



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION AT SHELTER ROCK

48 SHELTER ROCK ROAD, MANHASSET, NY 11030

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May 9, 2006

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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF SHELTER ROCK
PROTEST WAR IN IRAQ

TO: Religious Leaders
Media Editors
Community Leaders/Activists
Local/State/National Government Officials

FROM: UUCSR President Ronald Roel
UUCSR Senior Minister Paul Johnson
UUCSR Board of Trustees

SUBJECT: Congregational Statement Protesting the war in Iraq

One of the largest congregations in the New York metro area, The Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock (UUCSR), Manhasset, NY is joining the small but growing ranks of religious and spiritual groups speaking out against the war in Iraq through statements of conscience. "As people of faith, we raise our voice in protest against the unjust and immoral war in Iraq," reads the UUCSR resolution.

SENIOR MINISTER: The Reverend Dr. Paul S. Johnson
MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: The Reverend Dr. Barry Andrews
MINISTER FOR PASTORAL CARE: The Reverend Jennifer L. Brower
MINISTERIAL INTERN: Carol Schneider
CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR: Marilyn Anderson
ACTING VEATCH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Victor Quintana
MINISTER EMERITA: The Reverend Dr. Christine M. Wetzel

Well-known in philanthropic circles for its Veatch Program that has disbursed more than \$100 million in the last 10 years to causes promoting social justice the UUCSR approved the resolution at a congregational meeting in February. This resolution follows one protesting “the systemic use of torture as a policy of governmental control,” and calling it “a crime against humanity,” approved in October by the congregation, which is the largest on Long Island with more than 700 members.

“Our hearts go out to our men and women in uniform put in harm’s way by this war and for the Iraqi people who have suffered so much. We hope that adding our voice in protest against this very human tragedy will prompt others to speak their conscience and express to our leaders how deeply we feel about this matter,” said the Rev. Paul Johnson, Senior Minister at the UUCSR.

The UUCSR resolution reflects the spirit of statements on the morality of the war issued by religious leaders and communities, including Pope John Paul II who said at the outset that the war in Iraq did not qualify as a just war. In November, 95 bishops of The United Methodist Church, called the invasion of Iraq “unjust and immoral” and the Union for Reform Judaism became the first major Jewish organization to speak out against the nation’s “failures before and during the war” and call for “a clear exit strategy with specific goals for troop withdrawal.” In February, the U.S. Conference for the World Council of Churches, representing Lutheran, Anglican, Evangelical and other Christian Churches, said the Iraq war was “launched in deception and violating global norms of justice and human rights.” Other groups have also made public statements.

“The congregational vote on the resolution came after a lot of soul searching,” said Ron Roel, president of the UUCSR. “We had two town meetings and many discussions and throughout we tried to make sure all viewpoints were aired and differing opinions were respected. In the end, although not all members were in favor of it, the resolution carried with slightly more than 80 percent of the vote at the congregational meeting on Feb. 5.”

With roots in the Jewish and Christian traditions that date to 16th Century, Unitarian Universalism is an open-minded belief system that affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every human being and the individual’s quest to seek God, or a higher meaning in life, through community and based on personal experience, reason and conscience, without adhering to an official creed. Congregations are self governing. The more than 1,000 congregations in the United States and Canada are affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations based in Boston.

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Prepared for the Board of Trustees and the Congregation by the Ad hoc Committee on the War in Iraq:

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