

OCTOBER, 2007



→ CUC IN ACTION →

Current Social Responsibility Letters, Events, Topics & Discussion

~ LETTERS OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ~

CRISIS IN MYANMAR

October 1, 2007

The Right Honourable Steven Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

The current crisis in Myanmar is the latest eruption of a long-continued situation where an oppressive dictatorship has consistently suppressed and denied the rights of its people to self-determination.

This is a clear-cut case of a tyrannous regime violating the rights of the people. The current uprising, led by courageous Buddhist monks and clearly supported by the people of Myanmar, has already resulted in the death of several of the monks and beating, oppression and probable death of many protesters.

The international community is fully apprised of this situation via the United Nations and interna-



tional media, and the leaders of Great Britain and the US have spoken, indicating that sanctions will be applied against the dictatorship in Myanmar.

One of the principles of our Canadian Unitarian Council states that we affirm and promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. In addition, our peace resolution 1.3 calls us to promote human rights as set out by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We therefore urge Canada to take action.

The current oppression must be condemned, and Canada, as an upholder of universal human rights, must speak out immediately and unequivocally in the UN and elsewhere in support of those who bravely oppose the dictatorial regime in that unhappy country. We strongly request that Canada issue a clear statement condemning the actions of the Myanmar leaders and apply pressure on the military government to uphold the basic human rights of the Myanmar people.

Yours sincerely,
Jean Pfleiderer

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Cc: Embassy of Union of Myanmar

Want in on the discussion? Join the peace discussion group by sending a blank email to: cuc-peace-discussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

~ PRESS RELEASES ~

October 1, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"RENOUNCE AND ENJOY", UNITARIANS SAY

Unitarians across Canada are taking a day off on November 23 from spending, to observe Buy Nothing Day. The Canadian Unitarian Council encourages congregation members across Canada not to handle money on that day, but to spend some time asking themselves, "How much is enough?"

"Unitarians covenant to affirm and promote the interdependent web of existence," said Jean Pfleiderer, president of the CUC. "We can achieve this by living simply, and by curbing the urge to spend and consume more than we need."

Unitarians work towards a more sustainable world through various projects, including Green Sanctuary programs in their churches and fellowship halls. Buy Nothing Day provides a chance to join with environmentalists and consumers' groups globally

"We believe in world community," said Pfleiderer. "We also believe that we cannot shop our way to fulfillment. We encourage people to ask themselves every day, 'Why do I want to own this?' We think people are trying to fill spiritual needs by accumulating possessions, when what they really want is fellowship."

Between Buy Nothing Day and New Year's Day, many Unitarian congregations will offer fellowship through community gatherings, workshops and worship services. Some of these events illustrate Unitarians' Christian roots and long-standing commitment to social responsibility, such as "Unplug Christmas"

and "Simple Christmas" workshops; "Blue Christmas" events where people can talk about the downside of the holidays; and collecting and distributing hampers for those less fortunate than themselves.

Buy Nothing Day kicks off the Unitarian winter holiday season with a reminder that true gifts come from the heart, not the store. "We are urging Unitarians to buy less," said Jean Pfleiderer, "and live more. Gandhi once summed up his philosophy as 'Renounce and enjoy'. If we take the focus off spending, we can see other aspects of life more clearly."

The Canadian Unitarian Council was the first national faith group ever to endorse Buy Nothing Day, urging the 18,500 Unitarians in Canada to stay out of the stores and malls on that day. The CUC hopes that other faith communities will follow its lead, by endorsing Buy Nothing Day, and encouraging their own members to give their loved ones the greatest gift of all: their time and full attention.

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-centered, Buddhist and other progressive beliefs.

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