



For Immediate Release

Unitarian Universalists Conclude Annual General Assembly with Statement on Moral Values and Calls to Political Action

(Portland, OR – June 24, 2007) The Unitarian Universalist Association concluded its annual General Assembly by issuing several statements on social justice issues, including a Statement of Conscience titled “Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society.” The liberal religious organization also called for legal protections and rights for transgender people and charged its 1,040 member congregations to work for comprehensive sexuality education, to demand a repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” and to support immigrant families by calling for an end to ICE raids on workplaces.

Nearly 6,000 Unitarian Universalists gathered in Portland, Oregon from June 20 -24 to worship, attend workshops and share experiences. But the progressive social justice work the denomination is known for was the focus of the gathering.

Among the highlights of the General Assembly were a lecture by Dr. Rahsidi Khalid, Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies at Columbia University, and an appearance by Daniel Ellsberg and presidential candidate Mike Gravel to recount their roles in events that led to the UUA's Beacon Press' publication of the Pentagon Papers in 1971-72.

UUA President Rev. William G. Sinkford was joined by 500 Unitarian Universalists and a broad coalition of area clergy and activists for a June 23 environmental justice rally called “Witness for Earth Community.” On June 24th Rev. Sinkford was a guest speaker at a rally in support of undocumented workers and their families at the Portland ICE headquarters.

2007 Statement of Conscience: Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society

In June 2005, the General Assembly of the UUA selected “Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society” as the issue suggested to congregations for two years of study, action, and reflection. On June 23rd the Assembly approved a final statement as official policy for the Association.

The statement reads, in part:

People often make religious claims about controversial issues such as reproductive rights, stem cell research, the death penalty, and the teaching of evolution. Their efforts to advocate one perspective, to the exclusion of others, are influencing every branch and level of government. Consequently, the United States is moving away from its constitutionally mandated separation of church and state.

It is time for Unitarian Universalists to assert and defend two basic principles underlying the American Constitution (1) the basic principle of freedom, that is the right of all human beings to follow a life of their choosing, as long as others are not harmed, and (2) the basic principle of inherent equal dignity of all human beings, which includes the right of all human beings to equal justice.

The Assembly also passed six Actions of Immediate Witness. These statements are calls to action presented by delegates and relate to pressing social concerns. The titles of the 2007 AIWs are:

- Support for the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Support Immigrant Families - Stop the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) Raids
- Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education Legislation
- Stop US Sponsored Torture – A Religious Call to Action
- Repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”
- Pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act with Transgender Inclusion and Protection

Transgender rights were a focus of the annual convention, beginning with the President’s report highlighting support congregations have offered transgender people who face discrimination in their local communities. The assembly offered a Responsive Resolution on Transgender Issues to recognize the need for anti-discrimination laws openly affirm support for transgender people.

The final texts of the 2007 Statement of Conscience, Actions of Immediate Witness, and Responsive Resolutions will be available on the UUA’s website within the next few days. Please check www.uua.org for complete details.

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