
Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica
A Dedicated Peace Site



Bulletin

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The 3rd Annual FIA Issues Election

Faith in Action was created to foster social action activities as an integral part of our church life. We do this in part by holding an annual issues election to determine which social action projects are of greatest interest to the congregation.

Our 3rd annual issues election was held September 14, 2003. More than 40 people participated. We unanimously voted to continue all of our current peace, civil liberties and hunger programs. After spirited discussion and a presentation by the Rev. Alexia

Salvatierra of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE), we resoundingly voted to add economic justice for low wage workers in the hotel industry to our list of priority projects.

This issue of the FIA Bulletin features personal opinion articles, photographs, and essays related to our ongoing programs. We look forward to adding articles about economic justice in future issues.

Charles M. Haskell, Editor

Special points of interest:

- *Faith in Action is the witness and advocacy program of the UUCCSM*
- *The FIA Bulletin publishes essays and letters expressing the personal opinions of UUCCSM members and FIA Speakers*
- *Faith in Action speaks for the church only when the congregation has voted resoundingly to take an official position on an issue related to peace, civil liberties or social justice*



3rd Annual Faith in Action Issues Election participants

Personal Opinion: The Bush Doctrine or the UN—We Must Choose



By Max Epstein

This is a stark choice because the purpose of the UN is the opposite of the Bush doctrine. One is a venue for negotiation in the interest of peace; the other, a statement of imperialism.

The rational answer is, we cannot thrive as a nation without the UN and we cannot long remain a superpower under the Bush doctrine.

To those who question the value of the UN, I ask, "What would you suggest as an alternative?" The UN is not one of several options—it is unique and it is essential to humanity's quest for peace, and thereby to our national interest. Were it not for the work of the UN, including its agencies, over the past 58 years, the world would be much worse off than it is today. Think of the World Health Organization, Unesco, and the numerous peace keeping operations around the world. The current administration seems not to appreciate what the UN can do.

As Dean Emeritus, International Students and Scholars, UCLA, I can speak of a life-long commitment to international understanding and the UN. As a student at the University of Colorado in the 1950s when the UN was just a few years old, I organ-

ized a model UN, where students played the roles of delegates of the member states. We took the assignment seriously, and suffered the joys and pains of negotiation in a game that became real for us.

In the 1980s, I served a term as president of the Westwood California chapter of the UN Association. This is a non-governmental organization devoted to increasing understanding of the UN. But it was during one of my visits to the UN headquarters in New York that I discovered a way to feel its essence. I wandered alone through the corridors, watching and listening to the delegates as they met informally. We hear about the work of the General Assembly and the Security Council, but as with all deliberative bodies, much of the work is done outside the meetings. At the UN, when these hallway discussions are conducted by delegates from adversarial nations, the process is thrilling to watch.

The current American experience with the UN demonstrates just how crucial that organization is. Before invading Iraq, President Bush tried and failed to get a UN resolution supporting the invasion. His effort to gain this support was compromised by his statements to the effect that we would proceed with UN support if possible, but without, if necessary; a position which must have cast doubt on the sincerity of his quest for support. More important, most of the world, including almost all of our traditional allies, did not believe the US case for war.

Some would argue, including myself, that President Bush should have listened more carefully to our colleagues in the UN, and sought another solution to the Iraqi problem. Be that as it may, our president has taken us into Iraq, and almost nothing is going well. The war is not really over, the death toll of Americans and Iraqis continues to rise, the American people are paying obscene sums as our deficit grows, there are no weapons of mass destruction and there is questionable progress towards Iraqi control of Iraq.

The Iraqi case is a perfect example of what is wrong with the Bush doctrine. First announced by President Bush to the graduating class at West Point in June, 2002, the doctrine states that "Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing or equating the power of the United States." In case the meaning is not clear, the doctrine goes on to say that "America will act against these threats before they are fully formed." Put simply, this means we grant ourselves permission to attack any country which appears to us to be growing too strong, whether or not said country has threatened us. This is imperialism at its worst. The doctrine has never been debated by congress, but our behavior in Iraq demonstrates that we are well into implementation.

(continued on next page)

Choosing between the UN and the Bush Doctrine, continued

Historically, other empires have fallen through a combination of overextension and imperial policies. Through overextension they went broke, and through imperialism they fostered the inevitable process whereby weaker nations gang up in defense. Both are beginning to happen to us. The recent meeting in Spain, at which we sought the support of other nations, speaks to our growing awareness of our overextension. By making a few conces-

sions (acting less imperious) we gained some support. Deliberations on increasing their military strength can be heard in the European Union and several of the larger nations of Asia, which speaks, in part, to the backlash against the US.

The irony is that the Iraqi morass may force this administration to become a cooperating member of the UN. There is no benefit to the US in pursuing the Bush doctrine,

only danger. On the other hand there is much to be gained by becoming the more humble nation President Bush described when he was campaigning. The Bush doctrine will doom us to a long-term decline with the loss of many of our freedoms along the way. Accepting our responsibility to work within the UN leaves us the possibility of maintaining our leadership as a democracy.



Kelly Hayes-Raitt was the featured FIA speaker in August. She is shown above with a photograph of an Iraqi girl she met on her travels to Iraq. Hayes-Raitt advised us to end our addiction to Middle-Eastern oil, to work for political regime change in the United States, and for us to reclaim our stake in the world. CMH photo.

“And Ain’t I a Citizen?”: The Battle for Same-Sex Marriage Rights (Part I)



By **Kris Langabeer**

The gay rights movement has come a long way... In 1989, I came out to my coworkers of five years back in Michigan...well, OK, I came out to maybe two of my coworkers and it was when they were about to become my ex-coworkers—I also told them that I was quitting my job to move to California! Very brave of me.

Now, I have family photos on my desk and talk about my spouse, Debbie. People ask about our son, Skye.

In 1989, my relationship with Debbie was not recognized by any institution, and being married, in a civil or church ceremony, was inconceivable.

Now, Debbie and I are registered domestic partners in Santa Monica, West Hollywood, and California. Debbie is covered under my health and retirement benefits at UCLA. We were married here at our church June 6, 1998.

But...and that’s a big *but*...we lesbians and gays are still second-class citizens, mainly because every state and the federal government deny us the right to marry in a civil (not religious) ceremony. That translates into the loss of more than 1,000 federal rights (1997 General Accounting Office report “OGC-97-

16, Defense of Marriage Act”) and a multitude of states’ rights.

The ramifications from this lack of rights are far reaching. As E.J. Graff, author of the Beacon Press book, “What is Marriage For?” stated in the *Boston Globe* (Feb. 13, 2002), “Civil marriage is an unbelievably comprehensive shorthand...that lets such institutions as employers, courts, pension programs, life insurers, health insurers,...hospitals,...banks, cemeteries - and more - figure out which relationships to take seriously. It’s the way law adjudicates an incredible array of disputes about who counts to whom in times of sickness, crisis, separation, and death.”

Same-sex marriage has become a hot topic in just the last few months, with the June Supreme Court ruling decriminalizing us, the legalization of same-sex marriage in Ontario and British Columbia (and probably Canada overall soon), and the potential of Massachusetts becoming the first state to legalize our marriages by court edict.

These dramatic advancements, however, have energized backlash efforts to amend the U.S. Constitution to limit marriage to that between one man and one woman. They even led the Roman Catholic church to pronounce that the recognition of gay and lesbian unions is the “legalization of evil.” Ouch!

And even though U.S. polls have shown increasing acceptance of gays and lesbians over the past 30 years, a majority of Americans is against same-sex marriage.

Thus, most of the Democratic candidates for president are against civil marriage rights for gays and lesbians. Only candidates Dennis Kucinich, the Rev. Al Sharpton, and Carol Moseley Braun have decided to risk being leaders of the people and not just followers of the polls by coming out in favor of our marriage rights. Or...they know that they’re not going to win anyway, so they can afford to do the right thing.

The other Democratic candidates favor the states having the right to create civil unions, as Vermont has done. Civil unions are better than nothing, but (1) they do not give us the crucial federal marriage rights, (2) separate but equal may be separate, but how can “You aren’t one of us!” ever be equal, and (3) what kind of *United States* would we be if just by crossing a state line, a couple could lose or gain crucial rights?

I refuse to remain relegated to a subclass that is denied participation in an institution that is so basic to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To paraphrase Sojourner Truth, “And ain’t I a citizen?”

What Can You Do? Sign the Human Rights Campaign petition for same-sex civil marriage rights at www.millionformarriage.org and write your U.S. Congresspeople against the proposed constitutional amendment outlawing them. Thanks!

(Kris will outline and address the major arguments against same-sex civil marriages in the next issue.)

FIA and our Community: Celebrating Success Breakfast 2003

Paula Bernstein coordinates our church's involvement in food sorts at the Westside Food Bank. She was one of 12 members of our congregation attending an annual event sponsored by the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition on 9/26/03 (see photo). The event honors formerly homeless people who have been helped by coalition members to be self sufficient. Paula graciously provided this story to inform our congregants about this experience.

Editor

By Paula Bernstein

Three years ago when he arrived in California from Tucson, John Mora was a self-described "hopeless drug addict" in search of recovery. But recovery was not easy to find. "I did it willfully," he recalls. "I was not ready for recovery." John was soon kicked out of the Dream Christian Rehabilitation Center, and it was even faster downhill from there. He lived in the backyards of prostitutes, unable to do anything but smoke and deal drugs. He was arrested and sent to drug court, which sent him to the CLARE Foundation, where he was once again kicked out for a policy violation. But during his time at CLARE, John was referred to the Chrysalis agency, a member of the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition, as is the CLARE Foundation.

At Chrysalis, he found love, encouragement, understanding and support. "They gave me shelter and clothes, and were incredibly instru-



mental in helping me obtain self-esteem," he says. Today, John is married, with a new son, and owns a transportation firm, which brings patients (largely workers' compensation recipients) to and from clinics. The firm, located in Playa del Rey, has three employees and John expects to hire 10 more. "Life is wonderful today," he feels.

John, honored by Chrysalis, was one of 24 formerly homeless, now self-sufficient, healthy men and women, honored at the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition's "Celebrating Success 2003" breakfast last month at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel in Santa



John Mora

Monica. Our church is one of the coalition's 30 members, composed of human service organizations, public agencies and faith-based groups. Among the 475 people attending the breakfast were the Rev. Judith Meyer; Stefanie Eitzbach-Dale, our intern minister; Charles Haskell, Faith in Action (FIA) Commission chair, and several church members involved in FIA projects: Christine Haskell, Lyn and George Armando, Alison Chipman, Paula Bernstein, Marge Zifferblatt and her daughter Ellen Stuart, and Janet Goodwin.

The Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition was founded 20 years ago to help people dealing with substance abuse, homelessness, domestic violence, disease, hunger, unemployment and poverty. "The success of the people honored at this eighth annual event is based on their willingness to make a change in their own lives and on a community that is willing to provide the opportunities for that change. We honor the people who have survived difficult hardships and improved their lives.

Celebrating Success Breakfast 2003 (continued)

And we thank the community for helping make this happen," said Christie Coho, of the Edelman Westside Mental Health Center, the event chair.

Also among the 24 honorees was Cheryl Martin, honored by Salvation Army/SAMOSHEL. Raised in an abusive home, Cheryl had no knowledge of her father. She gave birth to her first son at age 14 and her second at 16. She left her mother's home, where she lived with her husband and children, and drifted into drugs and homelessness. She had serious health problems (diabetes, arthritis, bipolar disorder) and failed the first time she



Cheryl Martin

entered SAMOSHEL. "I was homeless and a drug addict and I am currently in recovery," she told the audience at the breakfast. She moved back into SAMOSHEL after completing

four months of treatment at the Alcoholic Center for Women.

Cheryl enrolled in computer courses at Venice Skills Center and watched in wonder as her life began to change for the better. This year, she moved into Turning Point and began a social service internship program at the Westside Center for Independent Living. Then she returned to SAMOSHEL as an intern, assisting the staff in running the shelter. For the future, she's already looking ahead to a career in social services. She closed with, "Thank you, Keith, for sticking by me even though his mother was a drug addict."

Why, God?

By Myra Wald

I called up to God
the other day.

God, why...

I started to say.

That's enough!

He shouted

back at me.

I'm tired of your eternal questions
quit nagging me.

Why do you waste
your time

trying to understand

the whole damn universe?

What good will it do

you to know.

Your common sense

should tell you

I've made clear

what's needed.

Take care of

your own affairs

and stay out of

my hair.

I don't need your help
and you don't need mine.

I gave you a brain
so use it.

Do your own thing
and don't bother me

again.

Okay, okay,

I said.

I'll leave you alone

and become

a Humanist instead.



Myra Wald

Electronic Congregational Survey Results about the FIA Bulletin

During the Summer of this year an electronic survey was distributed to all members of the church who use e-mail. It was created by Liz Fuller and Dan Kegel in collaboration with Carol Agate and Charles Haskell. It asked for feedback regarding three aspects of our electronic publication program: the newsletter; our church's website; and, the FIA Bulletin.

Fifty-eight people responded to questions about the FIA Bulletin. The results are given in the accompanying chart. Most respondents (81%) did not consider themselves members of an established FIA group, such as the Peace Committee or Hunger Task Force. Most preferred a quarterly publication (68%) published electronically (65%).

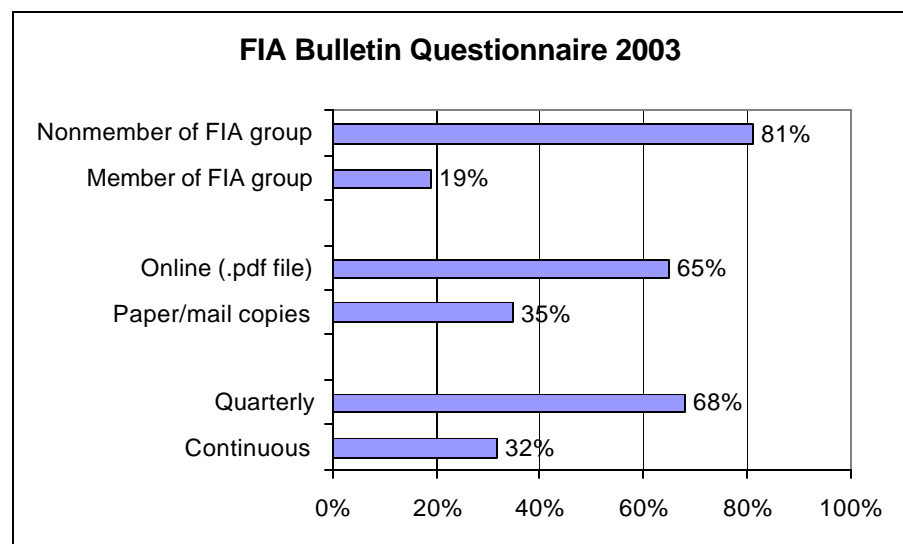
As far as members of the congregation who use e-mail and the web, the results are unequivocal.

This group will continue to receive the FIA Bulletin as a quarterly electronic document.

A challenge for the future is to determine the optimal way to distribute the FIA Bulletin to members of the congregation who do not use e-mail or the web.

For now, the FIA Bulletin will be made available to all members as a printed document placed on the Faith in Action table in Forbes Hall. We will determine the feasibility of other methods of distribution at some point in the future.

Charles M. Haskell, Editor



Instructions for Authors

The goal of the FIA Bulletin is to publish original stories, essays, letters, poems, photographs, and related material created by church members in support of the witness and advocacy program of the UCCSM.

Essays, letters, poems, photographs, and other original documents expressing the personal opinions of church members will be considered on a space available basis. Letters and other written material may be edited for purposes of space or clarity.

Submissions should be typed on a single page and submitted to the Editor of the FIA Bulletin.

Submission by e-mail to the Editor at chaskell@ucla.edu is preferred. Alternatively, documents may be placed in the Faith in Action box in the church office.

Statements published in the FIA Bulletin reflect the views of the author or authors and not necessarily those of the UCCSM, unless so identified.

Charles M. Haskell, Editor



Peace and Civil
Liberties



Hunger and
Economic Justice



Interweave &
Welcoming Congregation

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The FIA Bulletin is published to stimulate debate and discussion about issues of peace, civil liberties and social justice. The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors. Articles should not be construed as official position statements of the UUCCSM unless clearly identified as such.

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