



“WHERE WE STAND”

Resolutions of the General Assembly Annual Meetings on Social Responsibility and Faith and Public Issues

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Introduction

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches was established in 1928. Ever since then – or rather since the new arrangements bedded down with the completion of a full year in 1930 – its Annual Meetings, held in different locations up and down the country, have passed resolutions. In 1930 it said that it would “strenuously oppose any sectarian right of Entry or the giving of Building Grants to Denominational Schools. In 2001 it opposed “any move by Her Majesty’s Government and the Scottish Executive to support any increase in the number of schools with a religious foundation”.

So there has been continuity over the years. There have also, however, been trends and differences. Constitutional amendments and other resolutions of a strictly internal organisational character are excluded. Unsuccessful motions were not considered: an analysis of these would be an interesting study in itself. It is worthy to note that the vast majority of resolutions originate out of social concern.

The data have been broken down into five periods of as equal length as is possible: 1930-45 (including the wartime assemblies, which continued to meet), 1946-60, 1961-75, 1976-90, and 1991-2002. Judged purely in terms of the number of resolutions successful at each GA meeting, the inter-war and war-time years were relatively productive for motion-making (2.6 resolutions passed at each assembly, 1930-45). They were followed by a decidedly fallow time (1.5 resolutions per assembly in 1946-60; 1.9 in 1961-75). The period from the oil price rise in the 1970s to the fall of Mrs Thatcher in 1990 was the high spot (4.6 resolutions passed per assembly). Since then there has been a slight falling off – 4.0 resolutions on average were adopted at each assembly 1991-2002.

Now let us turn to the subject matter of the resolutions. We may start with what might be called traditional concerns for dissenters. All save one of the resolutions on Education have regretted a projected increase in denominational schooling. Gambling has been a perennial topic of concern; although this was particularly marked in the earlier years, the advent of the National Lottery in the early 1990s was welcomed no more than the spread of pools betting in the late 1940s. The evils of drink seem to have worried modern Unitarians rather less – the two most recent resolutions categorised under this heading have primarily dealt with drugs rather than alcohol – but have nevertheless made an occasional appearance.

From about the late 1960s onwards a new element appears, one which might be termed the perspective of the social welfare professional. The category ‘Social Policy’ comprises a variety of topics: health, community care, housing, social security, financial credit and personal debt. As time has moved on, more and more knowledgeable (and sometimes very long) resolutions have been passed in these areas. Similar influences have affected resolutions concerned with crime and penal policy. Before the 1990s there were few of these – indeed, the only early one (1957) was a simple repudiation of capital punishment. During the past decade there has been an average of one such resolution every two years, and the formation, activities and expertise of the Penal Affairs Panel (initially the Penal Reform Group) have clearly been instrumental in bringing these issues to the fore.

There are other areas which have moved up and up the agenda, reflecting, in these cases, their greater salience in society at large. The first resolution on the Environment, precursor of a series passed in the 1990s, was adopted as late as 1970. Animal Welfare seems to have a rather longer history as a subject for Unitarian concern, as expressed at General Assemblies. The first such resolution was passed in 1954: it condemned “all

sports which cause unnecessary suffering to animals”, and also mentioned vivisection, although it fell short of recommending an anti-vivisection position. Here again, however, in recent years the pace has quickened somewhat, and the shift in sensibilities may be evidenced by the successful 1990 resolution which was unabashedly entitled ‘Animal Rights’.

Unitarians have always been much concerned with rights (and so far at least there is no sign that the Blair Government’s insistence that “rights must always be balanced with responsibilities” – meaning duties – has influenced the wording of resolutions). Nearly 30 per cent of all the resolutions adopted since 1930 are included under the ‘Civil and Human Rights’ heading, and since this is the largest single category, a further breakdown is attempted in order to give some further illustrations of changes in the prominence of certain issues over the years. However, it should also be noted that quite a few of these resolutions have been very general in their scope: in the 1950s, in particular, there was a tendency to applaud hymns to liberty, tolerance and so on, the well-intentioned imprecision of which made them pretty meaningless in practice.

The two 1930-45 resolutions concerned with the rights of minorities both had anti-semitism as their subject – on the continent of Europe rather than at home. The first reference to immigrants from the Commonwealth appears, in passing, in a 1956 resolution condemning apartheid in South Africa (classed here, for want of a better alternative, as a ‘Third World Issue’): the resolution also calls, in language which would scarcely now be regarded as politically acceptable, “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.” Subsequent resolutions have concentrated on the banning of unfair and prejudicial treatment on racial or minority ethnic grounds, and this shift in favour of an anti-discriminatory approach also facilitated the emergence of women’s rights and the rights of gay men and lesbian women as topics for discussion at General Assemblies. Neither of these featured on GA Agendas before the 1960s and 1970s: indeed, before and immediately after the War the latter would probably have been unmentionable during any polite conference, and several of the women’s–rights resolutions were concerned with abortion, also seldom discussed in respectable circles during the earliest periods under review. During the most recent couple of decades there has been a further move in opinion, in which Unitarians have amply shared, towards a greater appreciation of the virtues of multiculturalism and of a diversity of lifestyles; however, GA resolutions have in the main stayed wedded to the human rights approach.

Unitarian opinion has mostly been vigorously internationalist, and one aspect of this is a perennial concern with peace and disarmament. Successful resolutions on these topics form the second largest group after Civil and Human Rights. As with the penal resolutions, although over a considerably longer period, these have been much aided by the activities of a dedicated special interest group, in this case the Unitarian Peace Fellowship. The tenor of the resolutions has been pacific or pacifistic rather than pacifist, and one can often detect in the wording a desire to avoid adopting stances which might split the movement, perhaps epitomised in a 1958 motion calling for a moratorium on nuclear testing, which disclaims the expression of “any opinion on the wisdom or otherwise of retaining Atom and Hydrogen bombs..... or of threatening their use under certain circumstances”. Although there are some sonorous affirmations of the virtues of peace or appeals to the probably non-existent goodwill of world leaders – again especially common in the early years of the Cold War – others of these resolutions are quite precisely targeted. An example would be the 1997 resolution supporting an international ban on the production, trading and use of

anti-personnel land mines. This fed into an international campaign which has had some success, even if, as is shown by events in Afghanistan, it is as yet sadly incomplete.

“Third World Issues” may be a bit of a misnomer; before and during the war ‘le tiers monde’ had not yet been invented. The earlier resolutions, therefore, are often concerned with colonial affairs, such as a call for the resumption of negotiations with leaders of Indian opinion (1944). Also worth noting are two resolutions from the same period on famine in Europe – which remind us that third world conditions were closer to our doorsteps in those days – and a 1933 resolution, timed to coincide with the centenary of the abolition of slavery in British possessions, which draws attention to the continuing survival of the ‘peculiar institution’. An appropriately revised version could be passed today but would now come under the title World Development. Recent successful resolutions in this area are often full and detailed, and cover such topics as Jubilee 2000 and the cancellation of debt, the defects of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), and the malign consequences of the increase in world population. As this list may indicate, the line between these resolutions and those subsumed under the heading of “the Environment” is becoming increasingly hard to draw.

The last category distinguished is entitled ‘Denominational Issues’, but this should not be taken as ending on a note of domestic cosiness, since many of these resolutions recommend the promotion of ecumenicalism in one form or another. Another recurring topic is relationships with umbrella Christian organisations, such as the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI). It should also be noted that some resolutions placed under other headings are, in whole or in part, concerned with internal denominational questions: enjoining non-discrimination in recruitment to the Ministry, for instance. Furthermore, there are a large number of resolutions which – usually among other things – recommend local action by member congregations, such as affiliation to voluntary organisations or participation in campaigns. Altogether, the picture presented by these resolutions is of a denomination determinedly looking outwards, not inwards.

Tony Rees (member of the Social Responsibility Committee)

This update takes account of the Resolutions passed until 2013. The focus on human rights continues although the term “civil and religious liberty” so beloved of Unitarians seems out-dated. It was good to congratulate Amnesty International in 2011 on its 50th Anniversary having supported their work in 1963. The ongoing relationship with the Non Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland was a significant denominational issue and an Accord was approved in 2010. The concern for drugs policy re-emerged in 2013 with the call for a Royal Commission or Interdepartmental Inquiry. In terms of ecumenical and interfaith relations it is interesting that the latter has been the focus on the Charter for Compassion and interfaith work for Peace. Education continued to be an area of concern with the return to issues of discrimination faced by Unitarian children, which one would have thought was long gone, and about the teaching of creationism, again a surprising area to combat. An explicit commitment in 2007 to reducing the carbon footprint followed up the earlier Resolution on world climate change of 2001. The 2013 Resolution on assisted dying, following a year-long consultation, has seen the Unitarians as the only faith group to have supported this change. Concerns about the rights of migrants and asylum seekers saw three Resolutions indicating that Unitarians were taking on board the issues of our inter-dependent world. Peace remained one of the most significant themes. Two Resolutions on civil partnerships in religious premises and then same sex marriage placed the Unitarian movement at the forefront of this campaign. It is interesting and perhaps

disappointing that Resolutions on social policy issues and unemployment have not been a priority despite the events of 2008. World development remained a concern.

There is some consistency between the concerns of the General Assembly and its member congregations over the last ten years and the previous seventy years. There does seem to be an acknowledgement that action orientated Resolutions have more impact as opposed to simply expressing a view. We should be asking “who is listening”, “what effectively can we do” and “who can we work with”? This was certainly the case with equal marriage where Unitarians can claim that they contributed to the passage of such progressive legislation.

Derek McAuley, Chief Officer

1. ANIMAL WELFARE

1946-1960

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (Resolution 10 1953)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates to 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 issues 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.

1961-1975

INTENSIVE FARMING (Resolution 18 1965)

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.

1976-1990

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (Resolution 14 1979)

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.

SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS (Resolution 14 1990)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises that slaughter-house 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.

1991-2013

ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS (Resolution 14 1991)

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.

ANIMAL TRANSPORT (Resolution 14 1995)

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.

THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF ALL LIVING BEINGS (Resolution 2, 2013)

That 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.

2. CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

1930-1945

DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIPS (Resolution 1 1934)

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 1934)

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.

INCITEMENT TO DISAFFECTION BILL (Resolution 7 1934)

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.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 8 1939)

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.

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE (Resolution 10 1940)

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.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 12 1942)

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.

CIVIL LIBERTIES (Resolution 11 1944)

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.

1946-1960

PRISONERS OF WAR (Emergency Resolution 12 1947)

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.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND SPEECH (Resolution 8 1948)

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.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 10 1951)

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.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 10 1952)

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.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (Resolution 12 1957)

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.

1961-1975

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (Resolution 13 1963)

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.

ADMISSION OF MR WILLIAMS TO THE UK (Emergency Resolution 1964)

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.

CIVIL RIGHTS (Emergency Resolution) 1965

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.

HUMAN RIGHTS YEAR (Resolution 12 1967)

'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.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES (Emergency Resolution 1970)

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.

IMMIGRATION BILL (Emergency Resolution 1971)

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.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES (Resolution 15 1972)

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.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ANTI-TORTURE CAMPAIGN (Resolution 11 1974)

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 1974)

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.

1976-1990

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION (Resolution 17 1976)

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.

ETHIOPIA (Emergency Resolution 2 1978)

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.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (Resolution 15 1980)

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.

POLICE BILL (Resolutions 14 & 15 1983)

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.

FREE SPEECH (Resolution 14 1988)

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.

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 15 1990)

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.

1991-2013

PRO-LIFE (Emergency Resolution 18 1993)

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.

ENTRY VISAS (Resolution 5 1997)

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

HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 5 1998)

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.

2004 – OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD, EXPRESSION OF CONCERN (Resolution 2 2004)

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.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (Resolution 5 2011)

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

GOVERNMENT ACCESS TO PERSONAL DATA (Resolution 5 2012)

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.

3. CRIMINAL JUSTICE & PENAL POLICY

1946-1960

THE DEATH PENALTY (Resolution 11 1956)

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.

1961-1975

AFFIRMATION COURTS (Resolution 13 1974)

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.

1976-1990

TRIAL BY JURY (Resolution 16 1977)

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.

VAGRANCY ACT 1824 (Resolution 17 1979)

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.

PRISON REFORM (Resolution 20 1981)

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.

1991-2013

PRISONS/PENAL AFFAIRS GROUP (Resolution 14 1992)

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 acknowledgement 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.

VICTIM SUPPORT (Resolution 4 1993)

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.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (Resolution 3 1997)

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 Right of the Child.

TRIAL BY JURY (Resolution 6 2000)

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.

PENAL REFORM (Resolution 9 2000)

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.

FOCUS ON PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION (Resolution 6 2008)

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.

4. DENOMINATIONAL ISSUES

1961-1975

STATEMENTS ON PUBLIC MATTERS (Resolution 12 1960)

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.

UN INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION YEAR (Resolution 12 1964)

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 C-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.

UNITARIAN VIEW (Resolution 9 1967)

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.

DOMESTIC MISSIONS (Resolution 11 1968)

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.

1976-90

VIOLENCE (Resolution 18 1976)

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.

SOCIAL ACTION (Resolution 13 1979)

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.

TRADE (Resolution 10 1980)

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.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (Resolution 23 1983)

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.

SOUTH AFRICA/ETHICAL INVESTMENT (Resolution 18 1985)

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.

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION (Resolution 15 1985)

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.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (Resolution 21 1986)

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.

HERITAGE TRAIL (Resolution 14 1989)

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

DEBT (Resolution 17 1989)

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.

1991-2013

CHILDREN'S BEREAVEMENT (Resolution 17 1991)

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.

GLOBAL ETHIC (Resolution 9 1994)

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 1994)

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.

UN 50th ANNIVERSARY (Resolution 4 1995)

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.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF TOLERANCE (Resolution 11 1995)

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.

FAIR TRADE (Resolution 5 1996)

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.

HOMELESSNESS (Resolution 4 1997)

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.

THE AGREEMENT (IRELAND) (Resolution 9 1998)

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.

SIR TIM BERNERS-LEE (Resolution 3 2005)

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

CENTENARY OF THE BRITISH LEAGUE OF UNITARIAN WOMEN (Resolution 1 2008)

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.

ATTACK ON GELLIONNEN CHAPEL (Resolution 9 2008)

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.

ACCORD WITH THE NON SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND
(Resolution 1 2009)

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.

SOCIAL JUSTICE OFFICER (Resolution 6, 2009)

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.

APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT OF THE ACCORD WITH THE NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND (Resolution 2 2010)

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.

CENTENARY OF THE NON-SUBSCRIBING CHURCH OF IRELAND (Resolution 3 2010)

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.

UNITERIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION 50th ANNIVERSARY (Resolution 1 2011)

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).

5. DRINK AND DRUGS

1930-1945

TEMPERANCE LEGISLATION (Resolution 13 1944)

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.

1976-1990

ALCOHOLISM (Resolution 2 1978)

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.

1991-2013

DRUGS (Resolution 8 1994)

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 providing inadequate, and current levels of drug funding 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.

DRUGS (Resolution 9 1995)

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.

CALL FOR A REVIEW OF DRUGS POLICY IN THE UK (Resolution 4, 2013)

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.

6. ECUMENISM & INTERFAITH

1961-1975

INTER-DENOMINATIONAL CO-OPERATION (Resolution C 1964)

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.

1976-1990

INTERFAITH (Resolution 16 1987)

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.

ECUMENISM (Resolution 12 1988)

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 1988)

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.

1991-2013

MULTI FAITH (Resolution 16 1992)

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.

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND (Emergency Resolution 17 1993)

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.

CCBI (Resolution 7 1995)

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.

CHURCHES RESPONSE TO THE IRAQ WAR (Resolution 8 2003)

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.

RESOURCES FOR INTER-FAITH WORK (Resolution 8, 2008)

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.

CHARTER FOR COMPASSION (Resolution 4 2011)

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.

PEACE SUNDAY (Resolution 3 2013)

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.

7. EDUCATION

1930-1945

UNSECTARIAN EDUCATION (Resolution 3 1929)

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.

PUBLIC EDUCATION (Resolution 13 1930)

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.

RAISING THE SCHOOL LEAVING AGE (Resolution 10 1936)

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.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN DAY SCHOOLS (1942)

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.

1976-1990

TEACHING PROFESSION (Resolution 25 1986)

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.

1991-2013

NON-SECTARIAN EDUCATION (Resolution 10 2001)

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.

CREATIONISM IN SCHOOLS (Resolution 4 2006)

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.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE REVIEW OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (Resolution 1 2007)

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.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS POLICIES ON ADMITTING CHILDREN FROM UNITARIAN FAMILIES (Resolution 9 2009)

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.

8. ENVIRONMENT

1961-1975

ENVIRONMENT (Resolution 11 1970)

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.

1991-2013

ENVIRONMENTAL STABILITY (Resolution 7 1994)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises that the natural environment 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.

GREEN THEOLOGY (Resolution 12 1994)

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT (Resolution 2 1996)

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.

WORLD CLIMATE CHANGE (Resolution 11 2001)

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.

CARBON FOOTPRINTS (Resolution 5 2007)

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.

9. GAMBLING

1930-1945

GAMBLING (Resolution 2 1931)

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.

SWEEPSTAKES (Resolution 12 1932)

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.

LOTTERIES AND BETTING (Resolution 2 1933)

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.

LOTTERIES BILL (Resolution 6 1934)

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.

EVIL OF GAMBLING (Resolution 11 1936)

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 the 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.

POOLBETTING (Resolution 9 1938)

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.

1946-60

THE SPREAD OF BETTING AND GAMBLING (Resolution 12 1946)

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.

BETTING AND GAMBLING (Resolution 11 1947)

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.

1961-1975

GAMBLING (Resolution 11 1963)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches views with concern the present trends in gambling in this

country and the failure of recent legislation to secure adequate social control. It urges upon HM Government the desirability of a review of the existing law with a view to strengthening the powers of both local magistrates and local planning authorities.

This Assembly further urges upon the churches the need for serious consideration not only of the moral and ethical problems occasioned by gambling but also the causes responsible for its alarming growth.

It urges churches to set an example by not letting premises for commercial bingo sessions or by sponsoring football pools and similar efforts to augment their own funds. It re-affirms that planned giving is the only way by which congregational funds can be effectively raised.

1991-2013

NATIONAL LOTTERY (Resolution 3 1996)

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 1996)

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.

10. HEALTH

1976-1990

HIV/AIDS (Resolution 18 1987)

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.

HEALTH (Emergency Resolution 18 1989)

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.

1991-20013

HEALTH SERVICE (Resolution 10 2000)

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..

ORGAN DONATION (Resolution 9 2001)

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.

ASSISTED DYING (Resolution 1 2013)

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.

11. MINORITY RIGHTS & RACIAL JUSTICE

1930-1945

MINORITY RIGHTS (Resolution 5 1933)

- 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.

PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS (Resolution 13 1943)

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.

1946-1960

NATIVE PEOPLES OF S.W. AFRICA (Resolution 14 1952)

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.

THE COLOUR PROBLEM (Resolution 12 1955)

That this annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegated 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 South Africa to give further consideration to all aspects of the colour problems in a spirit of toleration and good will, 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.

1961-1975

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (Resolution 14 1963)

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.

1976-1990

RACISM (Resolution 4 1978)

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 formenting and exacerbating racial hatred.

MINORITIES (Resolution 20 1983)

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 co-operation and joint ventures and thereby become themselves reflective of the multiracial and multicultural society in Britain today.

1991-2013

SUPPORT FOR MIGRANT WORKERS (Resolution 2 2007)

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.

STRANGERS INTO CITIZENS CAMPAIGN (Resolution 4 2007)

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

RIGHTS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS (Resolution 6 2011)

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.

12. PEACE AND DISARMAMENT

1930-1945

WORLD DISARMAMENT (Resolution 12 1931)

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.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS (Resolution 11 1932)

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.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (Resolution 4 1933)

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.

DISARMAMENT (Resolution 3 1934)

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 Aggression 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 1934)

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.

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION (Resolution 12 1936)

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 1936)

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 1936)

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

INTERNATIONAL ORDER (Resolution 11 1940)

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.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF PEACE (Resolution 13 1941)

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 fulfilment of agreements and, in case of recognized need, their revision and correction; the adjustment of the real needs and just demands of nations and populations and racial minorities as occasion may require;
- (iv) 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.

THE BASIS OF AN ENDURING PEACE (Resolution 11 1945)

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 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 nations, secure relief from the menace and burden of expanding armaments in the post-war world, and lay the foundations of an enduring peace.

1945-1960

THE FOUNDATIONS OF PEACE (Resolution 12 1945)

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.

INTERNATIONAL UNITY (Resolution 10 1947)

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.

INTERNATIONAL CONTROL OF ATOMIC WEAPONS (Resolution 8 1950)

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.

PEACE PACT (Resolution 13 1951)

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.

THE HYDROGEN BOMB (Resolution 13 1955)

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.

ATOM AND HYDROGEN BOMBS (Resolution 13 1957)

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.

A CALL TO FREEDOM (Resolution 10 1958)

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.

1976-1990

PEACE (Resolution 3 1978)

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.

DISARMAMENT (Resolution 13 1982)

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.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS (Resolution 14 1982)

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.

PEACE (Resolutions 16 - 18 1983)

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.

PEACE (Resolution 14 1984)

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.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE (Resolution 12 1985)

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.

GREENHAM COMMON (Resolution 24 1986)

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.

DISARMAMENT (Resolution 18 1988)

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.

NUCLEAR FREE ZONES (Resolution 17 1990)

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.

1991-2013

GULF WAR (Resolution 15 1991)

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.

LANDMINES (Resolution 2 1997)

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.

PEACE IN KOSOVO (Resolution 3 1999)

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.

HAGUE APPEAL FOR PEACE (Resolution 9 1999)

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.

CULTURE OF PEACE (Resolution 4 2000)

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.

CEASE-FIRE DAY (Resolution 3 2002)

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 2002)

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.

CONTROLLING ARMS SALES (Resolution 5 2003)

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.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN IN IRAQ (Resolution 9 2003)

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.

A GOVERNMENT MINISTRY FOR PEACE (Resolution 1 2004)

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

SUPPORT FROM THE JEWISH COMMUNITY FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE (Resolution 3 2004)

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.

PARDONS FOR FIRST WORLD WAR SOLDIERS (Resolution 3 2006)

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.

IRAN AND DIPLOMACY (Resolution 6 2007)

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.

BANNING CLUSTER MUNITIONS (Resolution 7 2007)

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.

13. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

1946-1960

RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING (Resolution 13 1952)

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.

1976-1990

BLASPHEMOUS LIBEL (Emergency Resolution 3 1978)

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

BLASPHEMY LAW (Resolution 19 1981)

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.

PERSECUTION OF BAHÁ'IS (Resolution 16 1982)

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.

BAHÁ'IS & HUMAN RIGHTS (Resolution 19 1983)

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.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (Resolution 16 1985)

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.

ROMANIAN UNITARIANS (Resolution 15 1990)

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.

1991-2013

BLASPHEMY LAW (Resolution 8 2002)

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.

THE SCOUTS AND DIVERSITY OF BELIEF (Resolution 8 2009)

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.

14. SEXUALITY

1961-1975

TOWARDS A QUAKER VIEW OF SEX (Resolution 12 1963)

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.

HOMOSEXUALITY (Resolution 12 1973)

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.

HOMOSEXUALITY (Resolution 14 1974)

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.

1976-1990

OPEN MINISTRY-GAY RIGHTS (Resolution 14 1977)

'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 1977)

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".

HOMOSEXUALITY (Resolution 11 1984)

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.

1991-2013

SEXUAL EQUALITY (Resolution 5 2000)

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.

CLAUSE 28 - HOMOSEXUALITY (Resolution 8 2000)

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.

CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS IN PLACES OF WORSHIP (Resolution 7 2008)

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.

EQUAL SAME-SEX RELIGIOUS MARRAIGE (Resolution 1 2012)

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.

15. SOCIAL POLICY

1930-45

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE (Resolution 10 1940)

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.

THE BEVERIDGE REPORT (Resolution 14 1944)

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.

1946-1960

THE MENACE OF STARVATION (Resolution 11 1946)

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 HM 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.

WORLD CO-OPERATION (Resolution 12 1951)

That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches approves any initiative of 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.

1961-75

FREE WIRELESS AND TELEVISION LICENCES (Resolution 12 1962)

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.

SOCIAL SECURITY (Resolution 10 1968)

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.

1976-1990

AMENDMENT OF SCOTTISH LAW ON MARRIAGE (Resolution 15 1976)

'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'.

SENIOR CITIZENS (Resolution 17 1982)

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.

FUNERALS (Resolution 12 1983)

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.

CHARITY (Resolution 22 1983)

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.

HOUSING (Resolution 12 1984)

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 1984)

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.

SUNDAY TRADING (Resolution 22 1986)

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.

SOCIAL SECURITY (Resolutions 16 and 19 1988)

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.

1991-2013

SUNDAY TRADING (Resolution 13 1994)

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.

POPULATION (Resolution 13 1995)

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.

HANDGUNS (Resolution 6 1996)

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.

VOUCHER SYSTEM (Resolution 8 2001)

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.

16.INTERNATIONAL ISSUES & WORLD DEVELOPMENT

1930-1945

CENTENARY OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN BRITISH POSSESSIONS

(Resolution 3 1933)

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.

THE FOOD BLOCKADE OF EUROPE (Resolution 12 1942)

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

FAMINE CONDITIONS IN EUROPE (Resolution 12 1943)

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

INDIA (Resolution 15 1943)

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

1961-1975

ACTION FOR WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (Resolution 10, 1970)

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.

WORLD TRADE (Resolution 12 1975)

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.

1976-1990

ONE WORLD WEEK (Resolution 18 1977)

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.

ONE WORLD WEEK (Emergency Resolution 1 1978)

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.

ONE WORLD WEEK (Resolution 18 1981)

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

DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION FUND (Resolution 13 1983)

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.

1991-2013

JUBILEE 2000 (Resolution 6 1998)

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 1998)

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.

JUBILEE 2000 DEBT CAMPAIGN (Resolution 7 2000)

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.

WORLD CLIMATE CHANGE (Resolution 11 2001)

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

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY (Resolution 2 2005)

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.

ROBIN HOOD TAX (Emergency Resolution 1 2010)

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.

DISINVESTING IN VEDANTA RESOURCES (Emergency Resolution 2 2010)

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.

17. UNEMPLOYMENT

1930-1945

SOCIAL CENTRES FOR UNEMPLOYED (Resolution 6 1934)

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 1934)

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 centres 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 re-housing, 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.

UNEMPLOYMENT (Resolution 9 1937)

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.

1976-1990

UNEMPLOYMENT (Resolution 21 1983)

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.

18. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

1976-1990

EQUAL RIGHTS AND STATUS (Resolution 20 1977)

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.

ORDINATION OF WOMEN (Resolution 15 1979)

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.

ABORTION (Resolution 14 1980)

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.

BIRTH CONTROL/ABORTION (Resolution 14 1985)

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.

1991-2013

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (Resolution 4 1999)

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 Unit for committing itself to launching a European-wide consciousness-raising strategy paper on the issue of *violence against women*.

FULL EQUALITY AND PARTICIPATION FOR WOMEN (Resolution 2 2006)

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.

PREVENTING PEOPLE TRAFFICKING (Resolution 3 2007)

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.