152 **Grounding in Unitarian Universalism**

153 The Unitarian Universalist Association has a vision of environmental justice. One of our principles acknowledges  
154 the interdependent web of existence. We affirm the importance of peace and human rights. All of our principles,  
155 together, form an integrated and moral statement to encourage healthy relationships and to guide our actions.

156 **Topics for Congregational Study**

157 Start with a chalice lighting. Fire and light are important in organized religion and there are different stories to  
158 consider. Ask, "How much energy do people need?" Note the patterns of energy use in different parts of the world.  
159 Why do some people consume so much while others have so little? Do people have a human right to energy? If so,  
160 how should this right be secured? As you discuss energy issues, keep in mind that transportation requires energy.

161 Some economists and scientists believe that the global supply of fossil fuels will soon be exhausted. Some experts  
162 disagree. Study the peak oil debate. Consider the future of coal and natural gas use. Is the world moving towards a  
163 major energy crisis? If so, how should Unitarian Universalists respond through community, national, and  
164 international programs?

165 Discuss global competition for fossil fuels. Where do you see potential conflicts? How can "energy wars" be  
166 avoided? How can developing nations like China and India overcome poverty while helping to protect the global  
167 environment? Should the development of nuclear power be encouraged as a source of energy? If so, what problems  
168 do you anticipate?

169 **Possible Congregational/District Actions**

170 Work for peace with energy justice. Study the "energy poverty" problem at the community, national, and  
171 international levels. The poor often need transportation and home energy assistance. How can your congregation and  
172 district be helpful? What sources of assistance are available for the homeless, the elderly, and people with  
173 disabilities? Support national and international programs that recognize and address the "energy poverty" problem.

174 How much energy does your congregation need? Review energy use. Encourage energy conservation. How can your  
175 congregation and district support the production of clean and renewable energy in North America and in other parts  
176 of the world?

177 Develop transportation plans for your congregation and district. Improve access to your activities while reducing the  
178 use of automobiles.

179 **Related Prior Social Witness Statements**

180 Alternate Sources and Conservation of Energy (1981 General Resolution); Redirection Economic Resources to  
181 Eliminate Poverty (1991 General Resolution); Safer Sources of Energy (1992 General Resolution); Environmental  
182 Justice (1994 General Resolution); Working for a Just Economic Community (1997 General Resolution); Economic  
183 Injustice, Poverty, and Racism: We Can Make a Difference! (2000 Statement of Conscience); Endorse the Earth  
184 Charter (2002 Action of Immediate Witness); Toward Peace and Justice in the Middle East (2002 Action of  
185 Immediate Witness); Economic Globalization (2003 Statement of Conscience); End the U.S. Occupation of Iraq  
186 (2007 Responsive Resolution); Oppose a U.S. Attack on Iran (2008 Action of Immediate Witness)

### CSAI 2: National Economic Reform: A Moral Imperative

187 **Issue**

188 The economic crisis and current political responses will continue to destabilize our communities and erode our  
189 democracy. We cannot return to "economics as usual" without deepening economic inequality, fragmenting  
190 community resilience, and exacerbating the ecological crisis. Most areas of injustice are connected to the nature of  
191 our current economic system.

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## 192 **Grounding in Unitarian Universalism**

193 Stories of how our financial sector came to such a crisis reveal a moral malaise that is shocking to Unitarian  
194 Universalists (UUs) who treasure the principles of our ethical religion. Guided by our goals of justice, equity,  
195 compassion and the democratic process we are called to examine and work to reform our financial system.

## 196 **Topics for Congregational Study**

- 197 • What caused the collapse?
- 198 • Can the economy be repaired by regulation of the current financial system or is the structure itself
- 199 inherently unjust? Is the Federal Reserve federal or a reserve?
- 200 • What would a caring economic democracy look like? How would it address the distribution of resources,
- 201 meaningful work with a living wage, health of local communities, the locus of decision-making?
- 202 • If corporations were chartered to promote the public good not just maximization of profit, how should they
- 203 be structured, reviewed and controlled? Does the “personhood” of corporations affect our democracy?
- 204 • Whom does the current tax system serve?
- 205 • What are my responsibilities as an individual consumer, shareholder, owner, investor, or employee, toward
- 206 a just financial system? What are our responsibilities as religious congregations and as a denomination?
- 207 • What is the ethical balance between individual freedom and community responsibility?
- 208 • What structures and practices can we promote to achieve our principles of justice, equity, compassion,
- 209 democratic process, the interdependent web of all existence and world community?

## 210 **Possible Congregational/District Actions**

- 211 • Study Groups on Richard Gilbert, *How Much Do We Deserve?*; David Korten, *Agenda for a New*
- 212 *Economy*; Riane Eisler, *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics*; Naomi Klein, *Shock*
- 213 *Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism*; Les Leopold, *The Looting of America*; Jack Bogle, *Enough:*
- 214 *Measures of Money, Business and Life.*
- 215 • Research into what our current investments support and what social screens they utilize.
- 216 • Research into community banks, local private equity investment opportunities and into the effects of giant
- 217 corporations on local quality of life.
- 218 • Recognize and value our “real wealth” through support of local businesses, farmers, artisans, so that
- 219 creativity is encouraged and money re-circulates within the community.
- 220 • Create a new economic story that affirms and promotes our UU Principles and values service, local
- 221 communities and real wealth over fantasy finance that rewards the distant few.
- 222 • Establish “common security clubs”–to learn together, strengthen mutual aid activities and engage in social
- 223 action toward a more just financial system.
- 224 • Districts may put on workshops to extend the resources within congregations.

## 225 **Related Prior Social Witness Statements**

226 *A Job, A Home, A Hope* (1995); *Working for a Just Economic Community* (1997); *Economic Justice, Poverty and*  
227 *Racism* (2000); *Economic Globalization and Its Consequences* (2003)

## 228 **Substantiating Information**

229 For documentation on the current economic crisis, its roots and prospects for cure see any newspaper and the books  
230 listed under study group material for congregations:

- 231 • Richard Gilbert, *How Much Do We Deserve*
- 232 • David Korten, *Agenda for a New Economy*
- 233 • Riane Eisler, *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics*
- 234 • Naomi Klein, *Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism*
- 235 • Les Leopold, *The Looting of America*
- 236 • Jack Bogle, *Enough: Measures of Money, Business and Life*
- 237 • Naomi Wolf, *The End of America*

## 238 **National Organizations Currently Working on this Issue**

239 **Americans for Financial Reform** is a coalition of nearly 200 national, state and local consumer, labor, retiree,  
240 investor, community and civil rights organizations who have come together to spearhead a campaign for real reform  
241 in our banking and financial system. “For too long, the rules of Wall Street have been written by the bankers  
242 themselves. The huge mismanagement of risk by major financial firms, the ensuing financial crisis, and the related  
243 economic recession have cost millions of workers their jobs, forced millions of families out of their homes, and  
244 wiped out trillions of dollars in retirement savings. The large banks and Wall Street have undermined Americans’  
245 confidence in the integrity and fairness of financial institutions, and of the regulators and regulations that should  
246 have held them accountable. Now we have to look at the mess and look at the root causes to ensure that it won’t  
247 happen again.”

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248 **Center for Partnership Studies:** Alliance for a Caring Economy (ACE) is supported by Riane Eisler’s work and is  
249 composed of groups and individuals working with representatives from government, business, civil society, and  
250 academic sectors (based on partnership/caring principles) to develop the foundation for a Full Spectrum Economy.  
251 They are currently working collaboratively to:

- 252 • Collect information on what is already happening to give economic value to care giving, such as paid  
253 parental leave and economic measurements that, unlike GDP, take into account the essential economic  
254 contribution of care giving in both the formal and informal economies.
- 255 • Catalog economic metrics to be published, refined, developed, and promoted.
- 256 • Provide a forum for new ideas and initiatives, support pilot projects, and provide a framework for testing  
257 and disseminating new programs and policies.
- 258 • Bring the concept and practicalities of Caring Economics into business and economics schools.
- 259 • Bring together innovative thinkers to conceptualize new economic inventions.
- 260 • Offer education and opportunities for discussion about Caring Economics and the Full Spectrum Economy
- 261 • Develop virtual outreach to assist with communication and discussion Prepare educational booklets (hard  
262 copy and virtual) to raise awareness of the value caring and caretaking, including what can be done at the  
263 home, community, business, and national levels to recognize and reward this work.
- 264 • Develop an implementation guide to assist organizations to put these examples into practice.

265 **Navigating The Great Turning Initiative** is a project of the People-Centered Development Forum and is  
266 developed in response to David Korten’s latest book, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*, This  
267 Initiative’s mission is to contribute to the greater body of Great Turning work by forwarding the following framing  
268 ideas and connections:

- 269 • Help individuals, communities, and organizations displace the prevailing Empire prosperity, security, and  
270 meaning stories that define dominator hierarchy as the natural and essential human order, with Earth  
271 Community prosperity, security, and meaning stories that celebrate the human capacity to live in  
272 cooperative balance with one another and Earth.
- 273 • Facilitate the creation and strengthening of networks and alliances based on mutual trust and a shared  
274 commitment to changing the defining stories of the prevailing culture.
- 275 • Expose the dominator relationships of Empire as the upstream source of the many forms of violence against  
276 people and nature that threaten the human future, and identify the partnership relations of Earth Community  
277 as a defining feature of the cultures and institutions now within our means to bring forth.
- 278 • Name this the time of the Great Turning to highlight the epic nature of the choice between domination and  
279 partnership, and the opportunity created by a potential terminal crisis to create a world that works for all by  
280 turning to partnership as a conscious collective choice.
- 281 • Provide a strategic framework grounded in a theory of change that calls for displacing stories of Empire  
282 that affirm domination as inevitable and beneficial with stories of Earth Community that celebrate the  
283 positive potentials of partnership.

284 **New Economy Working Group’s** mission “is to contribute to reframing the economic policy debate to address the  
285 social and environmental imperatives and opportunities of the 21st Century. The distinctive role of NEWGroup is to  
286 serve as a virtual policy think tank and communications resource for the growing number of civil society groups  
287 concerned with economic justice, environmental sustainability, and peace that are forming alliances and coalitions  
288 under a New Economy banner. Because of the powerful tendency to slip into a conventional framing in the midst of  
289 the myriad political battles at hand, we see our distinctive contribution as being to look beyond what is currently  
290 politically feasible and to articulate and hold for the larger movement the long-term vision of a New Economy that  
291 functions by spaceship rules and values to:

- 292 • Provide everyone the opportunity for a healthy, dignified and fulfilling life,
- 293 • Maintain and enhance the vitality of Earth’s natural systems,
- 294 • Grow the relationships of strong caring communities,
- 295 • Honor sound, rule-based market principles,
- 296 • Support an equitable and socially efficient allocation of resources, and
- 297 • Fulfill the democratic ideal of one-person, one-vote citizen sovereignty.

298 **Common Security Clubs:** What are they? A place to come together to grapple with our personal security in a rapidly  
299 changing world.

- 300 • To learn about the root causes of our economic and ecological challenges.
- 301 • To explore ways to increase our personal/economic security through mutual aid and shared action.
- 302 • To build on what we have together—and strengthen the institutions that we all depend on.
- 303 • In the process, make friends, find inspiration, have fun, and strengthen community.

304 There are three basic components

- 305 • Learn: Through popular education tools, videos and shared readings, participants increase their

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- 306 understanding of the larger economic forces on our lives.  
307 • Mutual Aid/ Local Action: Through stories, examples, web-based resources, a workbook and mutual  
308 support, participants reflect on what makes them secure.  
309 • Social Action: Many of our challenges won't be solved through personal or local mutual aid efforts. They  
310 require us to work together to press for larger state, national and even global changes.

311 Over 50 communities (including many UU congregations) around the country have piloted “Common Security  
312 Clubs” in 2009. Clubs typically are 15-20 adults who commit to meet for six initial facilitated meetings using the  
313 Facilitator’s Guide that we have created. Have a look at our suggested “Introductory Meeting” here. Anyone who  
314 feels comfortable leading a group can start a CSC! We have the (free) Facilitator’s Guide available for use, and  
315 other tools and resources here on our website. Contact Andre (andree @ commonsecurityclub.org) for materials and  
316 guidance.

317 United for a Fair Economy (UFE) is a national, independent, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. UFE  
318 raises awareness that concentrated wealth and power undermine the economy, corrupt democracy, deepen the racial  
319 divide, and tear communities apart. We support and help build social movements for greater equality.

### 320 **UU Organizations**

321 Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) has among its programs “to inspire Unitarian  
322 Universalists to become informed on society’s economic and social systems and how they promote justice and  
323 injustice; to develop and work for passage of UUA study resolutions; to develop study materials on economic justice  
324 for use by UU congregations to use.”

325 Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) has a department for Economic Justice currently working on A  
326 Living Wage, Strengthening the Rights of the “Informal Economy” with Women and Children at its Core, and  
327 Equitable Distribution of Wealth through Fair Trade. “Economic justice is essential for securing basic human rights,  
328 alleviating local and global poverty, and achieving a more peaceful and just world. As a human rights and social  
329 justice organization, UUSC embraces a vision of economic human rights, recognizing that workers’ rights are human  
330 rights.”

331 Unitarian Universalist Women’s Federation (UUWF) is a continental membership organization that advances equity  
332 and justice for women through education and advocacy. They recognize and support the essential element of  
333 economic justice in empowering women both nationally and globally.

## CSAI 3: Immigration as a Moral Issue

### 334 **Issue**

335 Migration of people—driven by economic, social, political and environmental factors—is taking place around the  
336 world. Millions are currently in transit, in refugee camps, in detention centers, or living and working in places  
337 without full legal status and without access to social services or protection of civil rights.

### 338 **Grounding in Unitarian Universalism**

339 The dignity of all the world’s peoples is core to Unitarian Universalist (UU) principles and values. Given  
340 the justice-oriented nature of UU faith, UUs are called to be leaders in the struggle for immigrant and  
341 refugee rights, and to view immigration not only as a legal issue but also moral issue.

### 342 **Topics for Study**

- 343 • What are the definitions of refugee, migrant, permanent resident, citizen, non-immigrant, and  
344 undocumented and documented immigrants?
- 345 • What international bodies are accountable for the welfare of migrants and refugees? Are these bodies  
346 effective?
- 347 • Is international law concerning migrants and refugees (mainly the UN Declaration of Human Rights and  
348 the Geneva Conventions) adequate for people seeking asylum in a current context?
- 349 • What underlying factors contribute to global migration? And where are we complicit or accountable in  
350 these factors?
- 351 • Should there be complete global freedom of movement of migrants?
- 352 • What is the economic impact of immigration on countries and on individuals?
- 353 • For what reasons are immigrants arrested and incarcerated? And once incarcerated, how are individuals and  
354 families treated in detention centers?
- 355 • What are our positions on the enforcement of national boundaries?
- 356 • Who are the immigrants in our communities?
- 357 • What are the myths and realities regarding immigrants?

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- 358 • What role do racism, hate and intolerance play in driving immigration and enforcement policies?  
359 • Are there ways that immigrants enrich the social fabric of the country in which they settle and in particular  
360 the United States?  
361 • Using UU principles and values, what would be a just and humane immigration policy?

## 362 **Possible Congregational/District Actions**

- 363 • Participation in events that support the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees. Explore and implement  
364 programs for transforming concern into action for justice for immigrants.  
365 • Support and participation in humanitarian, sanctuary and other efforts directly related to helping  
366 immigrants and refugees.  
367 • Support and participation in efforts to change both national and international laws.  
368 • Organizing and hosting events to educate, energize and empower those engaged in these issues.  
369 • Coordinating experiential trips to gain first-hand understanding of border, migrant and refugee issues.  
370 • Take an active role in interfaith, community organizing to address needs of migrants and refugees in our  
371 local communities and around the world. (UURISE, Interfaith Immigration Coalition, No More Deaths)  
372 • Offer an intercultural awareness program for congregants.  
373 • Develop an intentional program of inviting immigrants for cultural sharing.  
374 • Conduct workshops on immigration, the facts and the human stories.  
375 • A district may wish to sponsor a program either at DA or for clusters of UU congregations on radical  
376 hospitality in the multi-cultural context.  
377 • Provide English as a Second Language tutoring.  
378 • Conduct citizenship classes.

## 379 **Related Prior Statements**

380 1961 General Resolution on Migrant Workers; 1963 General Resolution for Immigration Reform—encouraged an  
381 overhaul of antiquated federal immigration policy; 1964 General Resolution on Poverty—including migrant workers  
382 in the classifications of people deeply affected by poverty; 1975 Business Resolution on UU Migrant Ministry—  
383 allotted Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) money to support ministry efforts for migrants; 1980, 1983, 1984,  
384 1985—resolutions endorsed and supported the Sanctuary Movement to protect the lives of Central American  
385 refugees; 1989 Resolution of Immediate Witness to the Refugee Internment Camp in Harlingen, TX; 1992 General  
386 Resolution on Children Held in INS Detention—addressed the worsening treatment of minors held in custody by the  
387 U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services; 1995 Resolution of Immediate Witness to call for conscious, humane  
388 treatment of immigrants; 2006 Action of Immediate Witness to Support Immigrant Justice—displayed solidarity  
389 with immigrants struggling for justice in the U.S; 2007 Action of Immediate Witness to Support Immigrant Families  
390 and Stop ICE Raids—called for a halt to federal raids on workplaces that employ undocumented migrants.

## 391 **Supporting Documentation**

392 It is difficult to pin down exact numbers of people in transit around the globe. According to the United Nations  
393 Population Fund (UNFPA), some 191 million people—or 3% of the world’s population—were living outside their  
394 country of origin in 2005. The UNFPA tracks trends in migration, noting specifically that more women are now  
395 migrating than in the past. They attribute a majority of migration to the economic need for work. In a press release  
396 dated April 21, 2009, Oxfam predicts a 54% increase in people affected by climate disasters by 2015. Other  
397 international NGOs are making similar predictions about the expected increase in “climate refugees.” A statistically  
398 significant correlation between migration and environmental degradation including climate change was shown by  
399 Afifi and Warner (2007), controlling for the already established major drivers of migration. A June 2009 press  
400 release from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) said “the number of people forcibly  
401 uprooted by conflict and persecution worldwide stood at 42 million at the end of [2008].” The UNHCR’s 2008  
402 annual report said that 80% of the world’s refugees are in developing nations, and that although there was a decline  
403 in total refugees from 2007, they are already observing a sharp increase in 2009.

404 Both the United States and the European Union have invested in deterrence-based strategies to enforce boundaries  
405 where large numbers of migrants and refugees are crossing without authorization. In the U.S., the Department of  
406 Homeland Security was empowered to carry out the Secure Borders Initiative that called for a massive increase in  
407 border enforcement infrastructure, including patrol agents, walls and surveillance systems. The European Union  
408 created FronTex to enforce its southern and eastern boundaries using resources allotted from various member states.  
409 Both the U.S. and E.U. also fund deterrence efforts in “transit” states (Mexico in the case of the U.S., Libya and  
410 Morocco in the case of the E.U.). These parallel strategies that emphasize enforcement by deterrence have led to the  
411 deaths of countless thousands of migrants and refugees.

412 Other countries throughout Latin America, Africa and Asia are employing harsher border controls coupled with  
413 more aggressive immigration enforcement. The numbers of immigrants and refugees in detention centers has  
414 swelled around the globe.

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415 To begin addressing these problems, UU churches are becoming involved in a variety of ways. In Arizona, where  
416 the numbers of migrant deaths is the highest along the U.S./Mexico border, the Unitarian Universalist Church of  
417 Tucson (UUCT) adopted local humanitarian organization No More Deaths as a ministry of the church. No More  
418 Deaths provides direct humanitarian assistance to migrants crossing the desert and to those repatriated back to  
419 Mexico by the Department of Homeland Security. No More Deaths works with a variety of faith, secular, NGO and  
420 governmental partners in its work. UUs from around the country have traveled to Arizona to volunteer with NMD,  
421 and congregations have sent monetary and material donations to support their humanitarian work. In December of  
422 2005, a NMD volunteer and member of UUCT was issued a littering ticket while putting out gallon jugs of water for  
423 migrants near the border. He fought the ticket and was convicted by a jury in federal court for “knowingly littering,”  
424 and is currently under orders to perform 300 hours of community service and complete one year of probation.

425 In Phoenix, UU minister Susan Frederick-Gray announced a call to action to bring attention to the racist tactics of  
426 Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, whose raids and checkpoints resulted in the deportation of hundreds of  
427 undocumented immigrants and spreading fear and hate in those communities. Rallies against Arpaio and the 287(g)  
428 agreements that empower local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration law followed. To date, Sheriff  
429 Arpaio is still in office.

430 Unitarian Universalist Refugee and Immigrant Services & Education, Inc. (UURISE) is a non-profit organization  
431 dedicated to providing low-cost legal immigration counseling and representation, comprehensive refugee  
432 resettlement services, educational and advocacy programs on human and legal rights, and outreach to immigrant  
433 victims of human trafficking, persecution, torture, domestic violence and other crimes. UURISE is based in San  
434 Diego, CA but travels around the country to participate in various trainings and seminars.

### 435 **Additional References**

436 U.S. Department of Homeland Security Annual Report, August 2008. See a quick immigration summary page on the  
437 Department of Homeland Security website. The page contains further links to Department studies on all phases of  
438 immigration, as well as statistics and reports.

439 U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. See an introductory page on all types of  
440 visas for foreign nationals. From that page it is possible to learn about visitors, temporary workers, student and  
441 immigrant visas. The page also contains links to statistical reports, laws, and an FAQ about coming to the United  
442 States via legal means.

443 The Pew Hispanic Center links to an enormous amount of data concerning the hispanic population of the United  
444 States. See information specifically related to immigration. The Pew Hispanic Center offers many detailed studies of  
445 the Hispanic population by country of origin, occupational and economic profiles, and many similar Statistical  
446 resources about Hispanic immigrants.

447 Immigration Policy Center, American Immigration Council. Their home page is packed with detailed reports on  
448 legal actions and strategies, program links to many facts and statistics on immigration, and additional program links  
449 to more information resources.

450 UNHCR, 2008 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons.  
451 This link presents the immense global scope of our present immigration problems. The 12 million undocumented  
452 workers who arouse such passions in the United States are only a fraction of the total number of stateless and  
453 displaced persons in our world today.

## CSAI 4: Ending Slavery

### 454 **Issue**

455 More people are enslaved today than at any time in history, about 27 million worldwide. They are in communities  
456 throughout the U.S. and their stolen labor creates objects we consume every day. Yet ending slavery forever is  
457 within our grasp. We can finish the work begun by our abolitionist forebears.

### 458 **Grounding in Unitarian Universalism**

459 Slavery is an affront to our principles, stripping people of their dignity and the worth of their labor. It is intrinsically  
460 violent, unjust and degrading. Through our faith and our history, we know that all people have inherent worth and  
461 dignity and that freedom is a right for every person.

### 462 **Topics for Congregational Study**

- 463 • Slavery has been a part of many cultures throughout history. Do you know how slavery affected your  
464 ancestors? Were they enslaved? Were they slave holders? What is your congregation’s history with  
465 slavery? How does knowing about your community’s or your family’s history impact how you feel about

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- 466 slavery continuing today?  
467 • Many products we use every day are manufactured using slave labor. The steel in our cars may be formed  
468 using charcoal created by slaves. Our clothing could be cut or sewn by forced slave labor. Would you buy a  
469 product that you knew was made by slaves?  
470 • In America, slavery and human trafficking is often hidden in plain sight. We can all learn the warning signs  
471 of slavery and trafficking. If you saw the warning signs of slavery, what would you do? Who would you  
472 contact?  
473 • Can you imagine the feeling of being emancipated? What do people need after the experience of  
474 enslavement?  
475 • Are there local organizations or services in your area that support victims of trafficking and slavery? What  
476 can you do to support former slaves in your community? Would you do the same for former slaves in other  
477 countries?  
478 • Many experts believe that we have never been closer to ending slavery. What is your congregation willing  
479 to do to end slavery? What are you willing to do?

## 480 Possible Congregational/District Action

- 481 • Most Americans are unaware of the prevalence of modern slavery. Contact other local faith leaders,  
482 communities and local media to let them know your congregation is addressing modern slavery.  
483 • Hold a book discussion, DVD showing, or information session on contemporary slavery.  
484 • Incorporate information about ending modern slavery in your youth religious education program.  
485 • Purchase Fair Trade products, such as coffee, at your congregation. Educate members about Fair Trade  
486 chocolate, clothing, rugs and other products.  
487 • Where Fair Trade options aren't available, urge companies to take responsibility for labor practices in their  
488 product chains. Press for development of product chain disclosure of products that often use slavery, such  
489 as charcoal and coltan (which is used in cell phones).  
490 • Contact local law enforcement and other authorities to find out if there is a state or local Anti-Slavery Task  
491 Force, and if officers have received trainings on slavery. If not, contact local legislators.  
492 • Write to national legislators to make them aware that their constituents are concerned about slavery.  
493 • Encourage the creation of a national plan to end slavery within our borders. Ask them to use diplomacy,  
494 trade and foreign aid to target slavery internationally.

## 495 Related Prior Social Witness Statements

- 496 The last time modern slavery was addressed as a General Resolution was in 1965 and in 1967. More recent Social  
497 Witness Statements reference the successes of 19th Century Abolitionists. There are also Actions of Immediate  
498 Witness, a Business Resolution and a Responsive Resolution that express our opposition to slavery.  
499 • Human Rights Conventions, 1965: "BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: That the Unitarian Universalist  
500 Association urge the United States Senate, with all possible speed, to ratify the Supplementary Convention  
501 on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery; the  
502 Convention on the Abolition of Forced Labor; and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women;"  
503 • Strengthening the United Nations, 1967: "URGES: That the United States Senate advise and consent to  
504 ratification of the following Human Rights Conventions: 1. The Supplementary Convention of the  
505 Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, prepared under the  
506 direction of the United Nations in 1956, to which 61 nations are now parties; 2. The Convention on the  
507 Abolition of Forced Labor, adopted by the International Labor Organization in 1957, to which 74 nations  
508 are now parties;"  
509 • The New Abolitionism, 1982: "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That this Assembly urges all Unitarian  
510 Universalists to recognize and support solemnly and with hope the great new historical movement known  
511 as The New Abolitionism, 'a worldwide moral and religious movement which says 'no' to the nuclear arms  
512 race and nuclear war as the old Abolitionism launched a crusade to say 'no' to slavery. The New  
513 Abolitionism against slavery... can be a winning crusade' because it must;"  
514 • Support for the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against  
515 Women, 2007 (under Equal Opportunity): "3. The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office to continue  
516 to monitor and advocate for CEDAW as part of follow-up to the 2007 Annual Intergenerational Spring  
517 Seminar, 'Stop Modern Day Slavery: Breaking the Web of Human Trafficking'; and...  
518 • The Alien Tort Claims Act And Accountability For Multinational Corporations, 2004: "The Alien Tort  
519 Claims Act is the only United States law permitting multinational corporations with significant assets in the  
520 United States to be held accountable for their unethical behavior elsewhere in the world. Passed in 1789 by  
521 the First Congress of the United States, it enables victims of torture, slavery, ethnic cleansing, and other  
522 crimes against humanity to put the corporations that are responsible on trial in American courts."  
523 • Women's Rights Anniversary, 1998: "Therefore be it resolved that the Unitarian Universalist Association  
524 shall within this two-year period 1. Make effort to note the milestones in the critical anti-slavery efforts of

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525 women and the women’s rights struggle, from the 1848 Convention to the present...”  
526 • Truth, Repair, and Reconciliation, 2007: “President Sinkford asked, ‘What are our truths? To whom must  
527 we be reconciled?’ We have many stories to uncover—genocide, slavery, oppression. Only by knowing our  
528 truths can we act boldly on our spiritual journey of healing.”

### 529 **References**

530 Experts in modern slavery define a slave as a person who is forced to work without pay beyond bare survival, and  
531 who is not free to leave, either through violence or through threat of violence. See Free The Slaves or Anti-Slavery  
532 or any of the books referenced below.

533 “Bitter Harvest,” UU World, November/December 2004, Kimberly French.

534 The Slave Next Door: Human trafficking and slavery in America today by Kevin Bales and Ron Soodalter  
535 (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2009) or the FBI Human Trafficking website.

536 Free the Slaves has a 25 year plan for ending slavery, detailed in Ending Slavery: How We Free Today’s Slaves by  
537 Kevin Bales (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2007).

538 There is a strong and vibrant movement to end slavery. Free the Slaves is an organization with a mission of ending  
539 all forms of slavery globally through support of grassroots liberation and rehabilitation actions. Anti-Slavery  
540 International, based in the United Kingdom and founded in 1839, also works to eliminate all forms of slavery. There  
541 are also countless organizations that deal with specific regions or aspects of eliminating slavery, some of which have  
542 a specific focus on putting our Unitarian Universalist (UU) principles into action.

543 • The Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program works with key leaders and organizations of India’s  
544 most marginalized and disadvantaged peoples in their struggle to secure human rights and economic and  
545 social justice. Part of their focus area is working to eliminate debt bondage in India. Shramajivee Mahila  
546 Samity (SMS), one of their partner organizations, is the recipient of the 2009 Harriet Tubman award given  
547 to a community-based organization working to dismantle slavery. SMS goes undercover to expose  
548 traffickers, helps slavery survivors return home and raises awareness within villages to slave-proof their  
549 communities.

550 • The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) advances human rights and social justice in the  
551 United States and around the world. UUSC works by partnering with grassroots organizations, including  
552 those whose work prevents slavery. For example, one partner, the Rock Women’s Group, educates at-risk  
553 youth in Kenya who are vulnerable to trafficking. UUSC also helps UU children throughout the country  
554 participate in Reverse Trick-or-Treating, which educates children about child and slave labor in the cocoa  
555 industry.

556 • Unitarian Universalists Against Slavery is a small organization focused on educating the UU community  
557 about slavery. It brought speakers to the 2003 General Assembly to speak about slavery. This organization  
558 has been dormant since 2005 but is now being revived.

559 Unitarians and Universalists have a strong history of opposing slavery. William Ellery Channing wrote a book  
560 entitled Slavery, where he stated that to enslave a person was an insult to God. He was accused of encouraging slave  
561 insurrection. Theodore Parker hid and defended fugitive slaves and was indicted for obstructing a federal marshal  
562 for defending Anthony Burns, a fugitive slave in his congregation. A list of biographies of Abolitionists and Civil  
562b Rights Unitarians and Universalists is available online.

### 563 **Family History**

564 Resources for uncovering your family history with slavery are available from many sources. Some resources are  
565 listed below:

- 566 • The documentary Traces of the Trade follows Katrina Browne as she and her family uncovers their history  
567 as descendent of a wealthy slave trading family.
- 568 • Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave-Trading Dynasty in  
569 U.S. History, by Thomas Norman (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009)
- 570 • Listen to family history and review genealogical records for clues to your family history.
- 571 • The Passover holiday celebrates the Jewish people’s liberation from slavery in Egypt. This time of year can  
572 be used to draw connections between the Passover holiday and modern slavery.

573 Resources include local police or FBI office, the 24-hour National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline at 1-  
574 888-373-7888 or the U.S. Department of Justice Hotline at 1-888-428-7581 (during business hours).

### 575 **Suggested reading about modern slavery:**

- 576 • Ending Slavery: How We Free Today’s Slaves by Kevin Bales (Berkeley: Unit. of California Press, 2007)
- 577 • A Crime So Monstrous : Face-to-face with modern-day slavery by E. Benjamin Skinner (New York: Free  
578 Press, 2008)
- 579 • Sex Trafficking: Inside the business of modern slavery by Siddharth Kara (New York: Columbia Unit.  
580 Press, 2009)

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- 581 • The Slave Next Door - Human Trafficking and Slavery in America Today by Kevin Bales and Ron  
582 Soodalter (Berkeley: Unit of California Press, 2009)
- 583 • To Plead Our Own Cause: Personal Stories by Today's Slaves by Kevin Bales and Zoe Trodd (Ithaca:  
584 Cornell Unit. Press, 2008)
- 585 • Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy by Kevin Bales (Berkeley University of California  
586 Press, revised 2004)
- 587 DVD titles available from Free the Slaves that address modern slavery and human trafficking include:
- 588 • Slavery 101: a video introduction to modern day slavery. (12 minutes)
- 589 • Slavery: a global investigation: accompanies the book Ending Slavery, can be used by book groups (88  
590 minutes)
- 591 • Freedom and Beyond: Rehabilitation of boys recently freed from slavery in northern India.
- 592 • Dreams Die Hard: The stories of four women enslaved in the U.S.
- 593 • Celebrating the Heroes of the Anti-Slavery Movement: Freedom Awards 2008. Includes Slavery 101 (12  
594 minutes) and stories of Award winners in Ghana, Brazil, Philippines, and Uganda
- 595 • Freedom Awards 2009. Includes stories of Award winners in Pakistan, India and Cambodia
- 596 Teaching Packets are available at Free the Slaves.

## CSAI 5: Revitalizing American Democracy

### 597 Issue

598 Democracy requires an informed, engaged citizenry. Corporate and financial interests actively influence our  
599 government, but citizen participation and oversight have been insufficient to provide balance. Voting is important,  
600 but we must also keep informed, participate personally, discuss policy with others, observe all actions of  
601 government, and advocate for needed changes.

### 602 Grounding in Unitarian Universalism

603 Our Unitarian Universalist (UU) Principles celebrate the worth and dignity of every person, liberty and justice for  
604 all, and democratic processes. Corporations have shifted our nation's policies to favor profit-making and  
605 privatization of public resources. We the people must work to rebalance policies to support the well-being of all.

### 606 Topics for Congregational / District Study

- 607 • Can we evaluate the strength of our democracy by the extent to which our government promotes "the  
608 general welfare" of all our diverse people, which is one of the objectives stated in our Constitution.
- 609 • Lewis Powell wrote a memo in 1971 for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, crystallizing 40 years of work by  
610 financial and corporate interests to achieve an unregulated "free market," as detailed in Invisible Hands by  
611 Kim Phillips-Fein. Powell's memo lays out a long term vision for corporate influence over culture and  
612 government. Can his vision help us to understand many of the changes that our culture and government  
613 have undergone since then, and to reverse those that do not promote "the general welfare?"
- 614 • What recurring patterns underlie the many social justice issues that UUs commonly work on, such as health  
615 care, election integrity or the environment? For example, how are patterns of financial and corporate  
616 influence reinforced by our campaign finance laws and telecommunications laws? Identify specific  
617 instances in which corporations receive benefits and higher profits while certain costs are shifted to the  
618 public. Can seeing the common underlying patterns of inequity in different areas of government help us  
619 find more effective solutions?
- 620 • How much do corporate interests control the content of our media? Are responsible and diverse viewpoints  
621 being lost due to the concentration of ownership of the media? How can we keep informed sufficiently to  
622 maintain oversight of government? How can we work to restore balance and honesty in media?
- 623 • Do we subscribe to President Lincoln's ideal of government "of the people, by the people, and for the  
624 people?" If so, what must we do to achieve or maintain it? Since people are busy, how can we find time to  
625 be involved to maintain our democracy? For example, how can we work with other UU congregations,  
626 interfaith and civic groups to champion voters' rights, to observe all election procedures before, during and  
627 after elections, to monitor proposed election legislation, and to ensure fair redistricting after the 2010  
628 census?
- 629 • What election systems and procedures do our own county and state employ? How do local procedures  
630 facilitate or prevent observer and voter access? How can we oversee voting and vote-counting if they are  
631 done inside computers?
- 632 • How can we educate young UUs and other Americans to know and value our history, our form of  
633 government, and our opportunities and responsibilities to take part in making our democracy work?
- 634 • What does the history of voting rights in America have to teach us morally and practically? Do our

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635 Constitution and federal and state laws protect civil rights and voting rights? How have federal and state  
636 laws been used or misused? What legislation should we develop, support, or oppose?

### 637 **Possible Congregational / District Actions**

- 638 • Offer to conduct events in your community and local schools in which people read and discuss the U.S.  
639 Constitution.
- 640 • Conduct events in which people read the Powell Memorandum out loud, and then brainstorm equally long-  
641 range plans to promote the general well-being of ordinary people.
- 642 • Choose an issue to focus on and identify officials who work on it. Visit them, attend their public meetings,  
643 and try to learn what is happening on that issue. If you discover barriers to citizen oversight, work to  
644 eliminate them.
- 645 • Organize workshops to learn and practice the skills of government oversight and advocacy.
- 646 • As a congregation, recruit poll watchers and poll workers, research voting systems and procedures used at  
647 the local level, and problems that may have occurred. Assist in Election Protection efforts before, during,  
648 and after elections. Follow the chain of custody of ballots and equipment, and observe testing, auditing, and  
649 recounts.
- 650 • Champion issues that relate to corporate and financial influence on government and culture, such as  
651 campaign finance reform, balance and accuracy in media, reinstatement of anti-usury laws, robust financial  
652 disclosure for campaign contributions, and opposition to corporate personhood.
- 653 • Establish a group to monitor reporting of news on a selected issue in the major and alternative media.  
654 Collaborate to write letters to editors, news articles and editorials, and complain when news reporting is  
655 partial, biased or absent.
- 656 • Partner with interfaith groups, other UU congregations, public interest and civil rights groups, including  
657 energetic local organizations, to develop citizen participation and leadership. Join or start a statewide  
658 chapter of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry. Evaluate potential legislation and advocate for  
659 what is needed at the state and federal level.
- 660 • Work with local schools to teach age-appropriate civics and the Constitution starting in kindergarten. Work  
661 with students to mentor their discussions on topics in American history; economics; government; avenues  
662 for citizen participation; and the relevance of these topics to all of us today.
- 663 • Discuss with UU youth the pros and cons of careers in public service. Invite elected and appointed officials  
664 to discuss their career choices and how they prepared for and entered the field of public service.

### 665 **Related Prior Social Witness Statements**

666 Advocate Pending Legislation toward Clean, Honest and Fair Elections (2009 AIW); Voting Rights for  
667 Communities of Color (2007 Responsive Resolution); Electronic Voting (2004 AIW); Civil Liberties (2004  
668 Statement of Conscience); Campaign Finance Reform (2004 AIW); Political Campaign Finance Reform (1998  
669 AIW); Working for a Just Economic Community (1997 General Resolution); Federal Campaign and Election  
670 Reform (1974 General Resolution); Civil Rights (1963 General Resolution)

### 671 **Documentation Related to this Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI)**

- 672 • Constitution of the United States
- 673 • Louis D. Brandeis by Melvin I. Urofsky, Pantheon Books (div. of Random House), September, 2009,  
674 chapters 6-10.
- 675 • “American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality” (PDF, 24 pages), report of the American Political  
676 Science Assn., 2004.
- 677 • Lewis Powell memo for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 1971.
- 678 • Invisible Hands by Kim Phillips-Fein. W.W. Norton & Co., January 5, 2009
- 679 • Gangs of America, The Rise of Corporate Power and The Disabling of Democracy, by Ted Nace. Chapter  
680 12, implementation of the Powell Memo.
- 681 • “Does Touchscreen Voting Violate the 5th Principle?” (PDF, 8 pages) Teresa Hommel, June 27, 2009.
- 682 • Al Gore, “Democracy in Trouble” keynote speech, We Media Conference, New York, NY, October 5,  
683 2005
- 684 • Broadcast Blues: a media reform documentary. Shows the effects of concentration of media markets, and  
685 how people are starting to speak out against it.
- 686 • “Is America Ready to Vote?” (PDF, 188 pages) from Verified Voter, a 50-state report card about key  
687 election preparedness markers, including whether the state uses auditable voting systems, conducts audits,  
688 does ballot accounting and reconciliation, and provides sufficient resources like back-up paper ballots in  
689 machine jurisdictions. (See Introduction for examples of problems that have disenfranchised voters).
- 690 • Election Problem Log, failures by vendor and failures by state, and Handouts, 14-page description of  
691 electronic voting problems.

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- 692 • Our Vote Live (2008) and Vote Protect (2004-2005) for state-by-state reports of election incidents  
693 compiled by Election Protection Coalition and partners.
- 694 • Machine Failures, ES&S in the News, a partial list of documented failures. NOTE: ES&S bought out its  
695 competitor Premier Election Solutions in September, 2009 and now controls 74% of the voting machines in  
696 this country.
- 697 • Fair Elections Now (Flash): video on the effect of current campaign financing and the need for reform.
- 698 • The GAO (Government Accountability Office) Report to Congressional Requesters of September 2005,  
699 titled “Elections (PDF, 101 pages): Federal Efforts to Improve Security and Reliability of Electronic Voting  
700 Systems are Under Way, but Key Activities Need to Be Completed.”
- 701 • Carter/Baker report, “Building Confidence in U.S. Elections” (PDF, 113 pages). See the executive  
702 summary (at front), and details on p. 27. This report suggests other means for auditing machines in the  
703 future, but recommends a paper backup now. American University’s Center for Democracy and Election  
704 Management released a new report in July 2009 showing progress on Carter/Baker recommendations and  
705 what remains to be done.
- 706 • KWTW, “75 Percent of Oklahoma High School Students Can’t Name the First President of the U.S.” Out of  
707 1000 high school students tested with questions from the American citizenship exams, only 3% would have  
708 passed that exam, although 92% of immigrants pass it on the first try. September 2009.

### 709 **Groups Involved in Work that Supports this CSAI**

710 We strongly suggest that UUs explore hands-on groups in their own cities and states that focus on citizen  
711 participation and leadership, election observation and combating excessive financial influence of individuals and  
712 corporations. Some state Election Integrity groups are listed at Verified Voting. You can consult the three contact  
713 names listed at the end of this CSAI to help you locate additional resources.

714 Many of the large national civic organizations fall short when it comes to recognizing the need for fully observable  
715 and observed election systems, but their state chapters in certain cases may have a better understanding of this and  
716 other issues put forward in this CSAI. For example, this applies to the national ACLU versus the Massachusetts  
717 ACLU.

718 UUs are encouraged to examine the pros and cons of election laws that have been enacted as well as proposed state  
719 and federal legislation to see what they might encourage their legislators to co-sponsor or oppose. Information on  
720 state and federal bills and laws is available on Verified Voting and other Election Integrity websites, as well as on  
721 the Library of Congress website.

722 Hyde Square Task Force; ¿Oiste?; Initiative for Diversity in Civic Leadership; Verified Voting Foundation and  
723 VerifiedVoting.org; VotersUnite!; Black Box Voting; Election Audits; Public Campaign, and Fair Elections Now;  
724 Citizens for Election Integrity of MA; Fair Districts Florida; Florida Fair Elections Coalition; Florida Voters  
725 Foundation; Sarasota Alliance for Fair Elections; Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Florida.

726 Civil rights, policy and legal action groups include: Common Cause; Advancement Project; NAACP-LDF;  
727 Democracia.

728 Professional groups include: The Electronic Frontier Foundation; Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility;  
729 The American Statistical Association.