



January 10, 2006

**UP FOR DEBATES:  
CANADIAN UNITARIANS RELISH DEMOCRACY IN ACTION.**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Unitarians across Canada are hosting candidates' debates, searching websites, reading email and news from across Canada and around the world and preparing their questions for candidates at their doors – and doing this all with a sense of anticipation comparable to the excitement many Canadians felt about the holidays just passed.

“Not only is the use of the democratic process one of our seven principles,” said Rev Brian Kiely, president of the Canadian Unitarian Council, “but we, as a denomination, have a reputation for encouraging discussion and debate.”

Various social responsibility committees of the CUC have proposed questions for congregations to ask candidates from all parties. These questions cover a wide spectrum of political concerns, from income security to military spending, from climate change to Canadian sovereignty.

“Ours is a liberal faith,” said Rev Kiely. “We are concerned with promoting justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and a world community with peace and liberty for all.”

Social justice committees recently have discussed issues such as asylum for US war resisters, and a call for peacekeepers to intervene in Darfur, Sudan. As well, proposed questions for candidates include issues that have carried over from the 2004 election, including:

- If elected, what would you do to replace our punitive drug policies with new policies that emphasize treatment and harm reduction?
- If elected, what would you do to ensure the establishment of guaranteed levels of income assistance for those most in need?
- What will you do to combat the AIDS epidemic in Africa? Will you consider



- challenging Mr. Bush's policy of not funding any project that supports birth control?
- What is your party's position on world trade agreements and the inclusion of safeguards for environmental protection? Specifically, would you fight to retain Canadian sovereignty in protecting our environment, even if that should be a deterrent to international trade; and
- The Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012. Do you support a second round Kyoto accord and do you support this step including meaningful binding targets?

With less than two weeks to go until the election, The thoroughly modern CUC will distribute questions and a resource list to congregations through email and by posting them to the CUC website. [Fax service to congregations may also be available.]

The Canadian Unitarian Council/Conseil unitarien du Canada (CUC), is an association of forty-five congregations located across Canada with 5,200 individual members. Arising out of the work of outspoken reformers and dissenters within the Christian tradition five centuries ago, the Unitarian movement today includes Universalists and flows in a broad religious stream augmented by Humanist, earth-centred, Buddhist and other progressive beliefs.

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