

# Robert Greene's Farewell Column

by Rev. Robert Edward Greene

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE - After 35 years of writing these Minister's Messages and 22 years of serving this congregation, I now take leave of this column, this Church, and the parish ministry. I am most appreciative to all of you for your willingness over the years to read these words and share my thoughts and concerns; writing is, after all, a two way street and there would be no communication without your consideration, evaluation, and reflection. If what I have written has stimulated you to do that, or perhaps on occasion has provided a different perspective, or once in a while even moved you to action, then I am gratified to have been of some service to you.

Some, I am aware, have considered these columns too "political." I offer no excuse. Religion above all must be the expression of moral values and any religion which then fails to apply those moral values to the actuality of living is, as another minister has put it, a "dry-as-dust religion." If that requires crossing some line between religion and politics, so be it. Religion affects every aspect of living and a religion that is worthy of its exponents, I believe, never will hesitate to urge its values upon those who together form the community and upon those who claim to offer leadership to that community.

That you have allowed me to practice that religion, that you have encouraged me and supported me in the endeavor to make religion more than word and vision, that you have been willing to let me express a religion that is not an escape but a responsibility is the greatest honor for which I possibly could ask or receive. That is the reward I take with me; that is the reward I ever shall remember and ever shall cherish.

I take leave of you, then, only in the role of your active Minister. I keep you, each and every one, as the dearest of friends. I keep this church deep in my heart, an irreplaceable part of my very being. I keep still the vital significance of our common religious quest. I take no leave of the ministry; I may be altering my approach to that task, but I always shall be a minister, not just in title but in the character of my living. I can do that because of what I have learned from you, from the wonderful experiences that I have enjoyed with you, from the unending motivation and confidence you so kindly have given to me.

Thank you for giving me the years, the time, and the freedom to fulfill my dreams, my vision of what religion, Unitarianism Universalism, and the ministry ought to be!

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