

**SB 1070 Protest and Arizona Boycott
by the Rev. Ann Schranz
Monte Vista Unitarian Universalist Congregation
June 6, 2010**

On May 29, I joined tens of thousands of protesters in Phoenix to express disapproval of Arizona law SB 1070 and to agitate for comprehensive immigration reform. That new law requires police to check the immigration status of people who they stop for some other lawful reason and who they suspect may be in the country illegally. Supporters of SB 1070 say racial profiling will not accompany the enforcement of this law. Opponents of SB 1070 say the vague and subjective nature of “suspicion” will make racial profiling all too easy.

As I share a few images with you [these were photographs projected on a screen], I will go into some depth about a controversy within Unitarian Universalist circles. As I mentioned last week, the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association is urging delegates to the General Assembly in Minneapolis at the end of this month to vote to *not* hold General Assembly in Phoenix in 2012 but rather find an alternate location. The Board’s message is: Boycott Arizona. Delegates at GA at the end of this month are further urged to pledge to generate from our 1,000-plus congregations the money to pay for attendant cancellation penalties (estimated at around \$600,000) *and* to generate at least that much money (another \$600,000) to support the “Standing on the Side of Love” campaign in Arizona.

It has taken me a week to figure out how I am going to vote, and I changed my mind in the past week. Last Sunday, I leaned toward opposing the boycott (opposing the pulling of General Assembly from Phoenix in 2012). I leaned that way in large part because ministers and other religious professionals from Arizona

issued a statement opposing the boycott. They feel that our presence in Arizona (accompanied by anti-SB 1070 protests) would have more of a positive impact than our financial boycott would have a negative impact.

I changed my mind because I take my membership in a UU group called Allies for Racial Equity seriously. In order to vote against the boycott with a clear conscience, I believe that I would have to resign my membership in Allies for Racial Equity. I am not willing to do that. In a situation where there are valid arguments and counterarguments on all sides, I give the benefit of my doubt to Latina/Latino Unitarian Universalists and to Unitarian Universalist people of color, as they have gone on record through their respective groups, LUUNA and DRUUMM.

By the way, there is painful history wrapped up in that phrase “Latina/Latino UU’s and UU people of color.” As I understand it, because some Latinas and Latinos look white and identify as white, they can feel invisible in a “people of color” organization. Consequently, LUUNA (the Latino/a Unitarian Universalist Networking Association) exists as an entity separate from the UU people of color organization, which is called DRUUMM (Diverse & Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries). I learned from a Latina UU minister that there are six Latina/Latino ministers in our movement, including our Association president, Peter Morales.¹

I understand that it was the group LUUNA which first urged the UUA Board to boycott Arizona. “The Latino/a Unitarian Universalist Networking Association (LUUNA) formally protests the adoption of Arizona’s SB 1070. Its very

¹ See www.luuna.org/ and <http://druumm.onefireplace.org/>.

vagueness will provide a means for law enforcement agencies to harass individuals on the basis of appearance alone. This bill is just the tip of the iceberg, however.

Other bills pending include:

HB 2162: that would establish and support vigilante groups along the US/Mexican border

HB 2382: that mandates the educational facilities gather and maintain citizenship information on all its students

HB2281: that imposes penalties on educational facilities that offer any courses on ethnic studies

SB 1097: that the Department of Education will collect data on school districts' populations of non-citizen students and their identities. Data should include research on impact of non-citizen students' enrollment, and cost to taxpayers per non-citizen student. Based on these data reports, the State Superintendent Instruction can withhold state aid for those non-citizen students.

These bills would simply provide legal means to harass and oppress Hispanic, as well as other minority, communities. I cannot begin to describe the impact on individuals and families. Families may be split apart, and individuals may be arrested by association. There is a human face in all of this. In your community, do you know who they are?

Do not think that Arizona is alone in its efforts. For example, law enforcement in other states is already mandated to stop individuals suspected of being here

illegally, to arrest and deport them. Legislation such as this, if condoned, will embolden other anti-Hispanic/racist actions all over the United States.

Therefore, LUUNA calls on the Unitarian Universalist Association, and its member congregations to:

Protest the action by the state of Arizona by joining other organizations in calling for a boycott of Arizona.

Urge the President and Congress of the United States to pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

Appoint a task force to study and disseminate information on immigration issues.

LUUNA urges all its members and allies to join together to protest the actions of the state of Arizona and demand justice from our national government.”

Members of the Unitarian Universalist people of color group DRUUMM then expressed solidarity with LUUNA. This is the statement from DRUUMM: “DRUUMM (Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries) join with other Unitarian Universalists concerned with justice to condemn the new racial profiling laws in Arizona and we urge Unitarian Universalists who identify as people of color/Latina/o/Hispanic to express their outrage individually and collectively at these laws which allow law enforcement to target people based on race. We particularly note the statement by LUUNA (Latina/o Unitarian Universalist Networking Association) which notes about this

law that “its very vagueness will provide a means for law enforcement agencies to harass individuals on the basis of appearance alone.”

Because some of our members have indicated their concern that they would not be safe travelling to and within Arizona as long as such racial profiling laws exist, we also support the proposed boycott of General Assembly. To hold a General Assembly without the total spectrum of our members is exclusionary. We also urge our General Assembly delegates this year to explore other options that could keep us in dialogue with the people of Arizona.

We remind our Unitarian Universalist family that such actions do have impact. In the late 1980s, when Arizona refused to honor the Martin Luther King holiday, Unitarian Universalists cancelled the General Assembly scheduled to be held there. After the state changed their position, General Assembly was once again held in that state. We believe that, even in hard economic times, Unitarian Universalists must be willing to demand that their money be guided by their principles.

We as people who affirm the worth and dignity of all people must continue to fight against racism and ethnic discrimination in all forms. A law that singles people out by race and ethnicity is by its nature racist. We condemn this law and urge people of faith throughout our country to let their voices be heard.

For The Steering Committee, DRUUMM (Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries)

Allies for Racial Equity (the group to which I belong) then expressed solidarity with LUUNA and DRUUM.² This is an excerpt from the Allies for Racial Equity statement:

“We know that some in our association are advocating alternative protest strategies, but our philosophy of accountability calls us to carefully consider requests for allied participation from Diverse & Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM) and from the Latino/a Unitarian Universalist Networking Association (LUUNA).

In doing so, we have discovered that DRUUMM and LUUNA leaders have aligned themselves with the leadership of several prominent national civil and immigrants rights organizations. With hope and faith that a strong, united voice of protest will help overturn this law, and in solidarity with LUUNA and with DRUUMM, we affirm our support of an economic boycott of Arizona and encourage delegates to our General Assembly to vote in favor of the business resolution presented by our board of trustees.”

Two months ago, I participated in the drafting of Allies for Racial Equity accountability guidelines. These guidelines exist as a living document within the covenant of our relationship with DRUUMM.

Institutional and Community Relationships

Know and understand the institutional relationship between DRUUMM and ARE and its history.

² See <http://www.uuallies.org/>.

Work with the Unitarian Universalist Association, UU congregations and other UU institutions to further our shared goals of anti-racist transformation.

Engage with requests from DRUUMM for allied participation in our UU movement.

Uphold a relationship of mutual accountability with DRUUMM, including periodic auditing of these guidelines.

Support, initiate and expand anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism work in UU congregations and communities.

Create a deeper understanding of systemic oppression and white privilege in our organizations and institutions.

Interpersonal Relationships and Communication

Commit to building relationships of mutual trust and accountability with people and communities of color.

Develop relationships of mentoring, support and mutual accountability with other white people.

Invite other white people to join us in this work.

Offer our own experience and honor the experiences and cultural expressions of others.

Exercise our moral strength by respectfully stating our beliefs, needs and feelings.

Be aware of our individual assumptions and open to hear that we are making assumptions.

Commit to listening and learning.

Give and receive feedback openly, honestly and with compassion.

Maintain a balance between a healthy, accountable process and the need for action.

In conflict, honor all parties, exercise power consistent with our mission and seek to maintain right relationship within the community.

Show up, speak up and challenge oppression, racism and white privilege.

Be open to diverse forms of leadership and communication.

Be mindful of the power of our non-verbal communication.

Stay at the table, even when it's difficult.

Personal Practices, Reflection and Transformation

Be willing to take risks, make mistakes, take responsibility and seek reconciliation.

Commit to ongoing learning.

Practice humility with integrity.

Adopt a practice of action and reflection.

Develop a spiritual practice that includes anti-racist reflection and transformation.

Participate in ongoing discernment about personal motivation, seeking to connect our actions with our theology.

Strive for excellence and accept that we will sometimes fail.

Examine our white privilege, entitlement and internalized superiority.

Develop an analysis of racism, privilege and power that is shared in relationship with DRUUMM. [end of Allies for Racial Equity accountability guidelines]

To conclude, in situations where there are valid arguments and counterarguments on all sides, such as whether to move General Assembly from Phoenix, I give the benefit of my doubt to Latina/Latino Unitarian Universalists and to Unitarian Universalist people of color, as they have gone on record through their respective groups, LUUNA and DRUUMM. May we cherish our doubts. May we give the benefit of our doubts to the disadvantaged, to those who are most adversely affected by white privilege. May it be so!