



Annual Report

November 2002

Unitarian Universalists for Drug Policy Reform (UUDPR) was remarkably successful in fiscal year 2001-2002:

- * The Unitarian Universalist Association's drug policy Statement of Conscience passed with all of the most important recommendations intact;
- * UUDPR has grown to the point of having two full-time employees and a large team of active participants throughout the continent; and
- * UUDPR received excellent news coverage and initiated other efforts to promote more just and compassionate drug policies in the public arena.

(UUDPR's fiscal year ends on June 30.)



UUDPR's exhibit booth attracts many UUs at the 2002 General Assembly.

"UUDPR's energetic work was crucial in the passage of the UUA's newest Statement of Conscience. I encourage you to give them your support." — Rev. William Sinkford, UUA president

Statement of Conscience

UUDPR's first major project was to facilitate the congregations' efforts to study the drug issue and develop a comprehensive Statement of Conscience. The final draft was passed by the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in June 2002.

This remarkable document pushes the envelope further than any other religious denomination. **Excerpts include:**

- * "Drug use, drug abuse, and drug addiction are distinct from one another. Using a drug does not necessarily mean abusing the drug, much less becoming addicted to it. Drug abuse issues are essentially matters for medical attention. We do not believe that drug use should be considered criminal behavior."
- * "Establish a legal, regulated, and taxed market for marijuana. Treat marijuana as we treat alcohol."
- * "Remove criminal penalties for possession and use of currently illegal drugs, with drug abusers subject to arrest and imprisonment only if they commit an actual crime (e.g., assault, burglary, impaired driving, vandalism)."
- * "Make all drugs legally available with a prescription by a licensed physician, subject to professional oversight. End the practice of punishing an individual for obtaining, possessing, or using an otherwise illegal substance to treat a medical condition," and allow "medically administered drug maintenance" as a treatment option for drug addiction.

The complete text is available at: <http://www.uudpr.org/soc.htm>

UUDPR immediately alerted the national news media about this groundbreaking accomplishment, generating coverage in *The Washington Post*, as well as in Associated Press, Religion News Service, and other articles which ran in numerous publications throughout North America. (See the more complete list of news coverage inside.)

Organizational Development

The number of UUDPR's active participants doubled from 500 UUs in June 2001 to more than 1,000 by June 2002. Throughout the continent, they organized study circles and seminars, distributed literature, delivered sermons, submitted feedback to the UUA, and otherwise helped to ensure that the Statement of Conscience was as strong as possible.

More than 200 UUs made financial contributions to UUDPR by June 2002. Along with a \$17,000 grant from the UU Funding Program and donations from other philanthropists, UUDPR raised nearly \$80,000 in fiscal year 2001-2002. (See "Financial Statement" on the back page.) That's a 14-fold increase over the income for FY 2000-2001.

As a result, UUDPR was able to hire co-founder Charles Thomas to serve as the full-time executive director in February 2002. In addition, a full-time director of communications was hired in May.

With a fully equipped office, UUDPR is forging ahead to play a significant role in the drug policy reform movement.



UUDPR's Charles Thomas (front) and Regina Deavers (sitting) play leading roles in a medical marijuana protest at the Justice Department.

Activities and Accomplishments

Throughout the fiscal year, UUDPR helped Unitarian Universalists (UUs) study and take action on the drug issue by mailing information to the congregations and helping them find speakers, maintaining a Web page, e-mailing electronic action alerts, and placing ads in the *UU World*. UUDPR's staff also spent several hours a day directly communicating with UUDPR active participants via e-mail, phone calls and faxes. In addition to these ongoing activities, UUDPR's major projects and accomplishments in FY 2001-2002 include the following:

General Assembly 2002

The UUA's annual General Assembly this June marked the culmination of the two-year drug policy study process. More than 1,700 voting delegates gathered in Quebec City to represent their congregations on a variety of matters, including the new drug policy Statement of Conscience.

A two-thirds vote was required to pass the final version, which had been drafted and revised by the UUA's Commission on Social Witness in accordance with the feedback submitted by the congregations throughout the previous year.

A small but determined group of UUs opposed key parts of the document which call for the legalization of marijuana and the decriminalization and medicalization of other drugs. At the General Assembly, they attempted to have those recommendations deleted and/or to prevent the entire Statement from passing.

Anticipating that there would be some opposition, UUDPR was fully prepared to ensure that the Statement of Conscience passed without any major amendments. **UUDPR's activities included:**

- * flying four drug policy reform experts to Quebec City to speak at our three workshops, reassuring the voting delegates that the Statement of Conscience was excellent as is;

"The Boston-based denomination said that 'the consequences of the current drug war are cruel and counterproductive' and called for 'alternatives that regard the reduction of harm as the appropriate standard by which to assess drug policies.'"

"The denomination's president, the Rev. William Sinkford, said 'the so-called war on drugs is creating violence, endangering children, clogging the criminal justice system, eroding civil liberties, and disproportionately punishing people of color. It's time for a cease-fire.'"

— Religion News Service, 6/29/02

- * running an exhibit booth, from which we distributed thousands of pieces of literature and directly spoke with hundreds of delegates; and
- * providing testimony at the amendment hearing and the full floor debate.

Our efforts paid off: The drug policy Statement of Conscience was passed intact. (See page one for more details.)

Media Coverage

UUDPR did extensive media outreach regarding the Statement of Conscience, resulting in a great deal of favorable news coverage. Examples include:

- * **Associated Press (6/27/02)**
<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v02/n1245/a11.html?1331>
 - * **The Washington Post (6/29/02)**
<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v02/n1254/a12.html?1331>
 - * **Religion News Service (6/29/02)**
(as it appeared in the *Charlotte Observer*)
<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v02/n1195/a01.html?1331>
 - * **Columbia Missourian (7/5/02)**
<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v02/n1241/a08.html?1331>
 - * **Charleston Gazette (7/2/02)**
(favorable editorial)
<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v02/n1221/a09.html?1331>
 - * **Toledo Blade (6/29/02)**
<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v02/n1201/a03.html?1331>
 - * **ABC News.com (6/20/02)**
(released a few days before General Assembly; lots of information about UUism in the second half of the article)
<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v02/n1134/a06.html?1331>
- The Associated Press and Religion News Service articles ran in dozens of newspapers nationwide.
- Our work has also drawn the attention of journalist Dan Forbes, who wrote a lengthy article about UUDPR and the new UUA Statement of Conscience, including many encouraging quotes by various religious and drug policy reform movement leaders at: <http://www.drugwar.com/forbesuu.shtm>

In addition, UUDPR participants have had numerous letters-to-the-editor published, and UUDPR spokespersons have appeared on radio programs in D.C., Georgia, North Dakota, Ohio, and Texas.

— The Washington Post, 6/29/02



UUDPR Executive Director Charles Thomas (standing, right) joins Catholic, Methodist, and Baptist leaders in a speaking presentation at the Families Against Mandatory Minimums conference.

Interfaith Networking

In February, UUDPR added another project to our workload, in addition to organizing UUs for the June 2002 General Assembly.

The Washington, D.C.-based National Coalition for Effective Drug Policies was circulating a petition to President Bush, calling for a variety of changes. **UUDPR volunteered to solicit the signatures of several major religious denominations and groups.**

UUDPR's interfaith outreach was quite successful. Signatories included:

- * National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
- * Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- * Presbyterian Church (USA)
- * United Church of Christ
- * Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
- * Progressive Jewish Alliance
- * Religious Society of Friends (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting)

Although the petition stopped short of advocating legalization or decriminalization, it included many substantial drug policy reform recommendations. Examples include: less focus on law enforcement and prisons; better access to treatment; more effective drug education; demilitarization of international drug control efforts; and reducing or eliminating racial profiling, racially discriminatory sentencing, and mandatory minimum prison sentences.

The UUA's new Statement of Conscience also advocates these interim goals.

"[The UUA Statement of Conscience] may scare the socks off many people. [But] it may push the issue to the left so the middle can slide over and return policy to prior to 1910 — before drugs were criminalized."

— Prof. Walter Wink, a Quaker and professor at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York, in DrugWar.com article

"Every voice matters. Silence involves complicity with the way things are. UUs have a strong history of challenging the system."

— Methodist minister Janet Wolf, Religious Leaders for a more Just and Compassionate Drug Policy, in a DrugWar.com article

In fiscal year 2002-2003, UUDPR will continue to network with influential religious groups to build support for more just and compassionate drug policies.

Public Speaking

In fiscal year 2001-2002, UUDPR's staff, Board, and other active participants spoke at dozens of congregations, UUA district meetings, seminaries, and various community forums.

In addition, UUDPR Executive Director Charles Thomas spoke at several major drug policy reform conferences and events. Examples include:

- * **November 10, 2001** — Students for Sensible Drug Policy's third national conference in Washington, D.C.
- * **February 22, 2002** — Families Against Mandatory Minimums' national conference in Washington, D.C.
- * **April 13, 2002** — Students for Sensible Drug Policy's regional conference in Chicago.
- * **April 16, 2002** — University of California at Berkeley symposium on religious freedom and the use of psychedelic substances for spiritual purposes.
- * **June 6, 2002** — demonstration at the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., protesting the federal government's persecution of medical marijuana patients in California.

In fiscal year 2002-2003, Charles Thomas is scheduled to speak at conferences of the Marijuana Policy Project, Harm Reduction Coalition, and Religious Leaders for a More Just and Compassionate Drug Policy.

Infrastructure

UUDPR did two major outreach mailings in FY 2001-2002:

- * **December 2001** — a mailing to the several hundred UUDPR active participants in our database at the time; and
- * **January 2002** — a 4,000-piece mailing to all UU ministers, social justice chairs, congregations' main addresses, and board and district presidents.

These mailings helped raise funds for our work and also directly provided useful information to UUs to assist their study of the drug issue and development of the Statement of Conscience.



UUDPR volunteers gather at a local congregation in Washington D.C., to stuff envelopes for a large outreach mailing.

UUDPR also has nearly 1,000 UUs on our electronic action alert lists/serve. We set up tables at dozens of congregations, collecting names and distributing literature.

UUDPR was recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization in April 2002. This enabled us to seek large grants from a variety of foundations and philanthropists. (See financial report.) As a result, we were able to hire two full-time employees, pay for extra work from temps as needed, and purchase all necessary office equipment: computers, printers, a photocopier, and a fax machine.

Plans for Fiscal Year 2002-2003

Following the passage of the Statement of Conscience, UUDPR has embarked upon four major goals for the new fiscal year:

1. Continuing to facilitate the drug policy reform efforts of UUs throughout the continent;
2. Educating the public through the news media and directly advocating our positions to state and federal policy makers;
3. Reaching out to other religious denominations, encouraging them to become more outspoken against the immorality of the drug war; and
4. Developing harm-reduction drug education curricula for UU youth and young adults.

"Charles Thomas, the head of Unitarian Universalists for Drug Policy Reform, said the statement reinforces the denomination's basic theological tenets, which stress compassion and justice. He said drug abuse would be better seen as a medical problem, rather than a crime, and addicts would respond to 'the transforming power of love,' much better than incarceration."

— Associated Press, 6/27/02



UUDPR's information table is ready to assist UUs after a Sunday service.

But we can't do it without sufficient financial support.

UUDPR must raise \$134,000 this fiscal year in order to continue making progress on our projects. UUs who sign up to be on our free electronic action alert list will be kept abreast of our work (2-4 messages per month).

A tremendous fundraising opportunity has been presented to us: The UU Funding Program has agreed to match every dollar that we raise this year (up to \$19,000). To date, more than 800 UUDPR active participants have still not contributed. If each donates an average of \$24, that will give us more than \$19,000 . . . enabling us to receive the full UU Funding Program grant . . . giving us a total of \$38,000 toward our FY 2002-2003 budget. We expect to raise the remainder from other UUs, foundations and philanthropists.

We are most grateful for everyone's support!

Financial Report and Budget

	FY 2001-2002 (actual)	FY 2002-2003 (budget)
Expenses		
Administrative	\$4,005	\$25,000
Conferences (including General Assembly, booth rental, etc.)	5,965	6,000
Equipment and Supplies	2,979	5,500
Mailing list rentals; ads	2,729	6,000
Printing and Photocopying	3,257	12,000
Products (mostly books)	5,819	5,000
Salaries, wages, and consulting fees	26,689	99,000
Travel	1,543	5,000
TOTAL	\$52,986	\$163,500
Income		
Grants	\$47,000	\$98,000
Individual donations	29,181	28,000
Products (mostly books)	3,090	5,000
Speaker honoraria	425	3,000
TOTAL	\$79,696	\$134,000
Income minus expenses	\$26,710	(\$29,500)
Previous year surplus	\$2,837	\$29,547
BALANCE	\$29,547	\$47