

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT ANNUAL MEETINGS FROM 1929

ANNUAL MEETINGS -1929

EDUCATION (Resolution 3)

That this Assembly affirms its support of a National System of Education, Free, Unsectarian and under Public Control. While welcoming any grouping or re-organisation of existing schools which will help to secure progress and efficiency in the education of the adolescent, it will strenuously oppose any sectarian Right of Entry or the giving of Building Grants to Denominational Schools.

DISARMAMENT (Resolution 4)

Holding that International Peace and Co-operation are a law and an ideal of our Religion, and convinced that the future safety and survival of the nations rest on the principle and practice of Arbitration, and not on the power of Armaments, this Assembly

- 1) wholeheartedly endorses Great Britain's ratification of the Kellogg Pact, and
- 2) urges the Government, in consistency with the Pact, to sign the Optional Clause of the Permanent Court of International Justice, and to carry through the policy of disarmament in agreement with other signatories, to the scale requisite for police purposes alone.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1930

PUBLIC EDUCATION

That this Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, whilst welcoming any extension of Public Education,

- a) declares once more its support of the principle that Education paid for wholly or in part by the State should be controlled by the State, and that building grants should be given only for premises owned by a public authority;
- b) maintains that in the proposed re-organisation of Elementary Education and the provision of senior schools for all, there should be no new facilities for sectarian teaching or ecclesiastical privilege, and especially that there should be no imposition of religious tests upon teachers in the employment of public bodies.

SOCIAL SERVICE (Resolution 15)

The General Assembly places on record its sense of the importance of Social Service and social study in our churches, and of co-operation with other Christian Churches in these matters. It therefore endorses and approves the efforts of the Union for Social Service, and its co-operation with the Christian Social Council, which represents all the churches in England.

It urges our churches to affiliate with the Union, and individual members to support it financially and personally, so that ultimately the denomination may have a Social Service Department worthy of it, and properly influential in the wider Christian Social Movement.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1931

GAMBLING (Resolution 2)

This meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches places on record its grave concern at the rapid increase in the practice of gambling in recent years, and especially the specious cloaking of such practice under the guise of ballots, lotteries and

sweepstakes organized in connection with hospitals and other charitable institutions and causes; and urges the churches, in order to strengthen their own hands in combating these evils, to refrain from raising money by raffles and other such means.

WORLD DISARMAMENT (Resolution 12)

This meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expects the forthcoming World Disarmament Conference to result in a real reduction of armies, navies and air forces. This meeting, therefore, calls upon H.M. Government to insist with courage and vigour that the Conference must succeed.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1932

LEAGUE OF NATIONS (Resolution 11)

That this meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its confidence in the League of Nations, and its cordial support of all efforts made by the Assembly of the League and by His Majesty's Government:

- a) To vindicate the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Pact of Paris;
- b) To effect a just settlement of issues that have arisen or may arise between Nations parties to the League, without resort to warlike measures;
- c) To effect a substantial reduction of the Armies, Navies and Air Forces of the world;
- d) And especially it desires strongly to support the proposals put forward by Italy and certain other nations at the Disarmament Conference to prohibit those armaments mainly used for aggressive purposes.

SWEEPSTAKES (Resolution 12)

This meeting etc., views with alarm the growth in the organization of sweepstakes, not only in connection with charitable objects, but in offices, shops and workshops; and it expresses the hope that the Government will do everything in its power to check the development of a habit which will impair the national character.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1933

LOTTERIES AND BETTING (Resolution 2)

That this meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches views with satisfaction the findings of the Royal Commission on Lotteries and Betting published in its Interim Report, and the consequent action of the Government. It re-affirms its conviction that the evils of gambling have become so widespread that drastic steps are necessary not only to prevent their further development but to diminish the growth of recent years. It expresses the hope that His Majesty's Government will do everything in its power to render lotteries and sweepstakes of every kind illegal, and particularly the practice of promoting them under the guise of supporting charitable objects; and it appeals to all benevolent institutions to decline to augment their funds by raffling or gambling in any form.

CENTENARY OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN BRITISH POSSESSIONS (Resolution 3)

That this meeting of the Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches desires to place on record its high appreciation of the efforts made by His Majesty's Government during the last ten years to secure official international machinery to bring about the abolition of slavery. It

congratulates His Majesty's Government on having now obtained the creation of such permanent organization with the official object of securing the total abolition of slavery in all its forms throughout the world.

In view of the recommendation of the League of Nations Slavery Committee, upon the need of creating and sustaining a vigilant public opinion, and of the fact that the creation of a Permanent Slavery Commission to secure world-abolition coincides with the Centenary of British Abolition, we urge upon our ministers to use their best endeavours in pulpit and otherwise to direct public attention to the widespread evils of slave-owning, slave-raiding and slave-trading, and to consider the advisability of utilizing a Sunday in July 1933, near to the death of Wilberforce on July 29, to emphasise the importance of this question.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (Resolution 4)

That this meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches records its sense of profound importance of taking every means approved by conscience to prevent war, recognizes the heroic stand for world peace made by war-resisters in all countries now suffering for conscience' sake in person, and urges His Majesty's Government, in view of the extremely grave situation in Europe and the Far East, to adopt every possible measure that will conduce to the peaceful settlement of international disputes, in accordance with the terms of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

MINORITY RIGHTS (Resolution 5)

- a) That this Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the continued failure on the part of Governments of several countries to respect and ensure the rights of minorities in their respective territories, to which they pledged themselves under the Peace Treaties; and especially protests against the treatment of the Jews by the present Government of Germany and its agents, as an offence against common human nature for which no difference of race or religion affords any justification or excuse.
- b) That copies of this resolution be sent to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the German Ambassador and the Press.

SOCIAL CENTRES FOR UNEMPLOYED (Resolution 6)

That this meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges its constituent members to foster and help in every possible way the social centres for the Unemployed, and refers the whole subject to the Committee of the Union for Social Service with a view to their making recommendations as to the methods by which such help should be given.

UNEMPLOYMENT (Resolution 7)

That this meeting of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, realizing the great moral and spiritual damage done by long-continued unemployment, over and above the merely physical suffering caused by a too low standard of life:

- Notes the Government's schemes for aiding social centers for the unemployed, and the 'Spend for Employment' campaigns in various local centres;
- Deplores the almost complete absence of constructive proposals for getting people to work again and maintaining their standard of life; the failure to distinguish between mere relief works (which are justly condemned) and necessary or desirable public works which enrich the whole community; and the continuance of so-called 'economies' which increase unemployment and further restrict the economic demand for the goods with which markets are glutted;

- Calls attention to the facts that large funds are lying idle and money for investment is cheap; that many thousands of workers in the building, engineering and other constructive trades are out of work; that there is still a vast need for housing and rehousing, as well as for other public works; and that the employment in these directions of the idle men and money would increase economic demand for goods and thereby give a stimulus to every other trade;
- Urges upon the Government that it should forthwith encourage, stimulate, and initiate constructive works on a large scale with this object in view; that all merely restrictive policies and 'economies' should cease; and that 'Spend for Employment' should be a slogan for municipal and other public authorities, with the urgent backing of the Government;
- And also urges upon the Government in the meantime to increase the present meagre allowances under the Means Test.

ANNUAL MEETINGS -1934

DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIPS (Resolution 1)

That this Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches declares its traditional regard for public order, personal liberty and freedom of thought, its unshaken belief that these can best be secured by a democratic form of government, and its strenuous opposition to all attempts to set up a form of dictatorship, by whatever section of the community they may be advocated; and calls upon His Majesty's Government to prevent the private arming of any section of the community.

THE GERMAN CHURCHES (Resolution 2)

That this Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian churches, sympathizing with the German people in their manifold distresses, and observing with profound concern the destruction of freedom of thought in Church and State, expresses its admiration for the courage of those who have chosen to suffer for their faith.

DISARMAMENT (Resolution 3)

That this Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, profoundly convinced that the people of every country in the world desire the establishment of lasting peace and justice, **DECLARES** its conviction that the continuation of competition in armaments must lead to a new war more devastating in its effects than any which mankind has known;

URGES upon the Government the necessity of continuing to work with other countries for a Disarmament Convention to be obtained, not by re-arming any nation, but by securing the limitation, reduction and inspection of the armaments of all nations;

and **BELIEVES** that this object can be secured by taking immediately the following steps:

- a) A re-affirmation of the obligation of mutual assistance against Agression contained in the Covenant and the Treaties of Lucarno.
- b) Consideration of the definition of Aggression in the spirit of the formula contained in the Revised Draft Convention laid before the Disarmament Conference.

This Assembly of Churches therefore pledges its wholehearted support to the enlightenment of public opinion in sympathy with this policy.

PRIVATE MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF ARMS (Resolution 4)

That this Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, believing that the system of private manufacture and sale of armaments in the pursuit of private profit is contrary to the

public interest and to international peace, urgently calls upon the Government to take such measures as may bring this system to an end.

INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES (Resolution 5)

In view of the fact that there is an International Court of Justice and the Council of the League of Nations to which disputes between nations can be referred, and believing that all international disputes can now be solved by these, we of the Christian Churches cannot take part in or support any war in contravention of the Covenant of the League and the Pact of Paris.

GAMBLING (Resolution 6)

That this Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, deeply conscious of the growing evil of Gambling, which is inimical alike to Church and Nation, welcomes the Betting and Lotteries Bill introduced by His Majesty's Government as a substantial measure of social reform.

INCITEMENT TO DISAFFECTION BILL (Resolution 7)

That this Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon the Government to withdraw the Incitement to Disaffection Bill, in view of the grave menace to civil and religious liberty involved in its provisions.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1936

UNEMPLOYMENT (Resolution 9)

That in the view of the persisting magnitude of unemployment in this country, with its consequent waste of the nation's resources and its most serious effect on the lives of the unemployed, particularly during the period of youth, this Assembly particularly deplores the tragedy of the Special Areas, and urges the Government to mobilize the whole resources of the nation to deal with unemployment and to adopt emergency measures that will ensure immediate work, maintenance and self-respect to everyone.

THE EDUCATION BILL (Resolution 10)

That this Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the proposals in the Education Bill to raise the school-leaving age to fifteen years, but regrets the inclusion therein of so many exemptions, which in practice may nullify the effect of these proposals. It considers that the minimum leaving age should be definitely fixed at fifteen, with the provision of maintenance benefits where necessary. It trusts the Government will not yield to the demands of the authorities of non-provided schools for grants to be made without adequate public control over the appointment of teachers.

THE MENACE OF GAMBLING (Resolution 11)

That this Assembly views with deep concern the growth of gambling among all classes in recent years, which must act, in an ever-increasing degree, as a disintegrating force in the moral character of the nation, and in its social and economic life.

While strongly of opinion that the machinery of the State should be fully used in restricting the facilities for carrying on the business of betting and gambling, and particularly in the drastic curtailment of the dissemination by advertisement and circulars of inducements to gamble, this Assembly recognizes that there is also an urgent call upon the religious forces of the country to arouse the national conscience to a deeper realization of the dangers of this growing evil in all

its manifestations, and urges the churches to use their utmost endeavour to create an informed public opinion upon the moral and social wrong of gambling.

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION (Resolution 12)

That this Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, having learned with profound shame, of the collapse of Ethiopia, as a result of the barbarous invasion by Italy, and deprecating in the strongest terms all breaches of treaties freely negotiated, calls upon the Government to base its policy strictly on moral, as distinct from nationalist, considerations, and to use its influence in framing the policy of the League of Nations upon the same principles. This Assembly further pledges itself to support the peace forces of this country and of the international Peace campaign in efforts for the repair of the disaster and for the establishment of peace based not upon the spirit of nationalism but upon the common good of the peoples of the world.

ARMAMENTS (Resolution 13)

That this Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches affirms its profound abhorrence of war, views with grave concern the world-wide increase of armaments, and is of the opinion that through the League of Nations His Majesty's Government should take the lead in summoning without delay an International Conference to deal with the economic and other factors which are responsible for this, such as the necessity for access to raw materials and to markets, and for the migration of people from thickly populated countries, with a view to arriving at an international agreement which will remove from nations the incentive to pile up armaments and will contribute to a better understanding among the nations.

PEACE (Resolution 14 – submitted by the Peace Fellowship)

Convinced that all war is not only a crime against humanity but a colossal folly, and that peace can never be secured by arms, we, Delegates and Ministers of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, definitely refuse to take part in or support war of any kind, as only under the sanctions of truth and love is it possible finally to establish right relations between the peoples of the world.

We therefore, pledge ourselves to individual consecration in the building of world order on that basis.

ANNUAL MEETINGS -1938

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 8)

That this Annual Meeting of ministers and delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, regarding civil and religious liberty as our most precious heritage, views with concern and dismay the widespread curtailment of freedom by State and Bureaucracy. We desire to reaffirm our belief in personal liberty and religious freedom as the only foundation for the peaceful and orderly development of mankind. Recognizing our duty to the State as the upholder and supporter of corporate life, we regard persecution and religious and racial discrimination as disruptive and long discredited methods, the issue of which can only be moral and cultural deterioration in every country that pursues them.

We therefore urge His Majesty's Government to restore all traditional liberties and to use their influence with other Governments with which they have negotiations, to extend such liberties to their peoples and those under their authority.

POOL BETTING (Resolution 9)

That this Annual Meeting of ministers and delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian churches, believing that the widespread and increasing growth of Pool Betting is a danger to the moral health of the country:-

- a) Urges the churches to undertake an educational campaign on the subject, and to encourage in every way the provision of alternative outlets for the instincts which at present find expression in gambling;
- b) Requests the Government to press forward with effective legislation for the purpose of curbing the evils inherent in the Pool Betting system.

ANNUAL MEETINGS -1940

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE (Resolution 10)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, in session at a time of unexampled crisis in the history of civilization, solemnly reaffirms its conviction of the supreme importance for mankind of those principles of human freedom to which, in the name of religion, these churches have borne continual witness. We recognize that these principles are at stake in the present international conflict, and we declare our satisfaction that in the face of national peril the freedom of the individual conscience and judgment is being maintained. We urge upon all our Ministers and congregations the sacred duty of preserving this ideal undimmed in their relationships one with another, despite all conscientious differences of conviction, so that our loyalty to the name of religious liberty may be steadfast in our day and generation.

INTERNATIONAL ORDER (Resolution 11)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, having repeatedly in former years declared the conviction that the resort to war is the supreme evidence of Man's failure to acknowledge the obligations of brotherhood and the power of reason and good-will, expresses its earnest desire that at the earliest appropriate moment steps shall be taken, in co-operation with other nations, to establish an international order which will ensure the liberty of peoples, respect for law, and the maintenance of peace in Europe.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1941

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 12)

That this Annual Meeting of ministers and delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches reaffirms its traditional belief in the principles of "Civil and Religious Liberty the World Over."

THE FOUNDATIONS OF PEACE (Resolution 13)

That this Annual Meeting of ministers and delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches adopts the Manifesto, which appeared in "The Times" newspaper of 21st December 1940, over the signatures of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Archbishop of Westminster and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, which Manifesto sets forth the following five principles for the ordering of international life:

- (i) The assurance to all nations of their right to life and independence;
- (ii) The deliverance of the nations from the slavery imposed upon them by armaments and from the danger that material force, instead of serving to protect the right, may become the overbearing master;
- (iii) The establishment of a juridical institution which shall guarantee the loyal and faithful fulfillment of agreements and, in case of recognized need, their revision and correction;
- (iv) The adjustment of the real needs and just demands of nations and populations and racial minorities as occasion may require;
- (v) The development among peoples and their rulers of that sense of responsibility which weighs human statutes according to the sacred and inviolable standards of the laws of God;

And which Manifesto also sets forth the following five standards for the ordering of the economic life of this and other nations:

- (i) The abolition of the extreme inequality in wealth and possessions;
- (ii) The granting to every child of equal opportunity of education;
- (iii) The safeguarding of the family as a social unit;
- (iv) The restoration of the sense of a divine vocation to man's daily work;
- (v) The utilization of the resources of the earth as God's gifts to the whole human race;

And this Assembly affirms the belief that the acceptance of these principles and standards, added to the restoration and maintenance of the fullest measure of civil and religious liberty here and elsewhere will, on the conclusion of the present hostilities, form the true basis for a lasting peace.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1942

THE FOOD BLOCKADE OF EUROPE (Resolution 12)

That this Annual Meeting of Delegates etc., being profoundly disturbed by the acknowledged facts concerning the growth of famine conditions in certain of the enemy-occupied countries, recognizes the complexity of the problem of affording relief, yet respectfully urges upon His Majesty's Government that the measures already taken in favour of the peoples of Greece should be applied, under all possible safeguards based upon the experience of the former European War, to the other populations also, in order to mitigate the terrible evils resulting from long-continued conditions of famine.

A Resolution on **RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN DAY SCHOOLS** was referred to the Council for consideration. As a result the Council adopted it in the following shortened form:-

That this meeting of the Council welcomes the desire for better and more efficient teaching of religious knowledge in public elementary schools, and the aim of achieving it by the use of agreed syllabuses of religious instruction and the adequate training of teachers for the purpose, provided that the following principles be observed:-

- a) that no teachers be required to give religious instruction against their own desires;
- b) that there be no doctrinal or denominational tests for teachers who are willing to give religious instruction;
- c) that there be no right of entry by ministers of any denomination into provided schools, and that no religious catechism or formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught in such schools.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1943

FAMINE CONDITIONS IN EUROPE (Resolution 12)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches express profound concern regarding the food situation in the occupied countries of Europe. We recognize that famine conditions threaten the lives of millions, both Allies and neutrals, even more than enemies. We rejoice that the military, political and technical difficulties have so far been overcome as to permit entry through the blockade of limited supplies to the heroic people of Greece, and we urge H.M. Government, provided that there is reasonable grounds for hope that such supplies will reach those for whom they are intended, to use all practical measures to save lives and earn the gratitude of other suffering peoples of Europe.

PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS (Resolution 13)

That this Annual Meeting, of Ministers and Delegates etc., viewing with profound concern the persecution of the Jews, welcomes the recent declaration by the United Nations and pledges full support for any steps that H.M. Government can take to give practical expression to its contents. In particular we regard the alleviation of the refugee situation in Spain and Portugal as an urgent necessity, and respectfully urge H.M. Government to consider:-

- a) the establishment of a camp of temporary asylum in North Africa, in co-operation with the U.S authorities;
- b) the extension of facilities for the entry of Jewish refugees into this country and other parts of the Empire, having due regard to matters of security;
- c) the possibility of a declaration by the United Nations to the effect that they are prepared to regard the rehabilitation of refugees as a primary concern in the post-war programme.

An Addendum to this Resolution was introduced and, after amendment, was carried as follows:- That this Annual Meeting etc., strongly condemns the growth of Anti-Semitism in Great Britain, and calls on H.M. Government to take action against any persons who makes false and malicious statements against the Jews.

THE BEVERIDGE REPORT (Resolution 14)

A Resolution submitted by the Council was amended after discussion and carried in the following form:

That this Meeting etc., welcomes the Beveridge Report as a valuable contribution to the problem of "Freedom from Want" in the post-war world. It therefore urges the Government:

- a) to accept without reservation the principles embodied in the Beveridge Plan;
- b) as an earnest of its intentions, to establish immediately a Ministry of Social Security, armed with all the power necessary for making full preparation to carry the Report into effect.

INDIA (Resolution 15)

A Resolution submitted by Rev. J.W. Lee was carried after amendment as follows:-

That this Annual Meeting etc., while recognizing the efforts the Government have made and the exceeding difficulty of the Indian problem, would urge upon the Government the wisdom of re-opening negotiations with responsible leaders.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1944

CIVIL LIBERTIES (Resolution 11)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, reaffirms its fundamental belief in freedom as the inalienable right of all men, without which there can be no true progress either in religion or in the social and political structure of the State.

Whilst recognizing that freedom is impossible except under the rule of law, and that control by planning may be necessary and desirable to secure adequate physical conditions of well-being, it records its conviction that the test of every plan must be the extent to which it seeks to awaken and develop the consciousness of individual responsibility, and to increase the opportunities for independent initiative and self-government.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF PEACE (Resolution 12)

That this Annual Meeting, etc., recalls with confidence and hope the declaration of the Atlantic Charter in August 1941, wherein were set forth the basic principles upon which the peoples of the world might build an enduring peace, and expresses the conviction that the realization of this hope is dependant upon the application of such principles to all countries.

TEMPERANCE LEGISLATION (Resolution13)

That in view of the fact that grave moral evils are notoriously accentuated by the widespread use of intoxicants, especially among young people, this Annual Meeting etc., urges upon H.M. Government:-

- a) That the nation should accept responsibility, through the Ministries of Health and Education, for instructing youth in the nature of alcohol and the perils of alcoholic indulgence;
- b) That there should be in town and country, recreational centres and canteens from which intoxicating liquors are excluded;
- c) That the supply of essential foodstuffs to brewers should be curtailed;
- d) That there should be adequate control in all registered clubs;
- e) That the Colonial Office should set up a section to check the menace of alcoholism in territories concerned, and the Government should play its full part in all international action against alcoholism.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1945

THE BASIS OF AN ENDURING PEACE (Resolution 11)

That this Annual Meeting etc., affirms the belief that the establishment of a world-order free from insecurity, injustice and war, calls for spiritual, economic and political reconstruction, subordinating sectional interests to the common well-being of all peoples.

It urges that every possible step be taken to extend relief to the liberated populations in their necessity, in recognition of the fact that we are members one of another.

It affirms that moral values must prevail in national and international policies if the sacrifices of this war are to prevent further devastating conflict and social disintegration.

It affirms the urgent need of such international agreement as will encourage economic co-operation and the supremacy of law among the nations, secure relief from the menace and burden of expanding armaments in the post war world, and lay the foundations of an enduring peace.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1946

THE MENACE OF STARVATION (Resolution 11)

That this Annual Meeting of ministers and delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, realizing that many regions of the world are threatened with famine unless adequate relief measures be speedily put into operation, recognizes that H. M. Government have already brought some relief to stricken populations, but urges that further vigorous and effective steps be taken, either alone or in co-operation with other Governments, to ensure that relief be provided without delay.

We appeal to the Government to give full publicity to the tragic facts of the food situation in Europe and elsewhere, and to cause films to be prepared for this purpose.

We appreciate the fact that adequate relief measures may involve additional rationing in this country for a time. We urge that there be a reduction in the amount of grain allowed for brewing, that if necessary some further reduction be made in our food stocks, and that facilities be afforded for individuals to sacrifice food for the benefit of others whose need is extreme.

THE SPREAD OF BETTING AND GAMBLING (Resolution 12)

That this Annual Meeting, etc., views with deep concern the continued growth of organized gambling practices, particularly betting on football matches and greyhound racing, with their inevitable effects of moral and social disintegration. We therefore urge:-

That our ministers make the question of gambling a matter of special concern, and that they instruct their congregations, particularly their young people, in the ethics of gambling and the right use of money.

- a) That our congregations seriously consider whether, in the raising of money for church funds, it is not a duty to refrain from the use of all practices which might encourage the habit of gambling,
- b) That H.M. Government maintain the war-time restrictions on gambling practices, curtail present facilities and incentives to gambling, tighten up the administration of the laws relating to lotteries, gaming and betting, and prohibit the publication of betting news in the press.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1947

INTERNATIONAL UNITY (Resolution 10)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates, recognizing that if there should be a third world war the magnitude of the disaster to civilization would be incalculable, records the conviction that international efforts to prevent war, while more than ever demanding the support of churches, cannot alone achieve their end. The supreme need of the world is an enlightened religious faith applied to every problem of man's common life, in acknowledgement of the principles of divine sonship and human brotherhood. The churches must clarify their own fundamental beliefs, eliminating outworn and irrelevant dogmas, and must with a new sincerity respond to the insistent challenge of our time, making every effort to embody in practical service the universal laws of righteousness and love.

BETTING AND GAMBLING (Resolution 11)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates appeals with renewed emphasis to every minister, Sunday School teacher and church member to consider most earnestly the moral and social disintegration that is spreading through all classes of society as a result of the vast extension of facilities for betting and gambling, including the alarming growth of the football pools: to recognize that this is an urgent moral problem of individual and social life, and one on which every religious movement should pronounce in clear and decisive terms: to study the ethical implications of the habit of betting and gambling, to instruct the younger generation

especially concerning its evil roots and disastrous effects upon individual character and social well-being: and to eliminate from our church activities every concession to the gambling spirit.

PRISONERS OF WAR (Emergency resolution 12)

That this Annual Meeting views with strong disapproval the continued retention of 300,000 prisoners of war in England, and would beg H. M. Government to revoke its decision not to accept the Allied Control Council's recommendation to increase the repatriation figure.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1948

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND SPEECH (Resolution 8)

That this Annual Meeting of ministers and delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, deeply concerned at the fact that the fundamental principles of personal freedom are being violently and progressively attacked in the modern world, re-affirms the unalterable conviction that these principles are vital to all human well-being and progress.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1949

WORLD FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (Resolution 9)

That this Annual Meeting of ministers and delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches asks the churches to consider the plan for World Federal Government sponsored by Lord Beveridge and Sir John Boyd Orr, and also asks all Unitarians to consider participation next year in the election of delegates to the constituent assembly for drafting the constitution.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1950

INTERNATIONAL CONTROL OF ATOMIC WEAPONS (Resolution 8)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Churches, recognizing that the construction of the hydrogen bomb and other forms of mass warfare is caused chiefly by the "cold war" now being waged between East and West, records its conviction that the first duty of all peoples is to end this deadlock. It records its conviction that the common man in every country, no matter under what economic system he earns his livelihood, has no desire to engage in this fratricidal conflict either on behalf of economic theories or national imperialisms. It therefore calls upon the common man everywhere to pursue peace and to urge upon his government policies of peace. To this end this Assembly is of the opinion that international control of atomic energy through the United Nations Organisation is immediately necessary, and that the first steps should be the achievement of such control among the nations which have already agreed in principle thereto, and a fresh and persistent effort to obtain agreement on this point with Russia and other nations not yet in accord. The Assembly affirms its bond of unity with all men everywhere, and pledges itself to strive for that unity with undiminished faith and conviction.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 9)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, facing a world in which the lamps of personal liberty are once more being extinguished, and seeing the growing danger from the totalitarianism of the State on the

one hand, and of the Church on the other, asserts its unquenchable belief in the need for civil and religious liberty the world over, that the spirit of man unconfined, may attain its appointed destiny.

ANNUAL MEETING - 1951

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 10)

'That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches observes with grave concern the general indifference to personal liberty at a time when it is threatened by the growing power of governments and by the spread of ecclesiastical authoritarianism, and affirming its unfaltering faith in the value of human personality pledges itself to serve with renewed devotion the cause of civil and religious liberty the world over.'

WORLD CO-OPERATION (Resolution 12)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches approves any initiative His Majesty's Government may make towards the establishment of European or Atlantic political and economic co-operation; and urges His Majesty's Government to miss no opportunity to secure a settlement in the Far East satisfactory to all the peoples concerned, and to do everything in its power to bridge the gap between East and West, as the first step towards the attainment of world co-operation.

PEACE PACT (Resolution 13)

'That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, in order to fulfill the hope cherished by the peoples of the world whatever be their view of the causes that have brought about the danger of a world war; and in order to strengthen peace and safeguard international security; urges the conclusion of a pact of peace between the five Great Powers: the United States of America, the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic, Great Britain and France.
We call upon all peace-loving peoples to support the demand for this pact of peace, which should be open to all countries.'

ANNUAL MEETING - 1952

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 10)

'That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches desires to record anew its unabated attachment to the cause of civil and religious liberty which is increasingly endangered or violated in these times, and pledges itself to uphold that cause vigilantly by deliberate and sustained endeavour.'

RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING (Resolution 13)

'That this Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches believing that very many of the British public would welcome a more liberal interpretation of Christianity than that at present broadcast, appeals to the governors of the B.B.C. to allow the Unitarian Church more opportunity to present its approach to religion.'

NATIVE PEOPLES OF S.W. AFRICA (Resolution 14)

'That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches gives all moral support to the Rev. Michael Scott in his brave championship of the rights of the native peoples of South-West Africa; deplores the antagonism shown by the Government of the Union of South Africa; and calls upon HM Government to abandon the neutrality displayed at the meeting of the United Nations when the matter last came under discussion.'

ANNUAL MEETING - 1953

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (Resolution 10)

'That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches desires to record its conviction that all sports which cause unnecessary suffering to animals should be condemned; and that, while it does not express an opinion on the issue of vivisection it does assert that such experiments should be undertaken only when no other course is open; that in all cases the least possible suffering should be inflicted on the animals concerned; and that the number of government inspectors should be increased in some proportion to the increase in the number of experimental laboratories since the passing of the Cruelty to Animals Act in 1876.'

ANNUAL MEETING - 1955

THE COLOUR PROBLEM (Resolution 12)

'That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the recent apartheid activities of the Union of South Africa, which it holds are contrary to the principles of Christianity and the Declaration of Human Rights. It is of the opinion that a continuation of this policy will not only fail to bring about any satisfactory relationship between the various races in the Union but may lead to inter-racial conflict which is unlikely to be confined to South Africa alone.

The Assembly therefore, urges the Government of the Union of South Africa to give further consideration to all aspects of the colour problems in a spirit of toleration and goodwill, and also calls the attention of our own people to the need to consider the colour problem in Great Britain and to establish understanding and goodwill toward the coloured people in our midst.'

THE HYDROGEN BOMB (Resolution 13)

'That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, realizing the appallingly destructive powers of the Atom and Hydrogen bombs, and realising also the genetic disaster which may possibly occur to future generations through their use, urges the members of its various churches to work and pray with greater intensity than ever before for the healing of national animosities and the encouragement of peaceful co-existence leading on to peaceful co-operation between all the peoples of the world'.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1956

THE DEATH PENALTY (Resolution 11)

‘That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports the growing demand for the Abolition of Capital Punishment believing it to be an eminently humane and reasonable reform which cannot but promote the community’s sense of the supreme value of human personality.’

ANNUAL MEETING - 1957

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 12)

‘That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches mindful of the struggles of our forefathers in the faith, and seeking to uphold the fundamental principle of divine sonship and human brotherhood, reaffirms its unwavering conviction that all social advance, national and international, should be of such a character as to secure and extend civil and religious liberty the world over.’

ATOM AND HYDROGEN BOMBS (Resolution 13)

‘That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches without expressing any opinion on the wisdom or otherwise of retaining Atom and Hydrogen bombs in its possession, or of threatening their use under certain circumstances, urges HM Government to refrain from any further explosions with these weapons, in view of the consequent risk of grave peril to the health and sanity of future generations of humanity on earth.’

ANNUAL MEETING - 1958

A CALL TO FREEDOM (Resolution 10)

That whereas the Ministers and Congregations of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches have received and had opportunity to consider *A Call to Freedom*, the Ministers and Delegated here assembled affirm their conviction that the liberal faith of the Unitarian and Free Christian movement has a duty to seek freedom from the fear which grips the world, as an invaluable contribution to the resolution of the issues of war and peace in this atomic age and therefore pledge themselves, by self-examination and by careful study of these issues, to seek an alternative to war, and, God helping, vindicate their Christian faith in the love of God and the service of man.

ANNUAL MEETING - 1960

STATEMENTS ON PUBLIC MATTERS (Resolution 12)

‘That whereas in these momentous times great issues develop rapidly and whereas the Unitarian voice should be heard as each new situation is faced, this Annual Meeting of the Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly requests Council to find means of making public statements on behalf of the Assembly as each situation arises’.

ANNUAL MEETING - 1961

FREE WIRELESS AND TELEVISION LICENCES (Resolution 12)

In view of the large and increasing number of solitary and lonely old people whose Pension or Public Assistance Allowance provides for only the basic necessities of living, and in view of the incalculable boon that wireless and television can be to give them a window on the world and save them from self-centred isolation....this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches petitions Her Majesty's Postmaster General to take steps to issue Free Wireless and Television Licences to all persons of pensionable age who fulfil the following conditions:-

- i. That they live alone or with no-one who is not also of pensionable age.
- ii. That such persons living alone or together shall severally or jointly, have no private income and be solely dependent upon their State Pension and/or Allowances from the National Assistance Board.
- iii. That the only regular income of the household comprising one or more persons shall derive from the said pensions and/or allowances.

ANNUAL MEETING - 1963

TOWARDS A QUAKER VIEW OF SEX (Resolution 12)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches considering it essential for religious liberals to give their continuing attention to changing moral standards, commends to its member groups and churches, for their sympathetic consideration the recent booklet *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, published by the Home Service Committee of the Society of Friends.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (Resolution 13)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches affirms and proclaims the right of every man and woman, in every country, to dignity and freedom under the rule of law; and calls on all members and congregations of all Unitarian and Free Christian Churches to support and strengthen, by all the means in their power, the efforts of Amnesty International to liberate, protect, and comfort the world's prisoners of conscience, their families and their dependants.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (Resolution 14)

We, the Ministers and Delegates at the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, declare that the law should clearly state that it is an offence to exercise discrimination by refusing, withholding from, or denying to any other person, facilities or advantages in accommodation, employment or entertainment, on the grounds of colour, race, or religion of that person, or to incite publicly, contempt or hatred of any person or persons because of their colour, race or religion.

We urge the Government to enact the Bill No. 57, *The Racial Discrimination and Incitement Act, 1963* sponsored by all parties, now before the House of Commons.

ANNUAL MEETING - 1964

UN INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION YEAR (Resolution 12)

'That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the decision of the United Nations to designate 1965 as International Co-operation Year and its call upon Government and Voluntary Agencies to foster programmes of support.

It urges congregations to participate in this effort in 1965 by making international co-operation the focus point of services, meetings and social gatherings.

It suggests that churches and individuals should meet this as a challenge to make themselves aware of racial problems in their midst and should make contact with people of other nationalities in the hope that they may reach a better understanding of each other's way of life.'

INTER-DENOMINATIONAL CO-OPERATION (Resolution C)

This Annual Meeting of the General Assembly affirms that the only acceptable basis of inter-denominational co-operation is a willingness to work together for the good purposes which the churches can achieve together. It therefore views with concern the present basis of membership of the British Council of Churches and the current attempts to make this basis dogmatic, and affirms the General Assembly's willingness to continue as a member only on a liberal basis or under the Fisher Addendum.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION – admission of Mr Williams to the UK

The Rev. ED Davies (London), seconded by the Rev. GW Parkinson (Scarborough), moved an emergency resolution urging the Home Secretary to admit to this country the South African carpenter, Mr Williams and his family. Some doubted whether sufficient facts were known about the matter for the delegates to come to a decision, but the Rev John Kielty was quickly on his feet with details of the case and was strongly of the opinion that this was a matter on which the Assembly could declare its mind. The resolution was carried.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1965

CIVIL LIBERTY (Resolution 16)

'That this meeting of the General Assembly and Unitarian Free Christian Churches re-affirms its belief in Civil Liberty – in the right of every citizen to the free expression of religious and political convictions in speech and writing (excepting only the deliberate fanning of racial or sectarian hatred).

It calls on Her Majesty's Government to express to all governments concerned its strong disapproval of the imprisonment of any citizen on grounds of religious heresy or pacific political opposition.

It also sends a message of sympathy and congratulation to all those, of whatever country, sect or party, who are suffering for conscience's sake'.

INTENSIVE FARMING (Resolution 18)

'That this Annual Meeting of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches taking note of the widespread public concern caused by intensive farming methods in this country calls on the Government to strengthen the rights of all animals or poultry to reasonable access to sunlight and free movement'.

CIVIL RIGHTS (Emergency Resolution)

'This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches in Britain, at its 1965 meeting in Swansea, sends heartfelt greeting to the Unitarian Universalist Association of America. British Unitarians express their fraternal pride at the valiant contributions made by their co-religionists to the cause of civil rights for all American citizens. Their pride is mingled with distress at the human cost involved in this eager witness, which has not flinched from the acceptance of danger and death in all the racial anger and civil turmoil. They remember with special pride and sadness the passing of the Rev. James Reeb, so angrily attacked by those who hated his principles and so proudly and affectionately remembered by his fellow-Unitarians. Well aware that these British Isles are not free from some of the dark problems of racial prejudice, and acknowledging that Unitarians are false to their historic heritage if they neglect the demands of civic and racial tolerance, this Assembly of British Unitarians, as it meets in this ancient and proud land of Wales, takes heart from the passionate concern of Unitarians in America for the full flowering of racial, civic, intellectual and religious freedom throughout the world and for the rights of all peoples to the free and fair determination of their destinies 'in all boldness, none forbidding them'.

Encouraged by the vigorous progress of the Unitarian movement in America, Unitarians in Britain resolve upon every endeavour to find fresh and relevant ways of combining religious faith with the fullest intellectual freedom and the keenest social conscience’.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1967

UNITARIAN VIEW (Resolution 9)

‘This Assembly recognizes the importance of the expression of a Unitarian view on major social issues, and instructs the Council to authorize the Social Services Committee to make statements in the name of the Committee (but not of the Assembly) on any matters which it considers to be of public importance’.

(Resolution 9 addition) ‘And further recognises the importance of not allowing ourselves to be isolated from the life and social structure of the community in which our churches are situated, and to this end urges as a matter of accepted policy that our churches, both strong and weak, welcome and support such opportunities as there are to become actively involved in the social, educational and cultural structure of the neighbourhood in which each church is situated’.

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 12)

‘That this Annual Meeting...welcomes the decision of the United Nations to designate 1968 as Human Rights Year. It reaffirms the Unitarian concern to uphold the principles of political and religious freedom and calls upon congregations to give wholehearted support to the programme of the United Kingdom National Committee for Human Rights Year in their locality’.

VIETNAM (Resolution 13)

‘That this Annual Meeting...shares the deep concern of the American Unitarian Universalist Association about the war in Vietnam, and, along with the majority of the members of the UUA, supports the policy put forward by U Thant, General Secretary of the United Nations, which calls for further initiative, by both sides, to end the war’.

ANNUAL MEETING - 1968:

SOCIAL SECURITY (Resolution 10)

‘That this Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon HM Government urgently to rationalize the present social security provisions for the long term sick and the permanently disabled, to accept disablement as a category of being for which social provision should be made, and to recognize that financial security as well as the total range of rehabilitative and community services is essential to the integration of the disabled into the community. It believes that this pressure on badly needed hospital beds will be alleviated, by helping the disabled and chronic sick to live in the community, effecting not only a saving of public money, but also a meaningful life for those whose refuge from poverty must now be the socially and economically expensive hospital place. Conscious that the poor and sick suffer first and most acutely during periods of financial stringency, it urges immediate relief be afforded this section of the community.’

DOMESTIC MISSIONS (Resolution 11)

‘That this Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches requests the Council to report on ways in which support can be given to domestic missions and other churches situated in areas of particular need.’

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1970

WORLD DEVELOPMENT (Resolution 10)

'That this General Assembly, recognizing the rising concern for World Development among churches and other agencies and the urgent responsibility which lies with rich nations like our own, instructs the Council of the Assembly to set up and adequately finance an Action for World Development Committee, to be directly responsible to the Council for promoting education and worship among Unitarians which will lead to action for world development.'

ENVIRONMENT (Resolution 11)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognizing the urgency of concerted action to help conserve and improve the quality of our environment, welcomes the action of those countries, including our own, which have designated 1970 "European Conservation Year"; and urges its constituent churches to do whatever lies in their power to bring about an awareness of the implications of European Conservation Year. In particular, churches are asked to become involved in a consideration of local problems of conservation and to discuss the wider implications at national and international level.'

CIVIL LIBERTIES (Emergency Resolution)

'That this Assembly, recognizing the growing threat to the liberty of the individual citizen, and recalling our traditional witness to "Civil and Religious Liberty", asks that the denomination affiliate and urges all our churches and fellowships to affiliate and Unitarians throughout the country to give all possible support to the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES'.

ANNUAL MEETING - 1971

IMMIGRATION BILL (Emergency Resolution)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches meeting in Birmingham views with grave concern the effect that the Immigration Bill 1971, if enacted in its present form, will have on the liberty and dignity of immigrants in the United Kingdom. It therefore prays the High Court of Parliament to make such amendments to the Bill as will ensure for those immigrants basic human rights.'

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1972

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES (Resolution 15)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches reaffirms its affiliation to the National Council for Civil Liberties and asks the General Assembly to appoint representatives to attend general meetings of the NCCL and report regularly to the Assembly on the publications and policies of the NCCL.'

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1973

HOMOSEXUALITY (Resolution 12)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches set aside a considerable period of discussion in the General Assembly meetings in 1974 on the subject of homosexuality, and to this end ask the General Assembly Council to appoint a study group to produce a report in time to be circulated before next year's General Assembly in order to educate those associated with our churches particularly those involved with the young.'

RHODESIA (Emergency Resolution)

'That this Annual Meeting of the General Assembly deplores the detention order served on Mr Peter Nieswand and his secret trial and sentence. It also protests at the treatment of other

detainees in Rhodesia, and urges Her Majesty's Government to redouble its efforts to bring pressure upon the Rhodesian Government to enact measures in defence of human rights.'

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1974

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 11)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of its traditional concerns for the freedom of the individual conscience and for the cause of civil and religious liberty, expresses grave anxiety at the present epidemic level of torture throughout the world, and supports the current campaign of Amnesty International, and directs Council to officially contact the British Section and to seek its advice as to how this Assembly can actively support the anti-torture campaign.'

AFFIRMATION COURTS (Resolution 13)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches is of the opinion that people who wish to affirm rather than take an oath in a Court of Law should not be required by a Judge or Magistrate to declare their religious beliefs and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to take the necessary steps to achieve this end'.

HOMOSEXUALITY (Resolution 14)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches in view of the Report on Homosexuality presented to this Assembly and especially of the 'suggested remedies' in that document directs Council to set up a committee which shall examine the ways and means of implementing these suggestions within the denomination'.

ANNUAL MEETING - 1975

WORLD TRADE (Resolution 12)

'That this meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges all its members and associate churches

1. to acquaint themselves with the facts of the world food situation;
2. to press for the reduction of waste and the simplification of the production and consumption of food;
3. to urge HM Government to pay fair prices for products from developing countries (such as tea, cotton and copper) so that they can finance their own agricultural improvement programmes'.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1976

AMENDMENT OF SCOTTISH LAW ON MARRIAGE (Resolution 15)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches petitions HM Government to provide parliamentary time and support for the amendment of Scottish Law on marriage, so as to recognise non-Christian religious leaders on equal status with Christian, as recommended in the Kilbrandon Report of 1969'.

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 17)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches being mindful of its history and of its declared concern for human rights believes that in all issues of human association or community a claim to conscientious objection should be recognised and respected. It notes with dismay several cases recently where the so-called 'closed shop' principle has seriously threatened such claims and impresses upon HM Government its deep concern should such 'closed shops' be made legally enforceable. It further supports all members of its affiliated

congregations who choose to refrain from membership of such 'closed shops' on grounds of religious conviction.'

VIOLENCE (Resolution 18)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches asks the Social Responsibility Department to consider offering advice to help our churches in any way to exert an influence to reduce vandalism and violence in our society.'

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1977

OPEN MINISTRY-GAY RIGHTS (Resolution 14)

'That this General Assembly etc., resolves that the Ministry of this Denomination be open to all regardless of sex, race, colour or sexual orientation.'

HOMOSEXUALITY (Resolution 15)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches declares its abhorrence of discrimination solely on the basis of sexual orientation and directs Council to implement the fourth recommendation of the Study Group report presented to the Assembly at Liverpool in 1975, which was: "to bring liberalising pressures to bear on those public bodies where discrimination against the homosexual still persists".'

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 16)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches views with concern those parts of the Criminal Law Bill which seek to restrict the right to trial by jury; is totally opposed to the provision which would deny this right in cases concerning assault on the police; and instructs the General Secretary to communicate these views to the Home Secretary'.

ONE WORLD (Resolution 18)

'That this Meeting of the General Assembly etc., aware of the need for education for World Development and convinced that more should be done to secure our churches' and members' support for regular and serious study of the changing world, commends the 'One World Week' Programme to the Denomination and urges the Assembly, through its District Associations and Congregations to provide suitable financial support'.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS (Resolution 20)

'That this Annual Meeting of the General Assembly, etc., taking cognizance of the fact that women are now recognised as possessing equal rights and status with men and further, being aware that certain churches, trusts and committees of churches do not yet accord such rights or status to women members of their congregations, believes that such discrimination should cease and that women should henceforth, in all cases, be eligible for office or membership on church trusts and committees and, furthermore, that trustees and congregations should take action to bring their constitutions and rules into line with this resolution'.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1978

ALCOHOLISM (Resolution 2)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, perturbed by the increase in drinking and alcoholism among young people, supports the intention of the Government to survey the advertising of the Drink Trade with a view to the curtailing of undesirable aspects of such advertising which seeks to suggest to young people that alcoholic drinking increases sexual attraction, sports prowess and social well-being. It further urges the implementation of the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Licensing that every child should be given instruction concerning the scientific facts about the

effects of alcohol on the human body, based on information already provided by the Department of Education and Science.'

PEACE (Resolution 3)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognising that the United Nations has designated the nineteen-seventies as a Decade of Disarmament and as a Second UN Development Decade, welcoming the UN Special Session on Disarmament to be held in May this year, and noting that the nations of the world including many of the Third World, are spending huge sums on arms and weapon development, is of the opinion that the international traffic in arms is in direct contradiction to the aims of the United Nations, contrary to the best interests of all peoples, especially those in poorer countries, and results in the wholesale distortion of science, technology and industry, urges the British Government to bring under full government control all sales of armaments from this country, while concentrating on securing a new international economic order, which shall guarantee fair terms of trade to developing countries and promote the social and peaceful use of the world's resources.'

RACISM (Resolution 4)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, noting with concern the emergence of political parties which openly espouse the cause of racialism, calls upon all Unitarians to work for the establishment of just and harmonious race relations in Britain, and to resist all attempts at fomenting and exacerbating racial hatred'.

ONE WORLD (Emergency Resolution 1)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches takes note of the progress to date of the One World Week Programme and resolves to continue to support it appropriately in future should the Programme eventually be extended into a longer term project'

HUMAN RIGHTS (Emergency Resolution 2)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges Her Majesty's Government to bring such strong but peaceable pressure to bear upon the Ethiopian Government as may lead to the end of the atrocities reportedly being carried out in that country'

FREE SPEECH (Emergency Resolution 3)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls for the abolition of the criminal offence of 'Blasphemous Libel'.'

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1979

SOCIAL ACTION (Resolution 13)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, the members of which traditionally share a common concern for civic and religious freedom and respect for human dignity, recognises a growing need to witness to, and work for, tolerance, justice and peace. It calls for Unitarians to give their full and active support to social initiatives and day-to-day activities which serve to promote these ideals.'

ANIMAL RIGHTS (Resolution 14)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges HM Government to amend the Cruelty to Animals Act so that no experiments are carried out on living animals except those which are definitely planned with the purpose of conquering disease and relieving suffering in humans or animals and that even these experiments should only be performed when there is no alternative method available and with the absolute minimum of pain or distress.'

WOMEN'S RIGHTS (Resolution 15)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the many successful ministries conducted this century by women of this and other Non-Conformist Churches notes with deep regret the decision made by Clergy of the Lower House of the Anglican Synod not to accept a proposal to permit the ordination of women.'

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 17)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches believing that the offence of being 'a suspected person or reputed thief' - the so-called 'sus' offence - is incompatible with the basic principles of a fair judicial system, calls upon Her Majesty's Government to repeal that part of Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act 1824 which creates this offence and instructs the General Secretary to convey this view to the Home Secretary.'

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1980

TRADE (Resolution 10)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches being a shareholder in Brooke Bond Liebig calls upon the directors of that company to:

(a) make a significant improvement in the wages and conditions of employees and their families on the tea estates of their subsidiaries;

(b) provide shareholders with an annual summary of statistics indicating what progress has been made.

This General Assembly accordingly undertakes in association with the World Development Movement and other concerned groups to exert all possible pressure to this end through resolutions at the Annual Meeting of the Company and by other appropriate means.'

ABORTION (Resolution 14)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognizing that there is a genuine and valid conflict of opinion on the ethics of abortion, believes that people should have the right to decide on this matter according to their own consciences, and therefore urges Her Majesty's Government to do its best to ensure that abortion legislation respects this right.'

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (Resolution 15)

'This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches believes that the human right of individual freedom can be fully realised only in an informed, open and participatory democracy. It therefore calls for legislation to ensure maximum disclosure of information held by public authorities and other relevant bodies while providing proper protection of national security and adequate safeguards against infringement of personal privacy.'

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1981

ONE WORLD (Resolution 18)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches takes note of the resolution passed at the British Council of Churches Assembly of Autumn 1980, reaffirming the BCC's welcome to the Brandt Commission's Report 'North-South: A Programme for Survival', and in particular notes paragraph 4(b) of that Resolution which 'urges the Churches to co-operate in programmes of development education and action to deepen awareness of the causes and effects of poverty and the injustices which accompany it', and resolves to continue and broaden its support for fund-raising by the Unitarian World Development Action Committee directed to this object through One World Week Programmes and through such other projects as the GA Council may approve for this purpose on the Committee's recommendation.'

FREE SPEECH (Resolution 19)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches meeting in 1981, affirms that the Law against Blasphemy is neither relevant to our age nor conducive to good human relationships, and requests H.M. Government to repeal this law.'

PRISON REFORM (Resolution 20)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls on H.M. Government to - reduce drastically the excessive prison population by legislating to reduce maximum sentences for all but exceptionally serious crimes and to preclude the counter-productive imprisonment of petty offenders; improve radically the inhumane conditions that persist in many H.M. Prisons; remove barriers (except when genuinely necessary for security purposes) to prisoners' contacts with the outside world; place a moratorium on the provision of additional places in Prison Department establishments; and reallocate funds to the wider use of alternative non-custodial sanctions, to crime prevention and assistance to victims of crime.'

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1982

ARMS (Resolution 13)

'This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, deeply concerned at the accelerating arms race and deploring the use of resources for military expenditure which are desperately needed to tackle the world-wide and domestic problems of poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease, urges its members to be resolutely involved in the struggle for peace; and calls upon them to support the World Disarmament Campaign and to press H.M. Government to be more active in seeking international disarmament, and to give full support to the forthcoming United Nations Special Session on Disarmament.'

ARMS (Resolution 14)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches regards the use and threatened use of nuclear weapons as morally and spiritually indefensible and calls upon all nations, but notably those in possession of them, to take real steps towards their abolition. In particular, we ask the British Government to set an example by a unilateral initiative for the reduction of its own nuclear arms.'

PERSECUTION OF BAHAI'S (Resolution 16)

'This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, outraged at the continuing persecution of members of the Baha'i faith in Iran, and noting the savage execution of their leaders, the demolition of their Holy Places and the latest decision to register all citizens and require a statement of their religion, appeals to the Iranian Government to call off the harassment of this religious minority; requests it to observe fundamental human rights as set out in the United Nations Universal Charter of Human Rights; and urges H.M. Government to offer the maximum support possible to the persecuted members of the Baha'i faith in Iran.'

SENIOR CITIZENS (Resolution 17)

'This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon the British Rail Board to issue the Senior Citizens Railcard to men and women alike at the age of 60, provided that they are not in full-time employment.'

DATA PROTECTION (Resolution 18)

'This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges H.M. Government to sign the Council of Europe's "Data Protection Convention" without delay and to introduce legislation as soon as possible to establish a fully independent Data Protection Authority for the United Kingdom.'

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1983

FUNERALS (Resolution 12)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, believing the present amount of the Social Security Death Grant to be inadequate in view of present funeral costs, urges HM Government to raise immediately the Grant to £200.'

ONE WORLD (Resolution 13)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges HM Government to restore the official Development Education Fund (DEF) and recommends Unitarians to help in opening up public discussion on this topic.'

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolutions 14 & 15)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, viewing with grave concern the unprecedented extension of police powers proposed in the Police Bill without the range of safeguards recommended by the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, and believing that the use of these powers would only serve to undermine public confidence and support for the forces of order, calls upon HM Government to reconsider its proposals.'

'Whilst it is appreciated that, for the most part, the police in this country perform their difficult role well, in view of increasing disquiet amongst the general public regarding the satisfactoriness of the policy whereby complaints against the police are investigated by means of internal police inquiries, this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges Her Majesty's Government to introduce changed procedures whereby such complaints may be reviewed by totally independent bodies representative of the community as a whole.'

PEACE (Resolutions 16,17,18)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, having twice condemned nuclear weapons as being 'contrary to the will of God, a denial of the spirit of Jesus and an obstacle to the concord of man' (1960) and 'morally and spiritually indefensible' (1982), and believing that the cause of multilateral nuclear disarmament is not served by any acceleration of the arms race, declares its opposition to the proposed siting of Cruise missiles in Britain later this year, and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to reverse its decision to accept them.'

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognising that peace is more than the absence of armed conflict and that there is no peace without justice and equality, recommends that the General Assembly Council develop a programme of peace education for use in Unitarian congregations and fellowships and elsewhere.'

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches resolves to send a message of encouragement and support to the women's peace camp at Greenham Common in their work for nuclear disarmament.'

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 19)

'That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, noting that the government of Iran continues in its savage persecution of members of the Baha'i faith and in its numerous other contraventions of basic human rights, urges Her Majesty's Government to instruct its immigration officials to treat Iran as a special case so that Iranian citizens are not sent home from this country against their will and so that those who can show evidence that their lives and liberty may be at risk if they return to Iran can be offered residence permits to remain in this country.'

MINORITIES (Resolution 20)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges its constituent congregations to make strong efforts to make closer contact with ethnic minority groups in their locality, to offer support and hospitality whenever possible, and to create opportunities for cooperation and joint ventures and thereby become themselves reflective of the multiracial and multicultural society in Britain today.

UNEMPLOYMENT (Resolution 21)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the suffering inflicted by the current level of unemployment and calls upon Her Majesty's Government and all individual Unitarians to take all possible steps to alleviate the ill-effects caused to the social fabric by unemployment.

CHARITY (Resolution 22)

We, the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, aware of the continuing needs in our society for the help afforded by both statutory and voluntary services, and aware that the Charity Law as presently formulated and applied is inadequate by virtue of the burden of too many trusts separately serving the same ends, give our wholehearted support and encouragement to those promoting the Parochial Charities (Neighbourhood Trusts) Bill, which we believe to be a necessary first step in the rationalisation of charitable trusts that they may better serve their common objects.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS (Resolution 23)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognising that the work of the Social Responsibility Department is of the greatest importance to the denomination no less than that of the Religious Education and Youth Department and the Publicity and Publications Department, directs the Council to consider seriously making provision for full-time paid staff for the Social Responsibility Department, and to report to the Policy and Development Committee.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1984

HOMOSEXUALITY (Resolution 11)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches declares its belief that the age of consent for homosexuals should be the same as that for heterosexuals.

HOUSING (Resolution 12)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the continuing decline in the provision of adequate housing for Britain. It calls on central and local authorities to give very high priority to the provision and repair of homes in their social funding and urges Unitarians actively to support professional and voluntary organisations campaigning for the homeless.

FUNERAL COSTS (Resolution 13)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, believing the present death grant to be wholly inadequate in view of the present funeral costs, again urges Her Majesty's Government to provide immediately an index-linked contribution sufficient for a basic funeral.

PEACE (Resolution 14)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches resolves to take steps to heal the divisions which have arisen in the denomination among all those who want peace on earth.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1985

PEACE (Resolution 12)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches pledges its support for, and encourages all its members actively to support International Year of Peace (1986) and resolves to urge HM Government to strengthen the United Nations as an instrument for peace.

It further requests that the General Assembly Council produce and distribute to congregations within nine months suitable worship materials and ideas for practical projects to mark the International Year of Peace and requests that member congregations and fellowships report on their actions by February 1987.

BIRTH CONTROL/ABORTION (Resolution 14)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches dissociates itself from the recent campaign supported by some religious leaders to prevent persons under the age of 16 from receiving advice and treatment on contraception and abortion without their parents' consent, when, in the doctor's clinical judgment, such confidentiality is in the patient's best interests; further, this General Assembly affirms its support for the establishment of DHSS guidelines on this matter.

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION (Resolution 15)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, reaffirming its affiliation to the United Nations Association, sends its congratulations to the United Nations Organisation on the approach of its fortieth Anniversary and urges all constituent congregations to show their support of the United Nations by affiliating to the local branch of the UNA.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (Resolution 16)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges the Lord Chancellor in England and Wales, the Lord Advocate in Scotland, the Lord Chief Justice in Northern Ireland (in consultation with the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland) and the Attorney General on the Isle of Man to seek the replacement of the present legal procedure whereby the evidence of a witness is declared truthful by an oath sworn on the Testament in all courts of law and before Commissioners for Oaths and solicitors, so that the normal procedure shall become for evidence to be supported by the making of a solemn affirmation and the option of swearing an oath on the Testament be made available only to those personnel who expressly wish for it.

SOUTH AFRICA/ETHICAL INVESTMENT (Resolution 18)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the recent killings in South Africa on the anniversary of Sharpeville, and calls upon its constituent congregations and societies to examine their conscience with regard to investment in the South African economy, the boycott of South African products, and whatever serves directly or indirectly to maintain the evil system of apartheid.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1986

SOCIAL AFFAIRS (Resolution 21)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognising the importance of every kind of social involvement by Unitarians, recommends the appointment of Society Responsibility Secretaries, preferably supported by small committees, in all District Associations and congregations.

SUNDAY TRADING (Resolution 22)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches views with concern the prospect of Parliamentary legislation which would allow unlimited seven day trading by shops in England and Wales, in view of the likely social, economic and spiritual consequences of this further incursion into the traditional Sunday, and calls on Her Majesty's Government to withdraw the proposal.

PEACE (Resolution 24)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches affirms its recognition of the moral courage shown by the women of the peace movement at Greenham Common and

other Peace Camps, and of the emotional and physical courage needed to withstand the appalling conditions which they daily endure. This General Assembly recognises that they are part of our national conscience, a visible part, and we cherish them.

EDUCATION (Resolution 25)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls attention to the growing concern about the needs of those whose only access to education is through state provision, and draws urgent attention to the deteriorating circumstances which spell a bleak future for our children. The pride of individuals in the teaching profession is at stake while the present policies are pursued.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1987

INTERFAITH (Resolution 16)

That the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges congregations to respond positively to the many faiths practised in our society by facilitating the meeting of people of different faiths to increase the understanding, by initiating such meetings where there is no organised contact, and by involving themselves in the new countrywide Interfaith Network at present being launched.

HIV/AIDS (Resolution 18)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches resolves, in view of the widespread ignorance, false information, prejudice and hysteria surrounding the disease AIDS and its sufferers, that Unitarian ministers and congregations be urged to inform themselves regarding the facts of the disease and its avoidance, and seek, through pastoral concern and practical care, to demonstrate the liberal and humane aspects of Unitarianism to AIDS sufferers, their families and friends.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1988

ECUMENISM (Resolution 12)

That acknowledging our heritage of openness and catholicity and our commitment to the larger ecumenical movement among the faiths of the world, the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the recent events on the scene in Britain and Ireland and wishes to associate itself with these events so long as our heritage of free religion remains uncompromised.

IARF (Resolution 13)

That this General Assembly of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of its commitment to the International Association for Religious Freedom, is aware of the financial needs of the IARF and urges District Associations, congregations, affiliated societies and individuals to improve their levels of financial giving while the General Assembly itself undertakes to increase its own contributions. It further urges all the aforementioned bodies to take a greater part in the activities of the IARF at national and international levels.

FREE SPEECH (Resolution 14)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the long-standing concern of its constituent congregations and their members for 'Civil and Religious Liberty', and aware of threats to this liberty both at home and abroad, urges all churches and their members to maintain active concern for liberty in all spheres, and freedom, especially freedom for the written and spoken word.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS (Resolutions 16 and 19)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges Her Majesty's Government to ensure that Health, Social Security and Social Services, which support those who care for frail and vulnerable people living in the community, be resourced at a level which meets the proper costs in social and financial terms, and in particular to rescind the new Social Security regulations which cut benefits.

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches regrets the effect of the most recent Budget (March 1988) which accelerates the breakdown of social justice by the reallocation of resources away from those in need (the aged, the mentally and physically sick and the long-term unemployed) to those who are financially secure, and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to return to consensus politics.

PEACE (Resolution 18)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the recent superpower I.N.F. agreement and the improving international climate for fruitful disarmament negotiations. It urges its members to be actively involved in campaigning for continuation of the disarmament process, and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to participate fully and resolutely in favour of disarmament in the forthcoming United Nations Third Special Session on Disarmament.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1989

HERITAGE TRAIL (Resolution 14)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges each district association to devise a Unitarian Heritage Trail.

DEBT (Resolution 17)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, aware that the suffering and dislocation to family life in this country caused by debt has now risen to the level of crisis,

- i) urges its officers, member churches and fellowships to make every effort to impress those with access to public opinion - with the need to make people aware of the real meaning of living and buying on credit and the dangers involved;
- (ii) urges its members to request issuers of credit, credit cards and charge cards, to examine closely the consequences and morality of their action and to work towards an agreed ethic of credit;
- (iii) requests Her Majesty's Government to examine the laws that at present govern the issue of credit in order to bring the problem under control;
- (iv) strongly recommends those of its churches and fellowships who are aware of people with debt problems to advise them to seek the assistance of trained debt counsellors.

HEALTH (Emergency Resolution 18)

- That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, noting the proposals contained in the recent Government White Paper 'Working for Patients',
- (a) expresses its alarm at the current attempt to push through major changes in the National Health Service without proper consultation or trials to determine whether the reforms will indeed produce a better service for patients. It urges Her Majesty's Government to reconsider these proposals which could lead to poorer quality of care and reduced choice for patients, and determined by cost rather than clinical need;
 - (b) urges Her Majesty's Government to give priority to the fully tax funded provision under the National Health Service of local hospitals and community health services which shall be accessible to local residents and especially children and older people.

ANNUAL MEETING - 1990

ANIMAL RIGHTS (Resolution 14)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises that slaughterhouse practices in general require a greater degree of supervision than is presently employed; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to ensure that the slaughter of animals be in accordance with the procedures as outlined in the Slaughter of Animals (Amendment) Act, 1954 (Scotland) and the Slaughterhouse Act 1974 (England and Wales), and Regulations made under those Acts, which require the humane treatment and effective stunning of animals before slaughter.

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 15)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the newly-won freedoms of the Romanian people and in particular those of our Unitarian brothers and sisters in Transylvania.

It calls upon Council and individuals to continue their support of Romanian Unitarians.

It further calls upon Her Majesty's Government to supply material aid to people of Romania to assist them through this present crisis.

PEACE (Resolution 17)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, believing in the transforming power of symbolic acts, invites all Unitarian congregations and other related bodies to consider declaring themselves Nuclear Free Zones.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1991

ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS (Resolution 14)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, being aware of the appalling cruelty involved in the testing on animals of cosmetics and being aware of the ready availability of cosmetics which are tested without resort to such cruelty, urges all Unitarians to exercise compassionate discrimination in the purchase of these goods.

GULF WAR (Resolution 15)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the use of force as the way of resolving the territorial dispute in the Gulf, and urges Her Majesty's Government to make every effort to ensure that future differences between nations be settled by negotiation or other non-violent means.

CHILDREN'S BEREAVEMENT (Resolution 17)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches notes the real distress and suffering experienced by children following bereavement and loss, and expresses its concern that their needs are often not recognised or understood. Aware that adults may be offered assistance by organisations such as Cruse, and that such services are not generally available to children, it urges the Social Responsibility Department to consider this matter and bring it to the attention of congregations, fellowships and other interested bodies.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1992

PRISONS / PENAL AFFAIRS GROUP (Resolution 14)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

(a) expresses great concern at the poor conditions and regime at many local prisons in this country and welcomes

i) the Government's acknowledgment of the ineffectiveness of custody in dealing with such offending behaviour and

ii) the Government's determination to secure greater use of non custodial remands and sentences.

(b) recommends the setting up of a penal affairs group from within the General Assembly, to examine penal policy with the intention of constructively commenting within the denomination, to other church organisations and to the legislators, subject to the approval of the General Assembly Council.

MULTI FAITH (Resolution 16)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the relationships, locally, nationally and through the International Association for Religious Freedom with other faith communities, strives to achieve a constructive dialogue with those members of other religious faiths who have problems in relating to certain laws and traditions of the United Kingdom.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1993

VICTIM SUPPORT (Resolution)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, while being aware of the contribution of local volunteer groups to the work of Victim Support, calls on Her Majesty's Government to provide more resources for Victim Support. Further it urges individual Unitarians and congregations to become better informed about the activities of Victim Support Groups and to consider how they can offer assistance in this area of social service.

CCBI (Emergency Resolution 17)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches regrets the recent decision of the General Assembly Council not to apply for Observer Status within the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland and requests the General Assembly Council to reverse this decision and to apply for such status within the next six months.

PRO-LIFE (Emergency Resolution 18)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its disapproval of the attempts being made by some Pro-Life activists to harass women opting for legal termination of pregnancy, and urges the Home Secretary to instruct the civil authorities to safeguard women exercising this right conferred by the Abortion Act 1967.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1994

ENVIRONMENT (Resolution 7)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises that the natural environments is the foundation of our continued existence and all our human comforts, and also that current human behaviour is endangering that environment in a manner that is unique in the whole history of the planet.

The General Assembly therefore calls upon the British Government together with the European Union to commit themselves to the principle of environmental sustainability as the basis of economic and social policy, recognising that this has far-reaching implications for our way of life and for the patterns of production, distribution and consumption of goods.

The General Assembly also asserts that present patterns of trade and consumption are damaging to under-privileged and poor sectors and countries and that sustainability and equity must go together as we strive to create a fairer world in which the needs of all are met, and that this General Assembly urges Headquarters staff, congregations and individual Unitarians to act in all possible ways to create a fairer world.

DRUGS (Resolution 8)

SINCE recent Home Office data and police statistics show a serious increase in drug offenders, now including pre-teenagers and people living in rural areas, not only, as formerly, older offenders in inner-city problem areas:

AND SINCE current drug laws are proving inadequate, and current levels of drug funding are also inadequate:

WE, the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, in recognition of the grave concern among churches and community organisations, urge all General Assembly congregations, affiliated and associated bodies, to debate before the end of the Calendar year 1994:

- (a) the possible decriminalisation of the personal use of illegal drugs and prohibited substances in order that users may seek help without penalty of law and that government resources may focus on apprehending suppliers of drugs rather than users; and
- (b) the possible provision of higher levels of funding for health education, and to the Health Service and other recognised centres for drug rehabilitation, with a view to resolution of General Assembly views in this matter at the 1995 General Assembly Meetings.

We further request that all assistance in the form of written information be circulated at the earliest possible time by or through the appropriate departments of the General Assembly.

GLOBAL ETHIC (Resolution 9)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches hereby endorses and adopts the Declaration of the 1993 World Parliament of Religions, titled TOWARDS A GLOBAL ETHIC and written by Dr Hans Kung.

TOLERANCE (Resolution 10)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the United Nations intention to designate 1995 as the 'Year of Tolerance' and should seek imaginative ways of understanding and strengthening our own commitment to tolerance and of leading the discussion on this important issue and pillar of Unitarianism.

ENVIRONMENT (Resolution 12)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the initiative of the Theology and Life Seminars and Summer School to focus this year on Green Theology, and hopes for a continuing interest in this subject. All constituent and affiliated bodies are also advised to consider practical ways of protecting the environment and conserving natural resources, and to reflect upon the environmental consequences of all major decisions.

SUNDAY TRADING (Resolution 13)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon Her Majesty's Government and the Department of Transport not to allow local authorities to extend week day parking restrictions to Sunday in urban areas in consequence of extended Sunday trading, as this would penalise attenders at town centre places of worship, especially the elderly.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1995

UN 50th ANNIVERSARY (Resolution 4)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches reaffirms its affiliation to the **United Nations Association** and sends its congratulations and warmest greetings to the **United Nations Organisation** on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation.

CCBI (Resolution 7)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports further efforts to encourage communication and co-operation between Unitarians and the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland with a view to the Unitarians in due course achieving a status within the CCBI as befits a non-credal founder of the British Council of Churches.

It further instructs the General Assembly Council to:

- i) press the CCBI to seek to broaden its present interpretation of observer status and
- ii) urge Unitarians to co-operate with the Religious Society of Friends to bring about a greater spirit of inclusiveness within the CCBI.

DRUGS (Resolution 9)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches **instructs** the General Secretary to **write** to each Chief Constable in Wales, Scotland and England to express **our concern** about the growing abuse of drugs in our society, particularly amongst young people,
our support for the Police in their difficult role fighting this menace in our society,
our support for effective action under the law against any people involved in supplying illegal drugs,
our concern that applying the letter of the law to drug **abusers** makes escape from drug abuse more difficult,
and
our hope that the Police in the Chief Constables' area will apply a policy of warnings, linked to advice and counselling and only invoke criminal proceedings when it is clear that such action will help the individual to stop further abuse.
and further,
to ask each Chief Constable to explain to the General Assembly their current and future policy regarding application of the law to drug abusers and those involved in supplying illegal drugs,
and instructs the General Secretary
to report on the Chief Constables' responses in the Inquirer before the next Annual Meetings of the General Assembly.

TOLERANCE (Resolution 11)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the designation of 1995 the International Year for Tolerance. All members, together with constituent and affiliated bodies, are asked to consider their level of commitment to the principle of tolerance, and to explore ways in which their commitment might be strengthened.

POPULATION (Resolution 13)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches considering the present rate of increase of world population to be a threat to human well being in relation to resources, environment and political stability, calls for the issue to be considered by the General Assembly Council and by congregations during the coming year with a view to deciding relevant action next year.

ANIMAL TRANSPORT (Resolution 14)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges Her Majesty's Government

- i) to take effective steps to uphold and strengthen compassionate laws and practices that will limit the transport and exportation of live animals for slaughter
- ii) to use maximum influence on all European nations to end this practice altogether.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1996

ENVIRONMENT (Resolution 2)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches meeting in Glasgow, "the dear green place", with the theme "Cherishing the Living Earth"

1. affirms

- * a) its love for Earth "the dear green place", and
- * b) the importance of an ethic which nourishes and perpetuates Earth's resources and species for the benefit of all beings individually and interdependently;

2. commends

- * the celebration of Earth's wholeness as a regular focus in Unitarian worship;

3. asks Council

- * a) to initiate a programme of environmental auditing of its committees and headquarters and
- * b) to develop a similar programme for use by member congregations.

NATIONAL LOTTERY (Resolution 3)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches notes the operation of the National Lottery since its inception and without necessarily approving the principle of such a Lottery, expresses concern at certain aspects of its effect on the people of the United Kingdom and with the intention of moderating or alleviating these adverse effects calls on the Council to press the present and any future government to take action to ensure:

1. That top prizes be limited in their amount
2. That a much greater proportion of the raised income be distributed to Charities
3. That a proportion of the profit be used to support or create an institution to research and obviate the worst excesses of gambling
4. That the National Lottery be prohibited from issuing Scratch Cards
5. That the agencies of the National Lottery should be more receptive regarding the wishes of the public when making grants
6. That the Office of Lottery Regulator be instructed to supervise these proposals and to act in case of future perceived excesses.

The General Assembly believes that with the acceptance of the above suggestions most of the adverse effects created by the Lottery will be overcome.

NATIONAL LOTTERY (Resolution 4)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, alarmed at many of the effects of the National Lottery, and the questionable principles upon which it is based and administered, calls upon Unitarians and Free Christians to consider its impact upon their own lives and upon society generally and to work towards freeing our society from the many forms of dependency to which it gives rise.

FAIR TRADE (Resolution 5)

Since fair trade is an important issue where all churches can take clear and immediate action, these General Assembly meetings request that the General Assembly President writes to all Unitarian and Free Christian congregations, affiliated bodies and centres, asking them to use and promote fairly traded goods, in particular tea and coffee.

HANDGUNS (Resolution 6)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon Her Majesty's Government to introduce a system requiring all owners of handguns to obtain an annual certificate of psychological fitness.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1997

LANDMINES (Resolution 2)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, deeply concerned at the social, economic and personal effects of anti-personnel land mines, lasting long after conflicts have ceased, urges its members - individuals, congregations and affiliated societies - to press Members of the European Parliament to support an International ban on the production, trade and use of anti-personnel land mines and further to press Members of Parliament to support an immediate ban on the production, trade and use of such mines by the United Kingdom.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (Resolution 3)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges Her Majesty's Government actively to support schemes which have shown their worth in preventing crime and reducing the incidence of juvenile delinquency, such as the Perry Programme and High Scope in the USA rather than continuing with the proposals to build costly Secure Training Centres which do not reflect the standards required by the Children Act and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

HOMELESSNESS (Resolution 4)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, conscious of the suffering and long-term harm caused through homelessness in this country, urges its constituent congregations and fellowships to:

- 1) acquaint themselves with the facts of homelessness in their own area and, in cooperation with local groups and through the press and local radio, increase the awareness of the situation;
- 2) give support to and keep themselves informed through the Churches National Housing Coalition and other bodies of changes in the law and new developments;
- 3) bring pressure to bear on their local government bodies, their MP, prospective parliamentary candidates and the appropriate Secretaries of State to secure the provision of year-round shelter for all homeless people including those sleeping rough and permanent and adequate housing at a rent affordable for those on low income.

This General Assembly calls upon the General Secretary to bring these concerns to the attention of the appropriate Secretaries of State.

Nothing in this resolution shall in any way infringe the wishes of any who prefer homelessness as a way of life.

ENTRY VISAS (Resolution 5)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the refusal of entry visas to delegates from Nigeria, Pakistan and the Philippines who were invited to attend the bi-ennial meetings of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists held at Great Hucklow, Derbyshire, UK, in April 1997, despite the fact that those delegates are acknowledged leaders of their respective religious communities and despite the guarantees provided by this General Assembly and by the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists.

We regard this refusal as a denial of our right as Unitarians to free association, as a rejection of the equality of the human family, as a slur on the probity of our liberal religious faith, and as an unwarranted insult to representatives of our faith from other countries and cultures.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1998

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 5)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of our traditional emphasis on civil and religious liberty and our traditional support of international agreements in this area, encourages all its congregations, districts, fellowships, affiliated societies and individuals on the occasion of the **50th anniversary of the United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights"** to:

- i) reaffirm their commitment to the Declaration,
- ii) to join Amnesty International's campaign "Get Up Sign Up",
- iii) and continue to work for human rights locally, nationally and internationally.

JUBILEE 2000 (Resolution 6)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, affirming the right of all people to the necessities of life for a decent and dignified human experience and recognising the deprivation caused by the poorest nations' efforts to settle unpayable debt:

- 1) supports the Jubilee 2000 Campaign in its aim to persuade the governments of the developed world to cancel, by the year 2000, debts owed to them by the poorest nations of the world;
- 2) urges its members - individuals, congregations, district associations and affiliated societies - to join the campaign, engaging where practicable in signing petitions, in lobbying and in writing to their MPs;
- 3) Commends the British Government for their proposals on debt relief in recent years and urges the British Government to cancel unilaterally all official British bilateral debts of the group of intolerably indebted countries identified by the Jubilee 2000 Campaign.

MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT (MAI) (Resolution 8)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, deeply concerned that the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which is being negotiated in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), could have profound effects on UK social economic and environmental policies, on regional development agencies, and on the poorest countries in the world, urges Her Majesty's Government and the European Parliament to press for:

- 1) **A full analysis of the likely impact** on the poor, on UK social, health and environmental policies, on regional development agencies and local authorities, and on the poorest countries of the world;
- 2) **Fundamental reform** to the MAI to establish binding responsibilities for multinational companies, rather than further extending their rights.
- 3) Further, that this General Assembly urges individual Unitarians, Congregations and Fellowships to ask their local Member of Parliament to support the Early Day Motion on the MAI, number 833.

THE AGREEMENT (IRELAND) (Resolution 9)

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches commends Her Majesty's Government on its crucial role in negotiating "The Agreement" on the future of Northern Ireland, with regard to which it further congratulates the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland on its initiative in appointing a pastoral community worker for the Forthspring Inter-Community Group operating on the Belfast "peace-line", and calls upon the General Assembly Council to explore ways of supporting this important venture.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 1999

PEACE IN KOSOVO (Resolution 3)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, deeply concerned by the tragedy of human suffering in Kosovo and the surrounding region, calls upon HM Government to make strenuous efforts to initiate fresh talks under the auspices of the United Nations in order to establish a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict. Furthermore, it urges HM Government to play a leading role in the relief work to help refugees and civilian victims of the conflict.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (Resolution 4)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches: mindful of our traditional emphasis on the inherent worth and dignity of each person, declares that *violence against women* in all forms is morally wrong and totally unacceptable, and urges all its congregations, district associations, fellowships, affiliated societies and individuals to:

- i) acquaint themselves with the facts of *violence against women* in their own area, and in cooperation with local groups and through the press and local radio, increase public awareness of the situation;
- ii) act in support of women's refuges and in solidarity with women who are victims of violence;
- iii) bring pressure to bear on their local government bodies, their elected representatives, First Ministers, and appropriate Secretaries of State to ensure that *violence against women* is placed on the political agenda as both a human rights issue and a development issue;
- iv) commend the UK Government's Women's Unit for committing itself to launching a European-wide consciousness-raising strategy paper on the issue of *violence against women*.

PEACE (Resolution 9)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of our continued commitment to Peace, welcomes the "*Hague Appeal for Peace*" initiative and resolves to send a message of support to the Peace Conference to be held in The Hague from 11-15 May 1999. Furthermore, it calls upon individual Unitarians, congregations, fellowships, district associations and affiliated societies to:

- ◆ support the National Peace Council's campaign "*Footprints to The Hague*" by sending **Bold Step Footprints** to The Hague, as a snapshot of our hopes and aspirations for peace at the end of this millennium;
- ◆ support the **Citizens Assembly for the Abolition of War**, a follow up to the Hague Conference at Westminster Central Hall, London on Saturday 22 May 1999, which will launch the *Hague Agenda for Peace* in the UK;
- ◆ consider holding a service to celebrate the centenary of the Peace Conference held in May 1899, the first international peace conference to focus on peace building and conflict prevention, rather than on the conclusion of a war.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2000

CULTURE OF PEACE (Resolution 4)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches wholeheartedly supports the General Assembly of the United Nations in its proclamation of the year 2000 as the ***International Year for the Culture of Peace***.

Furthermore, the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches commends its congregations, fellowships, district associations, affiliated societies and individual Unitarians to study ***Manifesto 2000*** and to consider giving support to UNESCO's aim to collect **100 million signatures** worldwide.

SEXUAL EQUALITY (Resolution 5)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches affirms that is opposed to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in all walks of life. It reaffirms the Resolutions passed at the Annual Meetings 1977 that our ministry is open to all regardless of sex, race, colour or sexual orientation, and declaring abhorrence of discrimination solely on the basis of sexual orientation. It commends Council for its recent agreement of a Code of Practice on Equality of Employment Opportunity to implement the Assembly's Policy on Equal Opportunity in Employment (agreed in 1997).

Further that this General Assembly instructs its Officers to write to HM Government and the Scottish Executive urging the introduction of legislation to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Further that this General Assembly instructs the Social Responsibility Department to consider the most effective way in which the denomination might question and examine its own attitudes, policies and activities on issues of sexual orientation and to make financial provision for such a process.

TRIAL BY JURY (Resolution 6)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches affirms its belief that trial by jury is the cornerstone of the judicial system of England and Wales. We call upon Her

Majesty's Government to abandon its proposals to restrict further the right of defendants in England and Wales to elect for trial by jury.

JUBILEE 2000 DEBT CAMPAIGN (Resolution 7)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches congratulates Her Majesty's Government (HMG) on the lead that they have taken in the "Cologne Debt Initiative", which was agreed at the 1999 G8 Summit in Cologne. We urge HMG to work with other governments to push for a new deal on debt at the G8 Summit in July 2000, which would cancel in full the £300 billion owed by the world's 50 poorest nations.

Furthermore, this General Assembly urges HMG to seek to ensure that further debt crisis does not arise by developing a more transparent and fairer process of International lending and borrowing.

Furthermore, this General Assembly calls upon its congregations, fellowships, district associations, affiliated societies and individual Unitarians to continue their support for Jubilee 2000 by engaging in the various campaigns leading to Debt Decision Day - 23rd July 2000.

CLAUSE 28 – HOMOSEXUALITY (Resolution 8)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports the repeal of clause 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act and regrets the vote taken against the repeal in the House of Lords on February 7th 2000, believing that this clause, proscribing the promotion of homosexuality in schools, in practice encourages homophobia.

Further it calls upon the General Assembly Council, in line with previous resolutions made at this Assembly, actively to work for the equal acceptance of lesbians and gay men in all walks of society.

PENAL REFORM (Resolution 9)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful that imprisonment reduces the likelihood of offenders playing constructive roles in society on release, offers no restitution to victims and makes very large and relatively ineffective use of public revenues, supports the use of community sentences and restorative penalties and the rapid decrease of use of imprisonment for non-violent offences and offences clearly not requiring imprisonment for the protection of the public.

Further, the General Assembly supports the work of Payback in increasing public awareness of the range of community sentences and restorative penalties available for the majority of offenders to whom sentences of imprisonment are now being given.

HEALTH SERVICE (Resolution 10)

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches strongly affirms its commitment to the principle of a National Health Service free of charge to patients at the point of delivery, calls upon Her Majesty's Government and the Scottish Executive to provide sufficient resources from general taxation to ensure that the National Health Service is adequately funded to meet the health needs of modern society, and welcomes the measures announced in the Budget Statement on 21 March 2000 towards this objective..

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2001

VOUCHER SYSTEM (Resolution_8)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches considers the operation of the refugee voucher system, in its present form, to be a degrading and humiliating experience for individual refugees, and believes that:

1. Cash should replace vouchers, and
2. Cash awards should be increased to minimum income support level.

It pledges itself to inform HM Government of this concern, and urges its constituent organizations to inform local councillors, MPs and MSPs and news media. It further pledges to notify other denominations and urges its constituent churches to canvass local denominations with a view to seeking support.

ORGAN DONATION (Resolution 9)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

1. believing that ethical medical research using donated human tissue, which aims at healing and the relief of suffering, is one of the noblest expressions of human dignity, affirms its trust in the medical profession, and its support for medical research;
2. invites Unitarians to declare their support for organ donation by indicating their willingness to become donors themselves and to consider adding their name to the NHS Organ Donor Register.

NON-SECTARIAN EDUCATION (Resolution 10)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches affirms the value of education taking place in a multi-faith and non-sectarian environment. For this reason we oppose any move by Her Majesty's Government and the Scottish Executive to support any increase in the number of schools with a religious foundation.

WORLD CLIMATE CHANGE (Resolution 11)

AFFIRMING that it is a part of the object of this Assembly "to promote a free and inquiring religion through....respect for all creation"; and

NOTING that it is a principle and purpose of the Unitarian Universalist Association of North America to have "respect for the interdependent web of all existence";

THIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES:

1. URGES Her Majesty's Government and the European Union to exert the greatest possible pressure upon President George W. Bush to display qualities of world leadership and honour the commitment of the United States of America to the Kyoto protocols on world climate change.
2. ENCOURAGES its sister association, the Unitarian Universalist Association, to take steps to urge President Bush and the United States Senate to co-operate with the Kyoto protocols and thereby affirm that action for the health of Planet Earth is also in the interest of the United State of America..

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2002

CEASE-FIRE DAY (Resolution 3)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, noting the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of an annual Global Cease-fire Day to be observed on the 21st of September each year,

- Supports the initiative;

- Asks the General Secretary to write to Her Majesty's Government urging national observance of the day:
- Suggests that all constituent congregations, affiliated societies and individual members write to their local Members of Parliament urging Her Majesty's Government to support the Global Cease-fire Day at the international level;
- Urges all constituent congregations, affiliated societies and individual members to find appropriate ways in which they can mark the day in their local communities.

CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST (Resolution 7)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its deep sympathy to all victims of terrorism and war.

In view of the peace call of the United Nations and the Peace Offer of the Arab summit,

1. we support the many members of the British Jewish community who signed the March 2002 Pesach Message which affirms:
 "At the heart of our religion and national identity is the message of freedom...we condemn the use of terror by extremist Palestinian groups. Nevertheless, this terror should not blind us to the deeper issues posed by Israel's occupation of and current behaviour in the Palestinian territories".
2. we further support their call to the Israeli government :
 - a. "to announce its intention to end the occupation
 - b. to declare its willingness to conduct negotiations with the Palestinians
 - c. to take certain unilateral steps immediately including dismantling the settlements in Gaza and in the heart of the Palestinian population in the West Bank"
3. we urge the congregations of the General Assembly to co-operate with local and international faith groups in programmes to reduce world terror, to build local and international trust.

BLASPHEMY LAW (Resolution 8)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian churches deplores the threat to bring charges against Joan Bakewell for blasphemy for quoting from "The Love that Dares not Speak its Name" by James Kirkup, and calls upon Her Majesty's Government, the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly to repeal the Blasphemy Laws.

ANNUAL MEETING - 2003

1) FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COUNCIL

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches is pleased to receive the application for membership as a Provisional Fellowship from The Unitarian Fellowship of Durham and welcomes it onto the General Assembly's Roll of Congregations

2) FROM THIRTEEN FULL MEMBERS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches instructs GA Council to appoint a task force to develop proposals to change the system of governance to have a nationally elected leadership, and to present them at the 2004 General Assembly.

3) FROM THE EAST MIDLAND UNITARIANS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, whilst welcoming the generous grant from a charitable trust to continue a fortnightly edition of The Inquirer until August 2004, urges the Inquirer Board to seek ways to continue this commitment which we consider vital to the movement.

4) FROM THE FOY SOCIETY

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the importance of representative Annual Meetings to the vitality of our movement, instructs the General Assembly Council to set criteria for future Annual Meetings which will ensure that venues and pricing structures are selected which offer low cost options with a view to maximising attendance.

5) FROM THE RICHMOND AND PUTNEY UNITARIAN CHURCH

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the danger to world peace from the stockpiling of weapons brokered through the international arms trade; noting the legislation passed by the British Government during the year 2002 with a view to government control of intended arms exports on the part of agents operating within British jurisdiction and regretting its incomplete range:

- Calls on all members to support efforts by Oxfam, Amnesty International, the International Action Network on Small Arms and others to secure a new International Arms Trade Treaty to stop the flow of arms to potentially abusive regimes;
- Welcomes the recent international conference convened by the British Government on arms control;
- Urges Her Majesty's Government to strengthen its legislation and its implementation;
- And furthermore urges it, as representing the world's second largest arms-exporting country, to press for new international controls over arms sales.

6) FROM THE MIDLAND UNION

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognising the uncertainty caused by the fundamental changes in Charity Law now envisaged by the Government, the threat to the continued existence of smaller congregations due to their aging memberships and the reduced financial and staffing capacity of Essex Hall to cope with tasks which could be undertaken without charge by the Charity Commission:

- Urges every Congregation which has not already done so to take immediate steps to ensure that:
- Its bookkeeping and Annual Report & Accounts fully comply with statutory requirements.
- Its Constitution complies with best modern practice in defining the policies and procedures required to administer its affairs and in particular that this includes a Winding Up Clause guiding future trustees about the disposal of its assets in a manner designed to continue the work of the Unitarian Movement.

7) FROM TWELVE FULL MEMBERS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches affirms the importance of Ministry in the Unitarian Movement and the desirability of this being reflected in its structures. Accordingly, it requests the Council to ensure that the work of the Ministry Committee is continued in a unified way, either as a Ministry Commission, or, failing this, incorporated into one other Commission.

8) FROM SIXTEEN FULL MEMBERS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the profound religious sensibilities aroused by the present war in Iraq, and conscious of the necessity of not exacerbating the situation further, expresses its deep concern at reports that some so-called "fundamentalist" and "evangelical" Christian organisations are planning to enter Iraq in the aftermath of war for the purposes of religious proselytization, and calls upon Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States to ensure:

- that the religious integrity of Iraq be fully respected by any post-war administration set up under the auspices of the United States and the United Kingdom.
- that the indigenous faith communities in Iraq, including both Muslim and Christian, be left free to practise their faith freely and without interference.
- that any individuals or organisations intending to enter Iraq in the aftermath of war for the purposes of undertaking religious proselytization be prevented from doing so.
- that humanitarian aid programmes not be used for the purposes of religious proselytization
- that the post-war administration place the utmost importance on the fostering of positive and constructive relationships with the indigenous faith communities of Iraq.

Furthermore, as Unitarians and Free Christians we dissociate ourselves unreservedly from any attempt to interpret the war in Iraq in terms of "Christian triumphalism" or the "fulfilment of biblical prophecy", believing such interpretation to be erroneous, irresponsible and dangerous.

9) FROM THE UNITARIAN PEACE FELLOWSHIP

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its sorrow and deep regret at the thousands of deaths and injuries, civilian and military, suffered by victims of war in Iraq; urges Her Majesty's Government to devote, as a matter of extreme urgency, massive resources to the emergency relief and succour of the Iraqi people; and calls upon our congregations, as a practical gesture of our own humanitarian concern, to respond generously to the special appeal administered by the Unitarian Peace Fellowship for the life saving work in Iraq of Save the Children.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2004

FROM THE UNITARIAN PEACE FELLOWSHIP

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports the proposed establishment of a Government Ministry for Peace.

FROM TWELVE MEMBERS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches is seriously concerned about the methods used by the organisation known as Samaritan's Purse to promote its form of Christianity. Its use of the Christmas Shoebox Appeal, under the name of Operation Christmas Child, according to its own literature, website and video, is simply a means of evangelising vulnerable children. This General Assembly alerts its associated congregations and bodies to the methods of this organisation and calls upon Samaritan's Purse in this country to be more open about its aims.

FROM GOLDERS GREEN UNITARIANS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its cordial support for the work of Rabbis for Human Rights and other justice and peace groups in Israel who, inspired by essential Jewish spiritual and ethical values, are seeking justice for the Palestinian people and a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In a spirit of

solidarity with all those struggling for peace and reconciliation we send our warm greetings to the people of Neve Shalom-Wahat al-Salam ("Oasis of Peace") and hope that their example may inspire others throughout the Middle East and across the globe.

FROM THE GA COUNCIL

1. That this General Assembly receives the Report of the Task Force with thanks for the hard work and dedication of its members and consultant.
2. That this General Assembly endorses the proposal for an Executive Committee to be elected and the proposal that the election be by postal ballot.
3. That this General Assembly instructs Council to prepare such motions and constitutional amendments as required to implement the Task Force Proposal for an elected Executive Committee and submit these to the Annual Meetings in 2005 for acceptance or rejection under the ordinary rules and voting majorities that apply under the Constitution and By-Laws of the General Assembly.
4. That this General Assembly extends the life of the Task Force until June of 2004 to enable it to undertake further consultation and to evaluate and to prepare proposals for the implementation of the recommendation in the Report regarding the enhancement of leadership positions for consideration at the Annual Meetings in 2005.

FROM MORE THAN TWELVE MEMBERS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches congratulates the Unitarian College on its 150th anniversary and gives thanks for all that its staff and students have given to the Unitarian movement over the years.

The Assembly also encourages the Unitarian movement in its support and care of the College in the years ahead.

Further, the Assembly commends to all Unitarians the commemoration volume "Unitarian to the Core" edited by Dr Leonard Smith.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2005

1. FROM THE GA COUNCIL

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches resolves to amend its Constitution as follows:

i) Concerning the establishment of an elected Executive Committee:

Add new rules 6 and 7 and renumber succeeding Rules accordingly.

6 Executive Committee The Executive Committee shall comprise eight persons elected by a postal ballot and an Honorary Treasurer. The Honorary Treasurer will be a voting member of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee elections will be held every three years and members shall serve a maximum of two successive elections, taking office at the start of the Annual Meetings following election.

7 Elections An Electoral Panel will be responsible for conducting the election of the Executive Committee and will be accountable to the Annual Meetings on the basis that:

a. Each member congregation or Fellowship will receive as many electoral votes as members paid for by the end of the financial year preceding election.

b. A list shall be established nationally of electors who are not included in category a. who

i. are Full Members of the Assembly or

ii. individually pay the required membership contribution directly to the Assembly by the end of the financial year preceding election.

c. No elector shall vote more than once and the Electoral Panel shall be responsible for devising rules to prevent double voting by any elector. Elections shall be based on a method to be established by the Electoral Panel.

ii) Concerning the removal of the Office of Honorary Deputy Treasurer:

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches resolves to remove the Office of Deputy Treasurer and therefore to alter its Constitution as follows:

Amend the clause 6 of the Constitution dated 19 April 2001(Honorary Officers) as follows:

On line two add the word "and" in front of the words "a Treasurer" and delete the words "and a Deputy Treasurer". On line five remove the words "and Deputy Treasurer" that appear after the words "The Office of Treasurer".

2. FROM THE UNITARIAN WOMEN'S GROUP

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of our traditional emphasis on the inherent worth and dignity of each individual, sponsors and supports the Make Poverty History campaign - calling for urgent and mindful policy change on three inextricably linked areas: trade, debt and aid - encourages all congregations, districts, fellowships, affiliated societies and individuals to:

a) make known their voices through letters, emails, fundraising campaigns, education and action at local level.

b) show their solidarity by wearing the white band - the campaign symbol - to help MAKE POVERTY HISTORY.

3. FROM THE YORKSHIRE UNITARIAN UNION

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches congratulates Sir Tim Berners-Lee on his award as the Greatest Briton 2004.

4. FROM DUNHAM ROAD CHAPEL, ALTRINCHAM

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognising that some congregations are threatened by closure or are in serious difficulty due to financial hardship, urges those congregations and District Associations whose finances are in surplus to investigate ways of supporting those who are in difficulty by means of substantial donations to the Sustentation Fund or by other means of financial redistribution.

PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

1. That the Reverend Brian Cockroft be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2005-2006.

2. That this seventy-fifth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Dawn Buckle as President during the year 2004-2005.

3. That David Dawson be appointed as Vice-President for the year 2005-2006.

4. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Michael J Tomlin for his services as Honorary Treasurer, to district association and local treasurers and collectors for their help.

5. That Martin G West be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2005-2006.

6. That Messrs Edmund Gibbs & Co be reappointed as Auditors.

7. That the Report of the General Assembly Council and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
8. That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
9. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend J Eric Jones for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
10. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Alan Myerscough, organist for the Anniversary Service, and to local Unitarians who arranged other music for the Meetings.
11. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to all the local Unitarians, especially from the sponsoring body, the Midland Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2006

The following Resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2006. In each case they were passed with a majority well in excess of the basic requirement.

1) FROM THE UNITARIAN CHURCH, STOCKTON-ON-TEES

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches acknowledges that, in order to survive, there is an absolute need for numerical growth. It urges every Unitarian organisation and member thereof to give high priority to numerical growth and to publicise this intention. It requests the General Assembly Executive Committee to set up an organisation and process that will bring together those who seek to promote numerical growth, where ideas, proven or not, can be exchanged, discussed and acted upon.

2) FROM THE UNITARIAN WOMEN'S GROUP

Whereas this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- recognises and promotes the worth and dignity of all people, which includes the equal rights of men and women;
- proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal and are entitled to all the rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind, including any distinction as to sex.
- recognises that discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity;
- promotes the full participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of society; and
- recognises that the cause of peace and the welfare of the world requires the full participation of all people, both men and women.

Be it resolved that:

- a) every Unitarian organisation and member thereof takes all appropriate measures to ensure that women, married or unmarried, have equal rights with men in all areas of economic, social and political life and that women are equal partners with men in determining the values, direction and governance of their societies for the benefit of all; and
- b) as a first step, every Unitarian Congregation, District Association and Affiliated Society undertakes an audit of all of their activities to ensure that women are enabled to participate fully and equally in all areas.

3) FROM GOLDERS GREEN UNITARIANS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- is concerned by the refusal of the British Government to grant posthumous pardons to the 306 British, Irish and Commonwealth soldiers, some as young as 17, who were executed by firing squad for battlefield offences in the First World War;
- recognises that many of these soldiers, executed for offences such as cowardice, were suffering from shell-shock and other traumatic disorders;
- welcomes activities in support of these pardons in Britain and the Commonwealth, led by the "Shot at Dawn" campaign;
- further welcomes the fact that New Zealand has granted its executed soldiers posthumous pardons and the Irish Government has supported pardons being granted to Irish-born soldiers;
- directs the General Secretary to write to the Prime Minister and the Defence Secretary (of the United Kingdom) calling upon them to end this injustice by granting posthumous pardons to all of those so executed; and
- urges all Congregations, District Associations and Affiliated Societies to support the campaigns for these posthumous pardons.

4) FROM WESTGATE UNITARIAN CHAPEL, WAKEFIELD AND ST SAVIOURGATE UNITARIAN CHAPEL, YORK

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches takes the view that the notions of Intelligent Design and Creationism are in no sense legitimate scientific theories but hypotheses which should not form part of the science curriculum in schools.

It calls upon the United Kingdom Government and the Welsh and Scottish Executives to ensure that, if these hypotheses are to have any place at all in the school curriculum, they are encountered in Religious Education alongside the many other creation myths to be found in the venerated texts of various faiths.

Further, this General Assembly urges its District Associations and Congregations to take action by raising this issue with their local Education Authorities and SACRE bodies.

PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

1. That David Dawson be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2006-2007
2. That this seventy-eighth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by the Reverend Brian Cockroft as President during the year 2005-2006.
3. That the Reverend Celia Midgley be appointed as Vice-President for the year 2006-2007.
4. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Martin G West for his services as Honorary Treasurer, and to district association and local treasurers and collectors for their help.
5. That Martin G West be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2006-2007.
6. That Messrs Edmund Gibbs & Co be reappointed as Auditors.

7. That the Report of the General Assembly Council and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
8. That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
9. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Peter Hewis for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
10. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Myrna Michell, organist for the Anniversary Service, and to local Unitarians who arranged other music for the Meetings.
11. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly Annual Meetings Panel and other volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2007

1) FROM THE EASTERN UNION OF UNITARIAN & FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, noting that the syllabuses for Religious Education in maintained schools are periodically reviewed, encourages its member congregations to inform themselves about their local syllabus with a view to having some input into the review process.

2) FROM GOLDERS GREEN UNITARIANS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- * Notes that an increasing number of people living in the UK are foreign migrant workers, and that they contribute to the national wealth;
- * That many of these migrant workers experience exploitation by unscrupulous employers who take advantage of their ignorance of their rights and of weak regulation, and that they also face prejudice;
- * That in recent years a number of faith and community groups have come together to support migrant workers living and working in the UK.
- * Urges the General Assembly Executive Committee, and all Congregations, District Associations and Affiliated Societies, to get involved in appropriate campaigns to support foreign migrant workers and new-arrival communities in Britain, and to help end their exploitation.

3) FROM THE UNITARIAN WOMEN'S GROUP

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

A. Welcomes the recent action of Her Majesty's Government in signing the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings;

B. Urges the immediate introduction of all necessary measures required by the terms of the Convention.

C. Pledges its active support at national, district and local levels of the work of CHASTE (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking across Europe) and other Non Government Organisations to end this appalling abuse of human beings and their sexuality.

4) FROM WESTGATE CHAPEL (UNITARIAN), WAKEFIELD

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports the Strangers into Citizens Campaign.

5) FROM THE NORTHERN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges all Churches, Fellowships and their members and friends to, firstly do a personal and collective carbon footprint and secondly work out ways to reduce it.

6) FROM SEVENTEEN INDIVIDUAL VOTING MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

Welcomes the recent report 'Time to Talk: The Case for Diplomatic Solutions' on Iran issued by a coalition of humanitarian, medical, environmental, trade union, Muslim and Christian organisations warning of:

- * the potentially highly dangerous consequences unleashed by an armed attack on Iran's nuclear installations,
- * the deaths of many innocent civilians in densely populated areas near these nuclear facilities,
- * heightened instability in the Middle East, with grave effects on the political situation in Iraq and neighbouring countries,
- * a disruption of the oil supply leading to a serious worldwide energy crisis and consequent economic damage to many economies following rises in oil prices,
- * environmental degradation caused by nuclear contamination, and
- * an inflammation of the already grave dangers of terrorism throughout the region

This General Assembly, mindful of these dangers, calls on the British Government to pursue resolutely all available diplomatic options through the United Nations within the framework of international law and the UN Charter in order to seek a peaceful diplomatic solution of the crisis caused by nuclear proliferation and political instability in the Arabian Gulf and throughout the region.

7) FROM THE UNITARIAN PEACE FELLOWSHIP

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

recognising the suffering caused to civilian populations around the world by the use and indiscriminate nature of cluster munitions, calls upon HM Government to support the call by the International Committee of the Red Cross for a new international humanitarian law agreement to specifically regulate cluster munitions and the implementation of the following three measures by all Nation States;

- * To immediately end the use of cluster munitions;
- * To prohibit the targeting of cluster munitions against any military objective located in a populated area;
- * To eliminate stocks of inaccurate and unreliable cluster munitions and, pending their destruction, not to transfer such weapons to other countries.

Further that all Churches, Fellowships, Societies and individual Members of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches be encouraged to support the above by highlighting the issue through worship, talks and workshops during 2007, and to support the Unitarian Peace Fellowship Lent Appeal.

PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

1. That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
2. That Messrs Edmund Gibbs & Co be reappointed as Auditors.
3. That Martin G West be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2007-2008.
4. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Martin G West for his services as Honorary Treasurer, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
5. That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
6. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Brenda Catherall for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
7. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Geoffrey R Usher, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these meetings.
8. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly Annual Meetings Panel and other volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
9. That the Reverend Celia Midgley be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2007-2008
10. That Joyce Ashworth be appointed as Vice-President for the year 2007-2008.
11. That this seventy-ninth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by David Dawson as President during the year 2006-2007.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2008

The following Resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2008. In each case they were passed with a majority well in excess of the basic requirement.

1) FROM - General Assembly Executive Committee

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches congratulates the British League of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women on its centenary and marks with gratitude the significant contribution of the League and its members to the life of the Unitarian movement over the past hundred years.

2) FROM - General Assembly Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches adopts the amended Constitution and By-Laws in document AGM 11/08 as a replacement for the existing Constitution and By-Laws.

3) FROM - General Assembly Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of Dr Roy Smith to Unitarians in the UK and abroad by naming him as an Honorary Member.

4) FROM - General Assembly Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognise the considerable contribution of Michael Tomlin to Unitarians in the UK by naming him as an Honorary Member.

5) FROM - General Assembly Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes and recognises the Ministerial Fellowship as an affiliated society of the General Assembly.

6) FROM - Foy Society

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges Her Majesty's Government and the Scottish Executive to focus more fully on strategies for prevention of crime and for the rehabilitation of offenders and to rely less on often ineffective punishments, such as imprisonment.

7) FROM - Oxford Chapel Society

That this General Assembly of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the need for marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales to be placed on an equal footing, and the need for full compliance with the spirit of the Human Rights Act, calls upon H M Government to introduce relevant legislation permitting ceremonies for civil partnerships to be performed in any place of worship or other premises in England and Wales licensed for the celebration of marriage. In addition this General Assembly of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon the Scottish Executive to introduce legislation permitting religious celebrants to officiate at partnership celebrations in Scotland.

8) FROM - Yorkshire Union

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports HM Government and the devolved administrations within the United Kingdom of GB and NI in their endeavours to negotiate, where appropriate, with organisations which represent the widest possible spectrum of faith communities such as the Interfaith Network of the United Kingdom. It welcomes the initiatives already undertaken, looks for parity of dealing with all faith bodies, and urges the continuing commitment of resources to this important work.

9) FROM - General Assembly Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its dismay and concern at the wanton attack on the Gellionnen Chapel and offers its heartfelt support to the congregation of the Gellionnen Chapel and its student lay pastor Lewis Rees.

PROCEDURAL RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
2. That Shaw Gibbs & Co be reappointed as Auditors.
3. That Martin G West be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2008-2009.
4. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Martin G West for his services as Honorary Treasurer, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
5. That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
6. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Art Lester for preaching the Assembly Sermon, to the Reverend Jane Barraclough, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
7. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
8. That Joyce Ashworth be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2008-2009

9. That the Rev Robert Wightman be appointed as Vice-President for the year 2008-2009.

10. That this eightieth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by the Rev Celia Midgley as President during the year 2007-2008.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2009

The following resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2009.

1) FROM - The General Assembly Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes and endorses the Heads of Agreement for the Accord with the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland in document AGM11/09.

2) FROM - The General Assembly Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of The Rev James McClelland to Unitarians in the UK by naming him as an Honorary Member.

3) FROM - The General Assembly Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of the Rev J Eric Jones to Unitarians in the UK by naming him as an Honorary Member.

4) FROM - The Yorkshire Union

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches asks the Executive Committee to consider adopting a shorter and more dynamic working title for our movement in the UK and bring their proposals to the GA meetings in 2010.

5) FROM - The Yorkshire Union

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches asks the Executive Committee to compile a set of behavioural principles that can be seen to underpin our theological diversity. They should ideally be brief, simply expressed, easily understood, and attractive to the new inquirer. These principles should be presented for consideration at the GA meetings in 2010.

6) FROM - The Unitarian Women's Group

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, given that Social Justice is at the heart of our ministry and witness, urges the Executive Committee of the General Assembly to appoint a paid Social Justice Officer with responsibility for raising awareness of significant social issues, internationally and within our denomination.

7) FROM - Westgate Chapel, Wakefield

That, provided a suitable candidate can be found, this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges the Executive Committee to appoint a salaried and dedicated Information Officer.

8) FROM - The Foy Society

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the fact that not all members of our religious body are allowed to be Leaders of the Scout Association without compromising their personal faith, encourages the Scout Association to be more accepting of diversity in matters of ultimate belief.

9) FROM - North and East Lancashire Unitarian Mission

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches notes with regret the reluctance of some Christian faith schools to accept Unitarians as pupils and expresses its

concern at such religious discrimination to Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and to Her Majesty's Government.

PROCEDURAL RESOLUTIONS

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs & Co be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That Derek McAuley be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2009-2010.
- 4) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Martin G West for his services as Honorary Treasurer, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
- 5) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Margaret Kirk for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend John Harley, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 8) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 9) That the Reverend Robert Wightman be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2009-2010.
- 10) That Neville Kenyon be appointed as Vice-President for the year 2009-2010.
- 11) That this eighty-first General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Joyce Ashworth as President during the year 2008-2009.

ANNUAL MEETINGS - 2010

1) FROM - Westgate Chapel, Wakefield

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the recent criticisms by the Prince of Wales and others, affirms that the cultural change known as "The Enlightenment" has been of immense benefit to humankind in its seeking out of knowledge old and new, and that its emphasis on wisdom being derived from many sources, including nature, science and reason, must be maintained.

2) FROM - Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches notes that the Heads of Agreement for the Accord with the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland was approved by the General Synod of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland on 10 June 2009 with the exception of clause 6.6, and agrees to the removal of this clause from the Heads of Agreement.

3) FROM - Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches sends congratulations and best wishes to its sister denomination The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, to its presbyteries and member churches on the occasion of the Church's centenary. The Assembly records with thanksgiving our common allegiance to the principle of Non-Subscription,

our shared but different histories and the many ministers who have served both in Great Britain and in Ireland ; and looks forward to many future years of co-operation.

4) FROM - Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of David Dawson to Unitarians in the UK by naming him as an Honorary Member.

PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

Proposed by: The GA President the Rev Bob Wightman

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs LLP be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That Huw Thomas be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2010-2011.
- 4) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Derek McAuley and Huw Thomas for their services as Honorary Treasurers, to Reverend Dr Ann Peart for undertaking the position of Acting Honorary Treasurer, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
- 5) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Michael Dadson for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Stephen Lingwood, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 8) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 9) That Neville Kenyon be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2010-2011.
- 10) That the Reverend Dr Ann Peart be appointed as Vice-President for the year 2010-2011.
- 11) That this eighty-second General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by the Reverend Robert Wightman as President during the year 2009-2010.

EMERGENCY MOTIONS

The following emergency motion has been accepted by the Steering Committee as having met the necessary criteria to be put as an emergency motion and voted in by the General Assembly at the Annual meeting held in Nottingham 8 - 11 April 2010

1) FROM - Foy Society

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches warmly welcomes the campaign to establish a tax levy on international bank transactions to create a fund to combat international poverty and fight climate change - the so-called 'Robin Hood Tax', based on the original idea proposed by the economist James Tobin; fully endorses the prompt action taken by

Unitarian Headquarters to sign up the General Assembly as a supporting body to the campaign; instructs the Chief Officer to convey the General Assembly's support for this initiative to Her Majesty's Government; and urges all Unitarians to sign up for the campaign.

2) FROM - Macclesfield

Following the recent decision of the Church of England to disinvest funds from Vedanta Resources this General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches instructs its Executive Committee to instruct its brokers to disinvest any funds it may have with Vedanta Resources.

RESOLUTIONS 2011

The following motions have been submitted for consideration at the GA Annual Meetings 2011. Amendments may be submitted at any time prior to the final vote on a motion. However, it is in the best interests of clarity for amendments to be advised as far in advance as possible.

1. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches congratulates the Unitarian Universalist Association on its 50th anniversary as successor to the American Unitarian Association (1825) and the Universalist Church of America (1793).

2. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes Undodaidd Bangor Unitarians as a 'small congregation' according to by-law 2.2.

3. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

To amend Paragraph 7 of the constitution, adding new sub paragraphs d and e:

d. If the number of candidates remaining validly nominated for an election is equal to the number of members to be elected to the Executive Committee, those candidates shall be declared elected unopposed.

e. If the number of candidates remaining validly nominated for an election is less than the number of members to be elected to the Executive Committee, then –

- (i) the candidates validly nominated shall be declared elected unopposed, and
- (ii) the Executive Committee shall fill any vacancy by appointment within six months from the date the declaration of valid nominations were received. Any such appointed person shall serve until the next Executive Committee election.

[note: this motion requires a two-thirds majority, as per GA Constitution paragraph 17]

4. FROM NORTHAMPTON UNITARIANS AND FROM TWELVE INDIVIDUAL FULL MEMBERS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- [1] joins with the Unitarian Universalist Association, the International Association for Religious Freedom, the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Religions for Peace, the Council for a Parliament of the World Religions, the National Council of Churches USA, the Three Faiths Forum, the Earth Charter and other people of goodwill from various spiritual traditions throughout the world in affirming the Charter for Compassion.

- [2] urges our fellow Unitarians and Universalists to reflect on the *Charter's* vital humanitarian message, inspired by the Golden Rule, and to act in its spirit.
- [3] resolves to become a partner organisation to the Charter for Compassion.

5. FROM THE UNITARIAN PEACE FELLOWSHIP

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- [1] congratulates Amnesty International on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary in July 2011.
- [2] notes Amnesty International's devoted work for human rights and civil and religious liberty worldwide; its determined advocacy of all victims of injustice and political and religious persecution, in particular women, gay people and vulnerable minorities; and its campaigns against the death penalty and judicial injustices.
- [3] requests the Chief Officer to write to Amnesty International expressing our warmest congratulations and encourages our Unitarian congregations to mark this occasion appropriately

6. FROM OLDHAM UNITARIAN CHAPEL

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

[1] applauds this statement by Kate Wareing, Director, UK Poverty, Oxfam on February 4th, 2011:

"Thousands of people are being forced into destitution as a result of government policies. We must end the policies that lead to destitution, and are unacceptable in the sixth richest country in the world".

[2] recognises that such destitution affects tens of thousands of people currently resident in the United Kingdom;

[3] holds that the United Kingdom government should change policies which lead to destitution and should ensure a fair, efficient asylum system which protects the rights and dignity of all who use it.

[4] requests its Chief Officer to write to the Immigration Minister recommending that the United Kingdom government should:

[4a] provide destitute asylum seekers with support to meet essential living needs: either until they are returned to their country of origin or they are given permission to remain within the United Kingdom;

[4b] provide free access to healthcare for all asylum seekers while they are in the United Kingdom;

[4c] grant asylum seekers permission to work if their case has not been resolved within six months or they have been refused, but temporarily cannot be returned through no fault of their own;

[4d] improve decision making and ensure that all those in need of protection receive it.

[5] encourages Unitarian and Free Christian congregations and every individual Unitarian to write to their own MPs in furtherance of these proposals.

Additional proposals:

- 1) Adoption of Standing Orders for the Conduct of the Annual Meetings – 2011 (Document AGM 12/11)

“To amend paragraphs 5.4 and 6.3 to replace “two thirds” with a “simple” majority.”

- 2) Stipend Review Committee Recommendations (Document AGM 13/11)

“To refer back the Stipend Review Report”

FURTHER MOTIONS

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs LLP be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That Huw Thomas be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2011-2012.
- 4) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Huw Thomas for his services as Honorary Treasurer, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
- 5) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Jeffrey Lane Gould for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Anthony Howe, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 8) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 9) That Reverend Dr Ann Peart be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2011-2012.
- 10) That Elizabeth Dyson-Jones be appointed as Vice-President for the year 2011-2012.
- 11) That this eighty-third General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Neville Kenyon as President during the year 2010-2011.

RESOLUTIONS 2012

The following resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2012.

1. From the Scottish Unitarian Association & the Merseyside & District Missionary Association

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon Her Majesty's Government and the Scottish Government to ensure that legislation is passed so that all couples, same-sex or mixed sex, have equal access to civil marriages, religious marriages and civil partnerships. We have no wish to impose this legislation on those faith traditions who feel, for religious reasons, unable to comply.

2. From the North & East Lancashire Unitarian Mission

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches requests the Executive Committee urgently to prioritise and formalise a policy which will enhance the Executive Committee's communication both to and from the District Associations and the congregations.

3. From Watford Unitarian Fellowship

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, calls upon its Executive Committee to ask the Constitutional Review Group to prepare proposals to change the constitution to allow proxy voting at the Annual Meetings.

4. From the Executive Committee (Emergency Resolution)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of the Reverend Keith Gilley to Unitarians in the UK by naming him as an Honorary Member.

5. From the Executive Committee

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the proposed legislation allowing Government access to all private e-mails, texts, mobile phone and internet use, and calls upon all United Kingdom Unitarians and Free Christians to oppose vigorously this gross violation of the rights of privacy and civil liberty.

FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs LLP be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Huw Thomas for his services as Honorary Treasurer, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services. This meeting authorises the Executive Committee to make appropriate interim arrangements to ensure that the functions of the Honorary Treasurer are fulfilled until a permanent appointment can be made.
- 4) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 5) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Celia Cartwright for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Chris Goacher, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 8) That Elisabeth Dyson-Jones be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2012-2013.
- 9) That Reverend Bill Darlison be appointed as Vice-President for the year 2012-2013.
- 10) That this eighty-fourth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Reverend Dr Ann Peart as President during the year 2011-2012.

The following motion was referred back to the proposer and seconder to do more consultation with a view to it being presented again to a subsequent Annual Meeting.

From Fulwood Old Chapel, Sheffield

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches believes that:
any individual who faces an intolerable existence because of a debilitating and/or incurable condition should have the right to seek support for the termination of their life in a painless and dignified manner; and
legislation should respect their choice and allow them compassionate assistance in achieving such a death without fear of prosecution.

RESOLUTIONS 2013

The following resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2013.

1. From Fulwood Old Chapel, Sheffield; Cross Street Chapel, Manchester; and 12 Full Members

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognising the worth and dignity of all people and their freedom to believe as their consciences dictate, believes that:

- 1) Any individual who faces an intolerable existence because of a debilitating and/or incurable physical condition should have the right to seek support for the termination of their life in a painless and dignified manner; and
- 2) legislation should respect their choice and allow them compassionate assistance in achieving such a death without fear of the prosecution of anyone involved.

2. From Golders Green Unitarians

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches urges fellow Unitarians and all people of goodwill to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part and recognising the dignity and worth of all living creatures, cultivate an ethic of compassion and mercy to the billions of sentient beings who share this planet with us and to act in ways that promote our common welfare.

3. From Belper Unitarian Chapel

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- 1) Affirms the common call of faith traditions for peace among the nations
- 2) Acknowledges those congregations which presently participate in inter-faith & inter church events contemplating and praying for World Peace
- 3) Designates the 3rd Sunday in October each year as a special Unitarian day for World Peace when Unitarian & Free Christian Churches host an 'Interfaith Service for World Peace'
- 4) Requests that the Facilitation Services Action Group together with the Unitarian Peace Fellowship produce worship material for this occasion.

4. From The Foy Society

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches asks the UK Government to establish without delay a Royal Commission or interdepartmental public inquiry to -

- 1) examine the present UK drug-related health and crime situations and compare those in other countries
- 2) examine and review the efficacy of current UK legislation in relation to drugs both those which are illegal and those which are legal
- 3) review options for alternatives to the current criminal justice-based approach, drawing on the experience of other countries, including the appropriateness of the medicalisation and decriminalisation of drug substances and the treatment of addictions.

FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs LLP be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Robert Ince for his services as Acting Honorary Treasurer, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services. This meeting authorises the Executive Committee to make appropriate interim arrangements to ensure that the functions of the Honorary Treasurer are fulfilled until a permanent appointment can be made.
- 4) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 5) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Feargus O'Connor for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Sarah Tinker, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 8) That Reverend Bill Darlison be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2013-2014.
- 9) That Marion Baker be appointed as Vice-President for the year 2013-2014.
- 10) That this eighty-fifth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Elisabeth Dyson-Jones as President during the year 2012-2013.

RESOLUTIONS 2014

The following resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2014.

1. FROM WESTGATE CHAPEL, WAKEFIELD

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon the BBC Religion and Ethics advisers to broaden the BBC Radio 4 Thought for the Day by including secular and spiritual non-theist speakers.

2. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches add a new paragraph to the Constitution:

“18. Dissolution

- (1) If the Members resolve to dissolve the charity the Executive Committee will remain in office as charity trustees and be responsible for winding up the affairs of the charity in accordance with this clause.
- (2) The trustees must collect in all the assets of the charity and must pay or make provision for all the liabilities of the charity.
- (3) The trustees must apply any remaining property or money:
 - (a) Directly for the objects;
 - (b) By transfer to any charity or charities for the purposes the same or similar to the charity;
 - (c) In such other manner as the Charity Commission for England and Wales (“the Commission”) may approve in writing in advance.
- (4) The Members may pass a resolution before or at the same time as the resolution to dissolve the charity specifying the manner in which the trustees are to apply the remaining property or assets of the charity and the trustees must comply with the resolution if it is consistent with paragraphs (a) – (c) inclusive in sub-clause (3) above.
- (5) In no circumstances shall the net assets of the charity be paid to or distributed among the Members of the charity (except to a Member that is itself a charity).
- (6) The trustees must notify the Commission promptly that the charity has been dissolved. If the trustees are obliged to send the charity’s accounts to the Commission for the accounting period which ended before its dissolution, they must send the Commission the charity’s final accounts.”

3. FROM TWELVE FULL MEMBERS

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its support for the campaign being undertaken by our Unitarian co-religionists, the Hungarian Unitarian Church, along with other church groups and environmental protection groups, against extensive mining operations in the Roşia Montană area of Transylvania, Romania. We are appalled at (i) the possible uprooting of the residents of this community from their homes, livelihoods, places of worship and their burial grounds and (ii) the known risk of major environmental damage from the use of cyanide in the mining operations. We call upon the Romanian government to discontinue permanently all consideration and negotiations regarding this mining development by the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation in this area.

4. FROM THE YORKSHIRE UNITARIAN UNION

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches asks the Executive Committee to make their recommendation for GA Vice-President on the basis of appropriateness for the post, and without reference to the present convention of alternating lay person and minister. We would hope that the Executive Committee would still be mindful of the need for some balance, over time, between lay persons, ministers and other variables such as gender and geography.

5. FROM TWELVE FULL MEMBERS

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, reaffirming our commitment to the Charter for Compassion and its message of empathy and universal compassion and our respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part:

acclaims the vital work of the British Red Cross in helping save the lives of millions of people in Syria and the Philippines and commends fellow Unitarians and all people of goodwill who have contributed to the Clara Barton Disasters Emergency Appeal in response to recent appeals issued on behalf of the General Assembly;

and, should the General Assembly, through the Executive Committee, decide to issue further appeals in response to major international disasters, encourages Unitarians everywhere to support them generously and wholeheartedly.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

6. FROM THE OCTAGON CHAPEL NORWICH AND 12 FULL MEMBERS

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports the campaign by the Howard League for Penal Reform urging the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Chris Grayling, to reconsider the Prison Service Instruction that limits books and other essentials being sent to prisoners from family and friends. Reading is a right and not a privilege.

FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs LLP be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Robert Ince for his services as Honorary Treasurer, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services. This meeting authorises the Executive Committee to make appropriate interim arrangements to ensure that the functions of the Honorary Treasurer are fulfilled until a permanent appointment can be made.
- 4) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 5) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the Reverend Dr David Usher for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 8) That Marion Baker be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2014-2015.
- 9) That this eighty-fifth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Reverend Bill Darlison as President during the year 2013-2014.

RESOLUTIONS 2015

The following resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2015.

1. FROM CROSS STREET UNITARIAN CHAPEL, MANCHESTER

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, in the spirit of those of our liberal religious tradition who have strived and strive currently to realise social justice in the world, whilst recognising the freedom of all to believe as their consciences dictate,

A: believes that the proposed Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) treaty:

- (1) Poses a threat to many of the hard-won social gains of the 19th and 20th centuries;
- (2) Would hand over uncontested power and influence from democratically elected governments to multi- and transnational corporations and
- (3) Would likely impact unfairly on many of the poorest in societies across the globe.

B: calls upon individual congregations and affiliated bodies of the General Assembly to inform their members of this issue, so that individuals may study it for themselves and, according to their consciences, take action on it, for example if they so wish by contacting their political representatives, and joining their efforts with groups campaigning against this treaty.

2. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of Dawn Buckle, MEd to Unitarians in the United Kingdom by naming her as an Honorary Member.

3. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches congratulates the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) on its 20th Anniversary.

4. FROM TWELVE FULL MEMBERS AND GOLDERS GREEN UNITARIANS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognising the universal kinship of all sentient beings affirmed by the world's great religions, philosophers and sages, encourages fellow Unitarians and all people of goodwill to support the Universal Kinship Fund of the Dr Hadwen Trust and other humane research charities in order to advance non-animal medical research and in so doing help save human and animal lives.

5. FROM WESTGATE CHAPEL, WAKEFIELD

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches asks the Executive Committee to devise, or cause to be devised, recommendations for the payment of the organists/directors of music and others who play for the services of its member congregations in much the same way as it provides guidelines for the payment of ministers and leaders of worship.

FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs LLP be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That Peter Hanley be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2015-2016.
- 4) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Robert Ince and Rev Martin Whitell for their service as Acting Treasurer during the year 2013-2014, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
- 5) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev John Harley for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Sheena Gabriel, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 8) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 9) That Rev John Clifford be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2015-2016.
- 10) That this eighty-seventh General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Marion Baker as President during the year 2014-2015.

RESOLUTIONS 2016

The following resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2016.

1. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognising the benefits of Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status, requests the Executive Committee to bring forward proposals enabling the General Assembly to convert from an Unincorporated Association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

2. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

That the General Assembly's Constitution be amended, as follows:

Recommendation 1.

That paragraph 6A "Transitional arrangements" be deleted.

Recommendation 2.

That the following be added as a 3rd section under 6.

"Members may serve for a maximum of two successive terms; a term includes any period as an appointed member to fill a vacancy following an election or arising from a casual vacancy."

Recommendation 3.

That the following be added to the 3rd section under 6.

"A period of at least one year should elapse before a member is eligible to seek a further term of office by election or appointment to a vacancy."

Recommendation 4.

That the following be added to the 3rd section under 6.

"A person who has been appointed to fill a vacancy under 7. E. ii. or 13 and who has completed their term of office will not be eligible to be appointed to fill a further vacancy until a period of one year has elapsed".

Recommendation 5.

That "Device" be replaced by "Devise" in paragraph 14.

3. FROM THE FOY SOCIETY

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the danger posed internationally by violent extremism, and cognisant of the revelations of Edward Snowden about covert surveillance by the security services:

- 1) Welcomes, in principle, the Government's intention to establish a statutory framework to oversee and monitor the work of the security services.
- 2) Considers that the Government's Investigatory Powers Bill, as presently drafted, fails to provide adequate safeguards to protect the privacy of law abiding citizens.
- 3) Urges that the Bill be amended so as to incorporate the eight point plan proposed by Liberty (National Council for Civil Liberties).

4. FROM GOLDERS GREEN UNITARIANS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- 1) expresses its deep concern that the Syrian Civil War has caused over 250,000 deaths, many more serious injuries, the displacement of over ten million people and a refugee exodus of over four million Syrians;
- 2) calls on fellow Unitarians to respond with compassion and generosity to the Clara Barton Red Cross Interfaith Emergency Appeal for urgent medical aid, food and shelter for the millions of victims of the war in Syria and the care of millions of refugees, including many vulnerable children and elderly people in desperate need of humanitarian aid and shelter.

5. FROM TWELVE FULL MEMBERS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

deeply concerned by the worsening effects of climate change;
committed as we are to the service of humanity, and to respect for all creation that constitutes the interdependent web uniting all life;
noting the partially positive but inadequate outcome of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 21) in Paris;
and believing that solutions lie in the informed, imaginative and courageous engagement of compassionate women, men and children all round the world;

calls upon all Unitarians and Free Christians to respond by:

- a) making rational changes to personal lifestyle by measuring as necessary and reducing personal carbon footprints—including in the areas of domestic energy consumption and supply, transport and travel choices, and diet;
- b) initiating and supporting actions at congregational level to reduce energy usage and promote energy efficiency - including by recording premises' energy consumption to establish a baseline carbon footprint, and through involvement where possible in local community projects around energy efficiency, seeking advice from the GA's Buildings Advisory Panel as appropriate;
- c) and by taking specific collective action, in coalition with other organisations and concerned citizens, to insist on moves as quickly as possible to cuts of more than 80% of greenhouse gas

emissions below 2010 emission levels from the UK by 2050 as an essential contribution to limiting global warming to an increase of no more than 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels.

FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs Ltd be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That Peter Hanley be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2016-2017.
- 4) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Peter Hanley for his service as Treasurer during the year 2015-2016, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
- 5) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Alex Bradley for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Winnie Gordon, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 8) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 9) That Dorothy Hewerdine be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2016-2017.
- 10) That this eighty-eighth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Rev John Clifford as President during the year 2015-2016.

RESOLUTIONS 2017

The following resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2017.

RESOLUTION 1

In view of the tragic news of the bombing of two Coptic Churches in Egypt on Palm Sunday, 9th April 2017, this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, meeting now in Birmingham, extends its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the over 41 Coptic Christians who died, and to the Coptic Pope and churches of Egypt, the United Kingdom and around the world.

In the words of Hans Küng, to the International Association for Religious Freedom:

“There will be no peace in the world, until there is peace among religions. There will be no peace among religions until there is dialogue among religions.”

RESOLUTION 2

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports changes to the length and format of the Annual Meetings [as set out in report **AGM13/17**];

and therefore, requests the Executive Committee and Annual Meetings Panel to bring forward proposals to the next Annual Meetings, including any amendments to the Constitution and By-laws, to enable such changes to take place for future Annual Meetings.

RESOLUTION 3

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of Rev Cliff Reed to the Unitarian cause worldwide by naming him as an Honorary Member.

RESOLUTION 4

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches deplores the harsh and degrading treatment of County Durham resident Irene Clennell on 26th February 2017 when she was taken away from her husband and family by the UK Border Agency, held in Dungavel immigration removal centre and then deported to Singapore in the most humiliating manner. This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon the Government of the United Kingdom to:

1. Immediately reinstate Irene Clennell's indefinite leave to remain in the UK, permitting her to return to her husband and family in County Durham.
2. Cease the practice of using obscure technical issues to deport people who have long been fully integrated into British families, thereby subjecting them and their family members to extreme anguish and distress.
3. Instruct the UK Border Agency to treat persons subjected to deportation with the utmost care, dignity and respect.

FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs Ltd be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That Peter Hanley be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2017-2018.
- 4) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Peter Hanley for his service as Treasurer during the year 2016-2017, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
- 5) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Sarah Tinker for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Daniel Costley, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 8) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 9) That Rev Charles VanDenBroeder be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2017-2018.
- 10) That this eighty-ninth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Dorothy Hewerdine as President during the year 2016-2017.

RESOLUTIONS 2018

The following resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2018.

RESOLUTION 1

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- 1) welcomes the award of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a global coalition of over 460 non-governmental organisations promoting adherence to and the implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW);
- 2) urges fellow Unitarians and congregations to write to the Prime Minister, MPs and, where appropriate, members of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, to call on the UK Government to abide fully by its legal obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), of which it is a founding member, and to express their support for the TPNW and promote awareness of the TPNW in our chapels and local communities and through letters to the press;
- 3) resolves to send a message of goodwill and solidarity to the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to commemorate the hundreds of thousands of people who were killed as a result of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs, all those gravely injured and all those who are still suffering and to join with them and all people of goodwill in praying that the world will heed the recent warning of Pope Francis of the 'catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects' of massive nuclear destruction.

RESOLUTION 2

That the By-laws be amended, as follows:

Amend title of section 2) to read

2) Conditions for Admission to Membership of the Assembly

Paragraph 2.1.2 – replace “12” by “8”

Paragraph 2.2 - replace with:

“2.2 Transitional Arrangements

Congregations admitted to membership as at 4 April 2018 under “2.2 Small Congregations” will be recognised as Members of the Assembly with Full voting rights.

RESOLUTION 3

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of Rev Dr Ann Peart to Unitarians in the United Kingdom by naming her as an Honorary Member.

RESOLUTION 4

- 1) That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches accepts the changes to the length and format of the Annual Meetings [as set out in report AGM13/18]; and that a formal review is carried out in three years' time.
- 2) That the General Assembly's Constitution be amended, as follows:

“ 10. Motions at Annual Meetings

No ordinary or procedural motion shall be proposed at the Annual Meeting unless notice in writing thereof shall have been given to the Executive Committee fifty-six days at least before the first day appointed for such meeting. An emergency motion may be proposed at the Annual Meetings if two-thirds of the members present and voting at the meeting give leave for this; this vote is taken without any prior discussion. Any amendment to a motion, which the President deems in order, may be proposed and discussed without notice or leave.

Motions submitted by Congregations, Regional Associations or Affiliated Societies must be supported by a majority of the relevant governing body of the Congregation, Association or Society. Motions submitted by Full Members must be endorsed by at least twelve such individual voting members of the Assembly. The Executive Committee shall give not less than thirty days' notice of any motion to the members of the Assembly, either by circular or by advertisement, as the Executive Committee shall determine. The Executive Committee has the authority to propose motions on its own behalf.

There shall be a maximum of FOUR ordinary motions accepted for debate by the Assembly. There shall be a maximum of ONE Emergency Motion (except in exceptional circumstances) accepted for debate by the Assembly.

In the event that more than FOUR ordinary motions and/or more than ONE emergency motions are received a vote shall be taken at the beginning of the business meetings to determine which four ordinary and one emergency motions shall be accepted for debate. ”

RESOLUTION 5

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, deeply concerned by the way that the negative effects of the government austerity measures implemented over the last few years have fallen disproportionately on women, calls upon all Unitarians and Free Christians to respond by:

- 1) acquainting themselves and their congregations with the relevant information regarding this subject;
- 2) initiating and supporting actions at congregational level to support women in their community affected by these measures through involvement where possible in local community projects and/or raising funds for the same, seeking advice from the Unitarian's Women's Group if required;
- 3) asking our chief officer to lobby parliament if and when possible for an end to the current austerity measures that are causing misery and hardship for so many people;
- 4) taking specific collective action, in coalition with other organisations and concerned citizens, to support the above.

RESOLUTION 6

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of Alan Ruston to Unitarians in the United Kingdom by naming him as an Honorary Member.

RESOLUTION 7

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- 1) Commends the excellent work of the Equality Trust which has shone a light on the evidence that inequality harms *everyone*, not just the poor, in all communities.
- 2) Urges Unitarians to take cognisance of the research findings of the Trust and to support the drive towards greater equality in society wherever possible.
- 3) Resolves that the General Assembly signifies its support by registering as an affiliate of the Trust and instructs the Executive Committee to make the necessary arrangements to put this into effect as soon as possible after these meetings.

FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

- 1) That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 2) That Shaw Gibbs Ltd be reappointed as Auditors.
- 3) That Peter Hanley be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2018-2019.
- 4) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Peter Hanley for his service as Treasurer during the year 2017-2018, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
- 5) That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 6) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Danny Crosby for preaching the Assembly Sermon.
- 7) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Kate Whyman, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.
- 8) That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 9) That Joan Cook be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2018-2019.
- 10) That Rev Celia Cartwright be appointed Vice-President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2018-2019.
- 11) That this ninetieth General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Rev Charles VanDenBroeder as President during the year 2017-2018.

MOTION REFERRED BACK

The following motion was 'referred back' – the proposers being asked to consult further and return with the motion to the next general meeting or the one following.

“That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, understanding and acknowledging the role of the member congregations of the Assembly, recognises the increasing role of new technology to develop virtual Unitarian communities and other forms of Unitarian involvement in today’s society and calls upon the Executive Committee to propose changes to the Constitution that will allow for new forms of membership to be accepted and will allow for such members to be represented in the business of the Assembly.”

RESOLUTIONS 2019

The following resolutions were agreed at the GA Annual Meetings 2019.

RESOLUTION 1

That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.

RESOLUTION 2

That James Cowper Kreston LLP be appointed as Auditors.

RESOLUTION 3

That Peter Hanley be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2019-2020.

RESOLUTION 4

That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Peter Hanley for his service as Treasurer during the year 2018-2019, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.

RESOLUTION 5

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches welcomes the Findhorn Unitarian Network into Membership as an Affiliated Society.

RESOLUTION 6

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the considerable contribution of Martin West to Unitarians in the United Kingdom by naming him as an Honorary Member.

RESOLUTION 7

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

Expresses its concern at the increasing incidence of devastating knife crime in Britain's towns and cities.

Expresses its strong support for an adequately funded multi-agency campaign to tackle this significantly raised threat to public safety, along the lines of that which has been so successful in Glasgow.

Urges Her Majesty's Government and the devolved administrations to establish an immediate investigation into ways and means of drastically reducing, over time, the ready availability of sharp pointed knives by the introduction of appropriate controls on retail and internet sales.

Calls upon Unitarian congregations to publicise the resolution amongst their members and friends and to ask their local elected representatives to raise these concerns with their relevant ministers and the Home Secretary's Serious Violence Task Force, with particular regard to the issue of sharp pointed knives.

RESOLUTION 8

That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.

RESOLUTION 9

That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Dr Maria Curtis for preaching the Assembly Sermon.

RESOLUTION 10

That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Dr Andy Phillips, worship leader for the Anniversary Service, and to all those who provided music and other content for the Anniversary Service and on other worship occasions during these Meetings.

RESOLUTION 11

That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.

That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.

RESOLUTION 12

That Rev Celia Cartwright be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2019-2020.

RESOLUTION 13

That Anne Mills be appointed Vice-President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2019-2020.

RESOLUTION 14

That this ninety-first General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Joan Cook as President during the year 2018-2019.