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AMERICA'S FIRST 'GREEN' FAMILY CEMETERY ESTABLISHED

For Immediate Release

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An 81 acre wilderness of ancient oaks, hickories, and pines has been donated to The Universal Ethician Church to serve as a traditional family burial ground, where earthly remains are naturally returned to nurture the earth.

Although the Ethician Family Cemetery is the third natural burial park in the United States, it is the first that has been divided into family plots of up to 1/3 acre each. It is also the largest natural burial ground in the United States.

Modern urban cemeteries may have as many as 3,000 graves per acre in sterile, toxic environments where embalmed bodies are sequestered in bronze, steel, or copper caskets or concrete vaults where they are kept from returning to the earth as God and nature intended.

Modern American families spend many thousands of dollars for elaborate burials, wasting money that could have been used to send grandchildren to college, pay for health care for elderly family members, or for charitable causes.

The spiritual philosophy of the Ethician Church is to follow the Biblical concept of "dust to dust" which demands natural burial in God's wilderness, and thus protects, preserves and enriches a part of Creation. A pickled body encased in steel, bronze, copper and concrete is not in accordance with Biblical and Ethician principles.

"And the Lord God formed mankind of the dust of the ground, and breathed into their nostrils the breath of life, and they became living beings."

(Genesis 2:7)

"Till you return to the ground,
For out of it you were taken;
For dust you are,
And to dust you shall return."

(Genesis 3:19)

Ethician Bishop and Prelate, George H. Russell had waited 35 years for his dream of creating a wilderness cemetery in America. In 1968, he and his wife Sue, were conducting field research in cultural ecology and linguistics in Toledo District, British Honduras (now Belize). As they had one of the few vehicles in that remote part of the world they were called upon to transport bodies into the lush rainforests for burial.

“I could feel the spiritual essence of the magnificent forest as created by God, welcome the mortal remains which would feed the forest, bringing forth orchids and other tropical flowers as well as fruits to feed God’s creatures both great and small,” expounded Russell. “I knew then that this time honored and ancient method of natural burial is what God intended. The American “death industry” consumes both money and the earth’s resources. Natural burials cost little and enrich the earth”

Embalming is not allowed as the chemicals are toxic to the environment, thus burial must take place within 24 hours of death or the bodies must be properly refrigerated in accordance with statute. Although simple pine coffins may be utilized, shrouds are preferred, which may be as simple as a favorite bio-degradable blanket or quilt. Cremated remains may be sprinkled or buried although the process of cremation wastes energy and creates air pollution and thus is discouraged. Graveside services may be conducted by family and friends or by a pastor, rabbi, imam, priest or other spiritual leader.

Each family that acquires a plot will be encouraged to erect a historical marker outlining a brief history of the family along the forest pathways leading to the various plots. Individual graves may be marked with simple monuments and families are encouraged to use their plots for the burial of family pets as well. A bench may be placed on each plot to serve as a place for spiritual enlightenment, meditation or prayer.

Large pets such as horses, tigers or elephants must undergo a “sky burial” cleansing process at the vulture sanctuary on the grounds of the nearby Holy Trinity Wilderness Cathedral before their bones may be buried.

Memorial services may be conducted at the adjacent Chapel of the Nativity, or at the gravesite. Graves must be dug with hand tools and must be a minimum of 24” deep to comply with Texas State Law. It is recommended that family members and friends perform the task of digging the grave and covering the bodies as part of the ritual.

As the Universal Ethician Church is open to all faiths, it is possible to be consecrated as an Ethician, even after death, upon testimony by one or two witnesses that the deceased lived by the “golden rule”, loved and cared for Creation, and had a profound spiritual persona.

Family burial plots may be assigned upon application based upon factors such as formal membership in the Ethician Church, life works to protect and preserve God’s Creation, or other factors. Although there is no charge for the assignment of a family cemetery plot, a donation to the Church, based upon ability to pay and the anticipated savings of avoiding the tremendous costs of modern funerals, is expected.

Donations above the actual appraised value of the plot are tax-deductible. 100% of the proceeds will be utilized to protect and preserve God’s Creation as the Church has no paid clergy or staff.

The wilderness burial park was donated through the generosity of Methodist Ethicians, Kenneth L. and Marjorie H. Russell. Dr. and Mrs. Russell have in addition donated several conservation easements to Natural Area Preservation Association, a Texas Land Trust, protecting over 500 acres along the shores of Lake Livingston in San Jacinto County.

For information on how to be assigned a natural burial plot for your family send an e-mail to ghr@cyberclone.net.

George H. Russell, an outspoken opponent of the death penalty, is a resident of Huntsville, Texas, known worldwide as "The City of Death."

He is founder of The Patriot Network, and author of its 35+ web sites located at www.patriotnetwork.org, as well as founder of The Universal Ethician Church, an interfaith ministry with a worldwide following via the church's 275+ web sites located at www.salvationnetwork.org.

Russell, 58, is an educational video producer, environmental activist, historic preservation specialist, photographer, art and antique collector, philanthropist, American patriot and ethician.

Additional biographical information may be found in *Who's Who in America*, through Internet searches, and in other publications. Images of Mr. Russell suitable for downloading for publication may be found at www.salvationnetwork.org.