

## 2006 General Assembly Delegates Act on Social Issues

[Adapted from the [General Assembly Blog](#) of uuworld.org, by Christopher L. Walton]

### *Study/Action Issue*

With only one Study/Action Issue on the agenda this year, delegates heard from the sponsor and four supporters of the [“Peacemaking” Study/Action Issue](#), but with no competing study/action issues on the agenda, there was no debate. Delegates overwhelmingly approved the “Peacemaking” Study/Action Issue, which means that congregations will have four years (see Changes to Bylaws below) to develop a Statement of Conscience for possible adoption by delegates to the 2010 General Assembly, responding to the question: “Should the Unitarian Universalist Association reject the use of any and all kinds of violence and war to resolve disputes between peoples and nations and adopt a principle of seeking just peace through nonviolent means?”

### *Statement of Conscience*

Delegates adopted a [Statement of Conscience on the Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change](#), two years in the making since it was first adopted as a Study/Action issue at the 2004 General Assembly. The final Statement of Conscience incorporated many of the amendments proposed in a series of unusually vigorous mini-assemblies and extended discussions in the plenary hall.

### *Actions of Immediate Witness*

Delegates adopted five of the six [Actions of Immediate](#) placed on this year’s agenda by the UUA Commission on Social Witness. They are:

AIW-2: “End Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining”

AIW-3: “Endorse the 'Declaration of Peace' Campaign”

AIW-4: “Pass the Stem-Cell Research Enhancement Act”

AIW-5: “Stand Up for the United Nations Human Rights Council”

AIW-6: “Support Immigrant Justice”

Delegates debated AIW-1 “Call to Establish a U.S. Department of Peace” at length, but the it failed to receive two-thirds of the vote. The proposed AIW sponsored by the UUSC, “Gulf Coast Workers Deserve Justice Now,” was not among the proposed AIWs put on the agenda by the Commission on Social Witness, nor were proposed AIWs “Rebuild New Orleans,” “Protection for Farm Worker Children in the Fields,” and “Provide Living Wages and Promised Benefits to Armed Services Personnel.”

### *Bylaw Changes to Process for Developing a Statement of Conscience*

Delegates adopted changes to the UUA bylaws that significantly modify the Statement of Conscience process. The new process will require the participation of at least 25 percent, rather than 10 percent, of UUA member congregations in introducing Study/Action Issues into the process that generates a Statement of Conscience. Opponents and supporters of the changes both observed that far less than 25 percent of congregations have participated in the process in recent years: Opponents said that the changes would effectively kill off many resolutions; supporters said that the changes would help guarantee that Statements of Conscience more truly reflect the values and commitments of the denomination.

The bylaw changes approved by Delegates also slows down the study/action process. The new process extends the study and review period for a Study/Action Issue from two to four years and allows the introduction a new Study/Action Issue every other year, rather than every year. This year, for example, delegates voted on the global warming Statement of Conscience at the end of two years of congregational review. Congregations are one year into the “Moral Values in a Pluralistic Society” Stud/Action Issue review process.

***Other Resolutions***

Delegates passed a responsive resolution on workers’ rights, on the UUA's new health insurance plan, and on thanking UUA moderator Gini Courter for the way she conducted -- and inspired -- the delegates. A final resolution, passed just before the end of the final plenary session, urges congregations to engage in anti-racism work in some way before the 2007 General Assembly.

***For More Information***

For more information about the Study/Action Issue, Statement of Conscience, and Action of Immediate Witness processes, and about the work of the UUA Commission on Social Witness, visit the Commission on Social Witness website at [uua.org/csw](http://uua.org/csw).