



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA DEPARTMENT OF MINISTRY • SPRING & GA 2002

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DIRECTOR

APRIL FOOLS' DAY

April Fools' Day has generally been kind to me. When I was a banker, I received my letter of acceptance into Harvard Divinity School on April 1. Because of the date, no one at the bank would believe what I was telling them until I actually produced the document. This April 1, I was chosen to be the Director of the new Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group starting on July 1. I didn't have to produce a document this time to induce credibility. People seemed to accept my word . . . and an e-mail from Kay Montgomery.

I am delighted to have been asked to be Director at this time. The new group's work will be filled with opportunities to find ways for those on staff to work more collaboratively and effectively with the ministers, religious educators, and other professional religious leaders who serve our movement, and to ask them to do the same with each other and us. It will no longer be the Department of Ministry, though we are proud of its history and accomplishments. It will be a new thing, a new working group, with a broad vision and mission.

It is a time of real change! Having grown up in the 60s I love that on a theoretical basis, but have learned since that change is also always a challenge.

There will be very significant shifts in the staffing of the new department. As I write this we are starting to review the applications we have received for the Ministerial Credentialing Director and RE Credentialing Director positions, and will be putting out an invitation for applications for the Professional Development Director position. Kenn

Hurto, who has served well as Acting Ministerial Development Director, is considering his options. Ellen Brandenburg and Robin Bartlett will be moving on after August. My expectation is that we will know at least the shape and staffing of the new working group well before GA and will make every effort to keep you informed of these changes as they happen.

Please also know just how grateful I am to the entire staff of the department, both ministers and assistants, for the consistency of their hard work, good spirits and real accomplishments. They are wonderful colleagues and good friends. I will sincerely miss those who will be leaving and, at the same time, look forward to building and being part of the new team with those who remain. ●

—David Hubner

MID-CAREER MINISTERIAL RETREAT

Save January 21–29, 2003 for a Mid-Career Ministerial Retreat in Tortola in the British Virgin Islands. Sponsored by the UUMA CENTER Committee and led by Leon Hopper and Elinor Artman, the event is aimed at those who have been in ministry for more than ten years and/or have about ten years until retirement. Spouses and partners are welcome. Approximate cost is \$1,500 per person including airfare, accommodations, meals, program costs, transfers, and taxes. More information is available at UUMA Professional Days and at center-retreat@uuma.org.

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Youth and Young Adult Ministry Sunday

It was a privilege to be with so many of you at the UUMA Convo in Birmingham. We were thrilled to discover how many ministers understand the difference financial and institutional support will make for developing and starting Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministry Programs.

This may be because so many of you have your own stories of how Unitarian Universalism touched your life as a youth or young adult. When we asked what Youth and Young Adult Ministries meant to you, several ministers replied, "It saved my life."

Think of how many young people would benefit from a liberal religion to lean on as they make life choices alone for the first time on a campus or in a new job. Many of these young adults who would welcome our "good news" have felt excluded from the news other faiths offer.

The goal for the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Sunday Campaign is to raise \$2 million in order to provide congregations with ministry grants, curricula, training, and other programs to support their outreach to youth, campus students, and young adults.

In our congregations there is an age gap of individuals between 14 and 35. We are asking every congregation to do two things to increase our ministry to people of those ages:

1. Hold a Youth and Young Adult Ministry Sunday in the fall of 2002 to celebrate your successes, create a vision for the future, and raise funds for these vital ministries. (The date is flexible.)
2. Ask your members to give generously to this effort, and let them know what Youth and Young Adult Ministries have meant to you and our whole Association.

The Youth and Young Adult Ministry Sunday Team is available to help ensure this is a successful fundraising Sunday for your congregation. We will provide worship and

publicity resources and are available to discuss any particular needs you have.

Please call Alison Miller, coordinator, at 617-948-6105, or e-mail her (amiller@uua.org) to discuss your congregation's participation and let her know the date that has been chosen. ●

—Alison Miller

At GA 2002

We will present and/or sponsor a variety of workshops and programs at General Assembly. Check your GA schedule for dates and times of the following events:

At CENTER Day:

Wednesday, 6/19/02, times TBA

What It Means to Be a Teaching Congregation: Dave Sammons and Patti Lawrence

Working Things Out (or Not) with Your Predecessor: John Nichols, et al.

Your Congregation through the Family Systems' Lens: Kenn Hurto

No More Sunday Collections: Ralph Mero

For Ministers Considering Search: John Weston

Succession Following Meritorious Ministry: John Weston

Panel on Depression within Ministers: Kenn Hurto and Leslie Westbrook

During General Assembly:

Congregational and Leadership Assessment in the Large

Congregation: Rev. Kenneth Gordon Hurto, Saturday, 2:00 pm and Sunday, 1:00 pm

Interim Ministry—Making the Most of It: Rev. John Weston, Sunday, 4:00 pm

Investment Planning 101: Rev. Ralph Mero and Fidelity Investments Representative, Friday, 12:45 pm

Let's Hear It for Fair Compensation Congregations!: Brad Brown and Ron Green, Friday, 2:30 pm

Making the UUA Retirement Plan

Work for You: Joyce Stewart and Nancy Chaddock, Friday, 4:15 pm

Ministerial Succession Planning: Rev. John Weston, Monday, 12:30 pm

Personal Finances for Church Staff: Rev. Paul Johnson, Monday, 8:30 am

Preparing to Meet the MFC: Phyllis Daniel, Friday, 8:30 pm

Service of the Living Tradition:

Sermon: "Only By Your Presence," Rev. Barbara Pescan; two services: Sunday, 8 am and 10 am

Strange Bedfellows? Scripture(s), Human Rights, and UU Principles: Dr. Carole Fontaine, Saturday, 3:45 pm

Thinking about Ministry: Rev. Ellen Brandenburg, Friday, 12:45 pm

Appointments with Directors at GA:

The best way to schedule an appointment with one of the Directors at GA is to contact them prior to GA to set something up. By the time of GA their schedules are usually full enough to make add-ons an interesting challenge. For your information, the directors will be staying at the Hotel Palace Royale (418-694-2000). ●

—Alllyn Ettien

Community Ministry

The UU Community Ministry Center has begun plans for a continental-wide conference on Community Ministry for the fall of 2003. For more information about plans underway you can contact Rev. Jody Shipley at joshipley@aol.com.

The Guidelines for the Affiliation of Community Clergy with UU Congregations continues to aid in the development of these new relationships. It covers information about the role and issues important to both congregations and clergy with added information about current community ministries and history. Copies are available from the UU Community Ministry Center, P.O. Box 2370, Berkeley, CA 94702. They are \$20 per copy.

UUMA Community Ministry Focus Group Formed

In March, representatives of the UU Community Ministry Center and the Society for the Larger Ministry gathered twenty-five community clergy attending the UUMA Convocation and formed a focus group for this expanding aspect of our UU ministry. The clergy attending represented the 120 community clergy who are UUMA members and a potentially larger number who have given up their membership.

In a series of three meetings the group met with members of the MRE Focus Group to share their experience, agree on a general direction for the future, and identify a steering committee. Serving on that committee are nine members. They have formed teams to begin the work of the group. Suzanne Owens-Pike (Hospital Chaplain, Minneapolis, MN), Ann Galloway-Egge (Hospital Chaplain, Minneapolis, MN), and Dorothy Emerson (Women's Heritage Society, Boston, MA) are developing formal relationships with all aspects of our UUMA. Bonnie Meyer (Hospice Chaplain, Lexington, KY) and Deborah Pope-Lance (Ministry of Sexual Ethics, Sudbury, MA) are developing a relationship with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. Roger Brewin (Ceremonies on Location, Chicago, IL) and Anita Farber-Robertson (Adjunct Professor at ANTS, Swampscott, MA) are increasing lines of communication with our parish and education colleagues. And Jeanne Lloyd (Co-Chair of SLM) and Jody Shipley (Staff for the UU Community Ministry Center) are developing a network for this focus group of clergy.

As the numbers of community clergy increases each year we are challenged to find more ways to make our professional organization supportive and inclusive of all forms of UU ministry.

If you would like to know more about the Community Ministry Focus Group you may contact Jody Shipley at 510-649-9088 or joshipley@aol.com.

STARR KING SCHOOL FOR THE MINISTRY

On-line (three Fall courses on-line):

"UU History," Alicia McNary Forsey; "UU Polity," Mark W. Harris; "UU Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," Helen Knox and Alicia McNary Forsey. See: <http://online.sksm.edu>.

Summer Session 2002 (offered this summer as part of the GTU's Summer Session Collaborative at Starr King School): June 17–21 "Poetry as Prayer," Marcia Faulk; July 8–12 "Exploring our Spiritual Selves Through Dreamwork," Jeremy Taylor; and "Effective Public Ministry," John Buehrens. See: www.gtusummersession.org.

Earl Morse Wilbur History Colloquium:

The Fifth Earl Morse Wilbur History Colloquium will be January 23–26, 2003, at the Clark Kerr Campus, University of California, and at Starr King School for the Ministry. Focus will be the role of the dissenter in Western culture, from Jesus through the Reformation.

In Their Own Words: A publication of conversation following three days of meetings in January, 2001, between members of the Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus/Black Affairs Council and FULLBAC (their white supporters). *In Their Own Words* is available for \$20; contact the school.

The Restitution of Christianity: Chris Hoffmann has completed the first English translation of *The Restitution of Christianity* by Michael Servetus. See: <http://online.sksm.edu>.

MEADVILLE /LOMBARD SUMMER INTENSIVES, 2002

July 1–5: Beyond the Western Tradition: Religions of the World, Jerome Stone

July 6–12: Advanced Preaching, David Bumbaugh

July 15–19: Systematic Thinking and Therapy, David Arksey

For more information contact the school at 773-256-3000, ext. 243

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

FROM ELLEN BRANDENBURG

Dear Students, Colleagues, and Friends,

Anyone who's ever been in the Ministerial Education Office has probably seen our drawers stuffed with student files. (As the years go by, more and more of those files are either red, blue, purple, brown, green, or yellow—each person is assigned a different color on the basis of their regional subcommittee.) At last count, we had 486 files. Each time a person is granted preliminary fellowship, we fill out a form, remove their file from the drawer, and carry it into the next office.

In the past thirteen years, I have seen over 750 files leave our office for the big drawers down the hall. Of course, every one of those files represents a life: a family history, educational experiences, deep aspirations, gifts and graces, growing edges, aptitudes, and attitudes—all the things that might have a bearing on the fulfillment of a ministerial call. Those pages are filled with some of the most personal and heartfelt things you can imagine—pain, courage, joy, faith, commitment to something greater than self—that and more, it's all there. Each time a file/person moves along, I remember the journey and I say good-bye, hoping I have handled that file/life with the care and respect it deserves.

As I contemplate leaving my job later this summer, I can't help but think back on all the incredible people I have worked with over the years—both students and colleagues, both those who have moved along and those who have gone in a different direction. I have learned something from just about every person, and I can say now that I have a special place in my heart for the pains-in-the-neck; they taught me the most about myself and the institutions of faith we serve. Thanks to each one of you.

I am enormously grateful to have had the privilege of serving as Ministerial Education Director at the UUA and I hardly know how to say “good-bye” in a way that adequately conveys the depth of my feelings. It's hard to let go, even though there are times I would like to quietly slip away and never look back. Fortunately, I'm not planning to leave the ministry and all the connections I have made over the years—that is a comfort and a joy.

And now I need to dust off my own file/life and pay it a little attention. I haven't updated my Ministerial Record Sheet since 1985. My, how things have changed! ●

Faithfully Yours,
—Ellen Brandenburg

Liaison to Students Report, February 2002

TOM ROSIELLO

On a Thursday in mid-February I arrived at Pickett and Elliot House wondering what the next four days would be like. I was reflecting on my own whirlwind experience with the MFC only five months earlier. I had read all the packets that Chris May had sent to me and had made some notes. I wondered how the actual MFC members had prepared. I was anxious to see the process from the other side.

During the next very full four days, my hopes as to how the committee would work were confirmed. I soon discovered that every member of the panel on which I served brought valuable gifts and experience to this difficult task. They were all well pre-

pared people of great integrity. They were committed to fairness. The way they performed their job gave me a very positive feeling about the future of our ministry.

Although many candidates received a “one” from the committee, a few did not. In each case, the process by which the MFC panel made their decision was exemplary. Members spoke clearly and honestly about whether they thought this person was ready to serve in our ministry. People really listened to each other and they took whatever time was necessary to fairly evaluate the candidate.

I want future candidates to know that the committee is on your side. They hope that everyone will shine in their interview. If nerves cause you to forget, they will help, sometimes by rephrasing the question or sometimes by moving on to another area in which you can “show your stuff.” This is not a test where the number of right or wrong answers is counted; rather, the questions provide a framework in which the committee explores whether or not they see a minister before them.

In every case where a troubling issue appeared in someone's packet, it emerged in the interview. The critical question was not if there was an issue

GA APPOINTMENTS

If you would like an individual appointment with Ellen Brandenburg at General Assembly please call her assistant, Chris May, at 617-948-6403 or send e-mail to cmay@uua.org. Her schedule is usually full by the time GA begins, so please make an appointment in advance.

but rather how self-aware the candidate was of the issue and what steps they had taken to address it. My single piece of advice to future candidates is to know what issues are raised in your packet and be ready to address them. A great first question is one that shows you are aware of a weakness and are addressing it. The internship evaluation, the CPE evaluation, and the career assessment speak volumes to the MFC. Review them early and often in your process of ministerial preparation. If the same issue appears in a couple of places be sure you have taken real steps to address it before you get to the MFC.

During our final session on Sunday afternoon, the student liaisons were asked for input based on their experience of working with the committee. I made the following four recommendations:

1. Conflict management should be included in the list of competencies. It's a survival skill that I believe many ministers lack. Almost consistently, questions regarding conflict situations were not answered well. In light of the significant number of negotiated terminations of ministers in recent years, it seem to me that conflict management skills should be formally required in ministerial education.
2. The MFC should clarify its thinking in regard to whether there really is a common standard of minimum competency for ministers of religious education, parish minister, and community ministers. The current system of credentialing ministers and the system by which one changes from one ministerial track to another is troubling. The idea of equality among our ministries is certainly important but I'm not sure that ministerial competency in each area is advanced by a "one size fits all" approach. The temptation on my panel was to really discover whether that person was fit for the type of ministry they selected

to pursue. Isn't that really the right question?

3. The Committee, in conjunction with the Regional Subcommittees, needs to move toward an "in care" model of ministerial development where meaningful evaluations can take place over a several year period.
4. During the MFC sessions a separate waiting area should be provided for those waiting to see the committee and those who have come out from their interview. Those waiting to go in and those coming out are in such totally different places that it seems like a matter of simple courtesy to provide them with separate spaces.

It was a personal pleasure for me to spend time with each member of the MFC. I found them to be some of the most interesting (and, yes, even fun) folks in our association. I was honored to witness their hard work and share in their passion for good ministry. ●

Liaison to Students Report, February 2002

SARAH STEWART

My experience as a student liaison to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) this winter was an invaluable way to learn more about the committee, how it functions, and its attitude toward the students it interviews. I came away with new respect for the hard work the committee members do as well as some clear ideas for how students can prepare for their meetings with the MFC.

First, my weekend sitting with the committee as a liaison convinced me of the necessity of having a continental body like the MFC to do this work. While the committee took particular internship and clinical pastoral education (CPE) evaluations very

seriously, along with the rest of the candidate's packet, it was also able to look at ministerial candidates with some objectivity. It balanced objective standards for our ministry and individual circumstances. The members did their work with compassion and intent, treating it as a sacred undertaking. They did not take it lightly.

When I met with the MFC as a candidate, however, I found their processes somewhat opaque. The committee recognizes this and is always working to be more transparent (I hope the Regional Subcommittees on Candidacy further this goal). There are also steps you can take before your interview to learn more about the process.

First, make sure you have the most recent version of the *Information for Candidates* booklet from the Office of Ministerial Education. Most of the information you need to meet with the MFC is there, and Christine May can answer any questions you may have about it.

Secondly, do what you can to meet the Director of Ministerial Education, the Director of the Department of Ministry, and members of the MFC before your interview. There are opportunities to meet members of the MFC in Boston, MA, Berkeley, CA, Chicago, IL, and at General Assembly every year. It will help you if you recognize some of the faces in the room on the day of your interview.

Meeting and getting to know the Director of Ministerial Education and the Director of the Department of Ministry is especially important. The Director of Ministerial Education is your link to the process. She or he and the department's assistant, Christine May, can answer questions you have and help you prepare for your meeting. I suggest introducing yourself to the Director of the Department of Ministry as well because, although she or he will not be as involved in your educational process, she or he sits on one panel of the MFC while the Director of Ministerial Education sits on the other (both

without vote). They are the liaisons between your interview and the department of ministry.

As much as you can, I suggest you try not to see your meeting with the MFC as the end of a process, but as one stage along a path toward successful ministry. If you get a “one,” you will then be faced with the search process, where search committees and potential employers will ask you questions very similar to those the MFC asks. If you get something other than a “one” you will likely continue in your ministerial preparation, with the committee’s comments as guidance. For the vast majority, this interview is not a “make or break” hurdle: doing as well as possible doesn’t mean the search process will be a breeze, and getting a disappointing number doesn’t mean you’re done for. Your preparation will serve you well as you continue in your ministry, regardless of how your interview goes.

I end with the usual advice: study, read the books on the reading list, practice with a group of people whom you trust (this could be a formal “mock” interview or something you do with other candidates; either way it is helpful to have a few people read your packet, even the confidential parts like your CPE evaluation, and ask you questions relating to it), write your sermon ahead of time, and practice it several times. Your sermon is the one part of the interview over which you have complete control. Maintain support networks during your preparation—they are invaluable in this as in all aspects of ministry. Good luck! ●

From the Internship Clearinghouse

What I enjoy most about working with the Internship Clearinghouse are the conversations that I have with you while you are in the process of planning internships—especially talking over possibilities about what could be, and how an internship fits into your vision for the

minister that you aspire to be. One effect of developing the Internship Clearinghouse on-line database (www.uua.org/ministry/internship) is that the basic information about established sites is readily available. Yet the work of discernment (what kind of internship I am looking for, what do I hope to learn, what has this experience meant for me) has become even more important.

I also have a fair number of these “discerning” conversations with those of you who are planning non-traditional internships—meaning internships that for one reason or another don’t fit what has been a more standard form. At one level, an internship has to meet the requirements set by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee; and yet no two are the same. In designing these internships both flexibility and substance are important, and the interactions between each intern, supervisor, and site brings its own dynamics, challenges, and gifts.

As I mentioned in a previous column, starting June 15 I’ll be working with the Internship Clearinghouse from our home in Chicago and I look forward to corresponding with you through phone calls and e-mails. My e-mail address will remain the same (kolliff@uua.org), and I’ll publish the phone number as soon as possible. I look forward to talking with you. Blessings and best wishes! ●

—Ken Olliff

P.S. We’re expecting a girl!

White Memorial Fund

The White Memorial Fund Committee oversees the annual distribution of monetary awards to selected UU ministerial students. While giving preference to students entering their last year of academic preparation, the committee will consider applications from students not yet in their final year. The committee will make 2002 application information available in June. The mailing address will be included in that package. Applications must be postmarked no later than

September 30, 2002. The recipient or recipients of the award will be announced and funds will be issued by the end of the calendar year.

Application formats suitable for copying and distribution will be sent to the UUA Department of Ministry and to Harvard, Meadville/Lombard, and Starr King. While applicants must be UUs who are studying for the UU ministry, they may be enrolled at theological schools other than those listed.

Application formats will also be available after July 1, 2002 from Ardis Coffman, 5128 Via De Palma, Las Vegas, NV, 89146; coffman@nevada.edu. Awards may range from \$500 to \$1,500 depending on the committee’s assessment of the quality of the applications. ●

COLLEGIUM

Annual Conference,
October 17–29, 2002

The Cenacle Retreat House,
Chicago, IL

Papers in theology, history, and feminism will be shared. Presentations will be given by a Distinguished Scholar and the winner of the Collegium paper prize (\$1,500). Those wishing to attend should contact Rev. Neil Gerdes, Meadville/Lombard, 5701 S. Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637 or ngerdes@meadville.edu.

NEW MFC MEETING SCHEDULE

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee has recently voted to reduce the number of its annual meetings to three. Accordingly, there will be only one meeting held in the first half of 2003. The new schedule is:

May 2–5, 2002, Chicago, IL
September 25–29, 2002, Boston, MA
December 5–8, 2002, Berkeley, CA
March 20–24, 2003, Chicago, IL

Agricultural Report

As of this writing (April 1), 57 search committees have identified their candidate for their congregation's next called minister, with a likely 10 or so to go. It's harvest season in the Settlement Office! ●

Meeting at General Assembly

In Quebec I will be staying at the Hotel Palace Royal, and hope to have a half-hour private meeting with every minister having settlement concerns. Top priority is ministers serving more than a hundred miles from Boston who have a completed application and Ministerial Record at the time they request the appointment. Please e-mail the Settlement Office with your request at settlement@uua.org, and Nancy Hezlitt will be glad to schedule you. ●

Interim Ministry Hopefuls Take Note

Some of you may remember last year when I thought I was Amos, or at least Alan Greenspan. I predicted a great recession in interim ministry and the wailing and gnashing of pastoral teeth. And wouldn't you know it, events proved me wrong: virtually every minister wanting to do an interim ministry was able to do so, though not always for the desired compensation or in a hoped-for location.

I swore off the prediction business forevermore, but as information is my stock in trade, I just can't give it up. I can, however, do a better job of discriminating between what I know and what I think. Here's what I know for sure: 41 congregations so far have applied for an interim minister for next year; together with

another 20 or so where the minister is the candidate someplace else, that makes 60 likely new interim opportunities. And here's speculation: if last year and the year before hold true, there will be another 20 to 30 congregations that come into play between now and late June, for a grand total of between 80 and 90 new interim opportunities.

This is the place to say that the UUA's interim ministry program looks first to the placement of those ministers who qualify as Accredited Interim Ministers (AIMs) and AIMs in Training (AIMITs) (i.e., those who take the extended training, attend the seminars, serve in interim ministry positions year after year, and relocate—every year or two). The rationale: AIMs and AIMITs can only be there for the congregations if the congregations are there for them. ●

Way Cool Interim Process

This year will be the first year that interim minister search committees will receive the Ministerial Records of recommended ministers via the Internet instead of through the mail. With the number of ministers serving in interim capacity having doubled in the past five years—a 10 percent increase in just the last year—the need was great. Once again the UUA's Information Technology Services department takes the cake! ●

Interim Ministers-to-Be Take Note

Basic Training for Interim Ministry will take place in Quebec City at the Hilton on Monday and Tuesday, June 17 and 18, 2002. All ministers planning to do their first interim ministry this year are required

to attend. We will start at 8:30 am sharp both mornings; thus you will likely need to fly in Sunday evening. We wrap up at 9:00 pm Monday and 5:30 pm Tuesday. The Settlement Office has reserved a block of semi-private rooms for Sunday and Monday nights. Register with us, please.

The cost of the training is 1 percent of your next year's TCM (pledges are accepted—due Nov. 1, 2002). In return we cover room, board, materials and program costs, and we reimburse you for one-half your round-trip transportation cost. The "faculty" consists of UUA Accredited Interim Ministers. ●

SEMINAR FOR NEW MINISTERS

From CENTER, the UUA's continuing education committee . . .

PITFALLS, PRATFALLS & POTHOLE:

Making Lemonade
Not Lemons of Your New Ministry

**Pre-GA, 9 to 5,
Tuesday, June 18, 2002**

This daylong practicum is for ministers just entering the Unitarian Universalist Ministry (receiving their call by June 1, 2002). Topics to be covered include:

What to Do (and Not) First;
Time Management; Defining Roles and Coming to Clarity with Leadership;
Negotiating Expectations; Organizing an Office; Record Keeping; Forming Collegial Relationships; Working without a Supervisor; The Role of Your Mentor.

Participation is by invitation; however, if you have questions, please contact Jory Agate, CENTER, at: 617-876-7772 or RevAgate@aol.com.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It Begins and Ends with Self . . .

“**O**ne must not always think so much about what one should *do*, but rather what one should *be*. Our works do not ennoble us; but we must ennoble our works,” Meister Eckhart.

“If a priest’s private life is in disarray, it’s going to affect his work and muddy the pastoral waters. How can it be other than an upsetting distraction for those who require help with their own private lives?” Susan Howatch, *The High Flyer*.

The late Emil Gudmundson, for many years District Executive (and Inter-District Representative) in the Midwest took me aside in the midst of a church conflict. “Kenn, I’ve been working with ministers for over forty years. Always *who* the minister is, not what he (sic) does, is what creates problems in ministry.” Then, eyes on mine, he said, “Do you know who you are?”

Many times in our ministries we are blessed by colleagues who cut

to the quick and open us to the truth of ministry. I remain ever thankful for Emil’s provocative challenge.

Recently, for the UUMA CENTER team, I compiled a schema for ministerial development. Typically, developmental grids focus on tasks, skills, and competencies. All our training is about doing. Of course, the practice of our ministerial craft is essential to the work. So, I included them in my model as well.

As I worked my schema, Emil’s trenchant question would not go away: “Who are you?” I felt I had to make this the first element in describing ministerial development: *Does this minister know who she, who he is?* However *necessary* skilled craftsmanship is, the *doing* is not *sufficient*; *being* is determinative!

Another mentor, Rabbi Edwin H. Friedman, taught that the essential task of leadership is to work on one’s own salvation. “Don’t convert others; convert yourself!” he often thundered. I discover that turning myself around is hard enough; why do I think I can turn others without having first gotten my act together? Ed convinced me that Emil had it right. We must begin with our own souls. Or as the proverb puts it, “Physician, heal thyself!”

The end of year seems to be when congregations like to evaluate our work. Inevitably, they focus on the *doing*. That’s okay, but only we can look in the mirror and see whether the soul within, the *being*, is sound. That’s the most important assessment you can do. Or, as yet another teacher put it, “How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?” Matthew 7.4.

As this most challenging program year moves toward summer, I hope and pray you are taking time to work on your own soul. Ennoble your work by enhancing your soul. *Be* the very best Self you can be! ●

—Kenn Hurto

REACH PACKET

Faith Works: Promising Practices for Lifespan Learning Communities.

That’s the working title for a new revitalized on-line REACH packet that will be as available to ministers as it has been to Directors of Religious Education and other religious educators. Ministers and seminarians are invited to submit items based on the following themes: Leadership Development, Curriculum and Learning Resources, Social Justice, Worship, Community Building, and the Administration of Religious Education Programs. If you have materials in these categories that educate, empower, inspire, or help to build community, why not share your ideas with others? The submission deadline for the Fall 2002 issue is May 15, 2002. Please send submissions to Jacqui James or Pat Hoertdoerfer, UUA, Department of Religious Education, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108 or send e-mail to jjames@uua.org or phoertdoerfer@uua.org.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Practical suggestions for continued learning, sabbatical planning, and life and skill enhancement may be found in the listing posted on the Ministry web page (<http://www.uua.org/ministry/>). There you will find the basic information of workshops, conferences, and seminars.

Some offerings by our colleagues include:

Clergy Self-Assessment led by Pat Carol, May 6–9, 2002, Baltimore, MD.

Faith and Money led by Dan Hotchkiss, October 21–24, 2002, Newark, NJ.

IMPORTANT INSURANCE ANNOUNCEMENT

It is vital that ministers moving to a new congregation contact the Office of Church Staff Finances within 30 days with the name and mailing address of the church, and their new salary and clergy housing amounts. The insurance company imposes penalties if the reenrollment in the life, dental, and disability policies isn’t done within 30 days.

Send information to Adebola Kehinde at akehinde@uua.org, 617-948-6401, or 25 Beacon St, Boston, MA 02108.

More Replies to Questions

A. What is the status of the clergy housing allowance?

Recent developments in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of *Warren v. Commissioner* are raising concerns about whether that portion of a minister's compensation used to provide a residence will remain exempt from income tax in the US. According to Stever Merriman, accountant for Rev. Rick Warren, the Circuit Court is debating whether the whole concept of a clergy housing allowance should be prohibited as unconstitutional. The minister at the center of the case is the founder of the Saddleback Community Church.

This is the first time a court has questioned the legality of excluding the clergy housing allowance from taxable income. Warren's attorneys indicate that should the Ninth Circuit overturn the status of the allowance, the case will go to the US Supreme Court. Warren describes himself as defending the interests of bivocational pastors of small churches who serve with little or no salary.

In the meantime, ordained, licensed, or commissioned clergy are advised to continue to have the expenses of maintaining their residence segregated from their cash salaries. The housing allowance is still subject to the self-employment tax of 15.3 percent, and there is no current ceiling on the amount or percentage of the minister's income that can be used for this purpose. The clergy housing allowance can still cover mortgage, rent, taxes, utilities, insurance, repairs, improvements, furnishings, and all the normal costs of maintaining a residence.

Even in the unlikely event that the clergy housing allowance is discarded by the Supreme Court, such a decision could not be made retroactive, so any funds excludable from taxes in the past would not suddenly be subject to taxes in the future.

B. What's happening in regard to student debt?

We are seeing little improvement in seminarians turning away from debt as a means of financing graduate education. The 117 UU ministers who applied for debt reduction grants this year had average seminary loan balances of \$30,531 (compared to \$30,208 last year). Seventeen of the applicants were carrying student debt between \$40,000 and \$49,999. Ten had loan balances of \$50,000 to \$59,999. Fourteen had balances over \$60,000. Indebtedness of this magnitude makes it very difficult to survive in ministry unless one is well partnered or has additional income from other sources.

We are also learning of colleagues who cannot make the minimum monthly payment on their debt, and so are falling farther behind as the loan agency adds more interest on the unpaid interest.

Under the guidelines for federally subsidized Stafford loans, seminarians may borrow up to \$18,500 per year. Taking out unsubsidized loans can raise the total higher. Ministers who accumulate such debt face payments of \$600 or more per month on loans that must be paid within ten years and that are not even forgiven by bankruptcy in all but the most exceptional cases.

One has to question the calling of a minister who entraps himself in such a quagmire. One has to also question the seminaries that allow their students to accumulate indebtedness so likely to undermine the ability of their graduates to succeed in their chosen work.

C. What is bivocational ministry?

More and more denominations with a preponderance of small congregations are reporting that their pastors cannot survive only on their earnings from ministry. One result is a decline in the number of men and women preparing for ministry in most Protestant denominations. Another consequence

is ministers earning part of their income from service to a congregation and part from other employment.

Over the six years between 1995 and 2001, the UUA had an increase of 1.4 percent in the number of congregations. Of our 1,054 local societies, about two-thirds are thought to have fewer than 150 members.

Our database reports 1,236 persons currently active in our ministry, including 141 with community ministry fellowship and 65 who are fellowshipped in educational ministry. Sixty percent of our colleagues are older than 50; 19 percent are older than 60. These figures are as of March 2002 and do not include ministers who are retired. We also are aware of 476 persons who have expressed an interest in becoming UU ministers, 64 percent women and 36 percent men. Some 403 of these have declared their future focus or "track."

These figures portend a possible surplus of parish ministers, a goodly number of ministers who would retire if financially able to do so, an increase in the percentage of women in our fellowship, and the likelihood that bivocational ministries will grow in number and diversity.

Persons entering seminary from other professional backgrounds might consider continuing to work part-time in the employment they had before entering ministry. Seminaries may need to encourage ongoing bivocational employment and find ways to adapt seminary education to the financial realities of these persons.

I am interested in learning more about the nature of the bivocational ministries currently in place, and I invite colleagues to share with me the stories about how they make a living from several sources—in confidence, of course.

D. Who inherits retirement plan money in the event of death?

Assets remaining in a retirement plan account after the death of the

owner can pass directly to the beneficiary or beneficiaries who have been named. These funds do not go through probate and are not part of the estate managed by one's personal representative. Neither Fidelity Investments nor the UUA keeps any of the funds left following the death of a plan participant.

Exactly how the money will be paid out is determined by a number of factors, but it is most important that the correct person(s) be identified. Fidelity will have no choice but to transfer the assets to the beneficiary of record, even if the plan participant had divorced, remarried, or had wished to name another as their beneficiary. Call Fidelity at 800-343-0860 to confirm the beneficiary or beneficiaries listed for your account.

E. Which is most important, dental insurance, life insurance, or long-term disability insurance?

More Americans have life insurance than the other two, and if others are dependent on one's earned income, life insurance may be crucial to one's survivors. The group term life insurance policy offered through the UUA provides a face value of 200 percent of one's cash salary and housing allowance up to a limit of \$150,000. This is at a unisex rate and without a medical examination if the policy is taken out when assuming a new settlement.

For example, if a minister had a total of \$48,000 in salary and housing, the death benefit would be \$96,000. The monthly premium would be \$26.88 ($96,000 \times .28$), and this amount can be paid by the church treasurer from pretax dollars. If the salary and housing was \$55,570, the face value would be \$111,140, and the monthly premium would be \$31.12 ($111,140 \times .28$), regardless of age or gender. Taking advantage of this life insurance can be very important if one has a medical history that might prevent obtaining coverage through the private insurance market.

Disability insurance continues a stream of income in the event of an

accident or illness that prevents one from working for longer than 90 days. Our long-term disability insurance guarantees enrollment and provides a benefit of 60 percent of the combined cash salary and housing allowance for a premium of 1.2 percent of the insured amount. The duration of benefit depends upon one's age and whether one could work in some less demanding profession after two years. Because both the life and disability insurance are linked to one's earnings, this coverage goes away at retirement or if one leaves work with a UU organization.

Dental insurance is often considered less essential than the two types of coverage described above. Our group dental policy provides \$1,000 worth of services in a calendar year after payment of a \$25 deductible. Two complete exams and cleanings are offered at no charge. The plan pays a portion of the cost of other dental work depending on the nature of the service. Monthly premiums for individuals are \$35.50 and \$84 for families of any size.

Fortunately, we have had fewer than twenty death or disability claims since we signed with the Guardian Insurance Co., but these payments have been of critical importance to the beneficiaries.

Other questions about these three lines of insurance should be directed to Adebola Kehinde at 617-948-6401 or akehinde@uua.org.

F. What's the easiest way to pay my US income and social security taxes?

There is no painless way for modestly paid clergy to pay their US and state income tax obligations, but there is an alternative to submitting quarterly checks to the IRS via form 1040ES on the fifteenth of April, June, September, and January. These are the dates that estimated income and self-employment taxes are due for the previous quarter.

If the minister is settled in a congregation that has other staff, the minister can request that the treasurer

or bookkeeper withhold some designated amount from his or her cash salary each month and send that in with the taxes deposited for the other employees. The amount withheld would be set by the minister according to what he or she believes would constitute at least 90 percent of the taxes likely due by April fifteenth of the following year.

For example, if one's earnings were likely to result in income and social security taxes of \$6,000 for the year, the minister could request that \$450 be withheld from his or her monthly salary and deposited with the income and social security withholding sent in for the other staff. The minister would have a smaller salary check each month, but most of the income and social security taxes would be prepaid as the year goes by. This can be beneficial for persons who dislike filing the quarterly tax payments. The taxes withheld would show in box 2 on the W-2 form.

G. What is "identity theft?"

One of the most rapidly growing crimes in the US and Europe is the use of another person's credit identity for fraud or theft. "Bin raiding" is the term used in England to describe stealing credit card receipts from garbage containers. No one knows the extent of false identity fraud, but it appears to be increasing dramatically. Until this happens to us, we are likely to be somewhat careless about discarding credit card receipts at gas stations, restaurants, and grocery stores.

One of our colleagues recently received a call from a bank asking if she had moved from Massachusetts to California. Someone in Oakland had used her name, birth date, and social security number in an attempt to open a false credit card account. Fortunately the only item the thief had wrong was the minister's home address. It was also fortunate that Capital One Bank thought to verify the address before issuing the new card. ●

—Ralph Mero

Dos and Don'ts of Strategic Communication

What do you do when the telephone rings and it's a reporter from the local newspaper? Or a producer from the local TV station? Is their interest in you and your work a cause for delight or distress? Do you want to encourage their interest or dampen it?

Whatever the situation, it's important to be prepared for your encounter with the media, and UUA Director of Information John Hurley is available to discuss with you options and strategies. John can provide insight into what the media wants from you and can work with you to hone the message you want to deliver. Even a brief consultation can make a significant difference in the quality of your experience with the media, so please take advantage of this service provided by the UUA's office of information. You can reach him at 617-948-6131 or jhurley@uua.org. ●

Charitable Giving and Estate Planning Services to Congregations

Did you know that the UUA helps individual Unitarian Universalists make charitable gifts to their congregations? Two of the best ways to make such a donation are through bequests in the donor's will and with a life-income gift. The UUA's Office of Charitable Giving and Estate Planning is here to assist with both.

With life-income gifts, such as a Charitable Gift Annuity or the Pooled Income Fund, the donor makes an irrevocable contribution,

usually of cash or securities, and claims an immediate, one-time charitable income tax deduction for a portion of the gift. We add that gift to the funds at State Street Bank and, when the donor dies, the remaining principle of the gift is given to the donor's congregation, the UUA, or a combination of both. Life-income gifts are an excellent way to make charitable donations while retaining some income. However, they are more complicated to administer than outright charitable donations, so the UUA manages these gifts on behalf of our member congregations. Bequests are also a great way to make a charitable donation. Your will can indicate that you would like to donate a specific amount, or a percentage of the remainder of your estate, to your congregation or to the UUA. Our office provides individuals and congregations with the simple language they need to include a gift to Unitarian Universalism in their will.

For more information, you can call us at 617-948-6509 or check us out on the web at www.uua.org/giftplans. ●

Church of the Larger Fellowship

Submit your sermons to *Quest!* This is just a reminder that the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) is always searching for sermons for possible publication in *Quest*. CLF asks you to consider sending your four best sermons from the last year or so. Send them along via e-mail, if you can, to clf@uua.org. Remember that the *Quest* team works many months in advance and sometimes holds on to things for years, so if you submit, don't be discouraged if you don't hear from CLF right away. The team is looking for sermons that translate well onto the printed page and that bring Unitarian

Universalism into the context of isolated UUs around the world. ●

The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing

The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing has been founded to promote the goals and vision of the Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing. The Religious Declaration has been endorsed by more than 2,100 clergy from 36 denominations, including several hundred UU clergy. Rev. John Buehrens was one of the original creators of the Religious Declaration. The Religious Institute is codirected by Debra W. Haffner, a candidate for UU minister, and Rev. Larry Greenfield. The Religious Declaration can be read and endorsed at the website www.religiousinstitute.org. ●

—Debra W. Haffner, Director, Religious Institute for Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing; 304 Main Avenue, # 335, Norwalk, CT 06851; 203-840-1148; haffner@religiousinstitute.org

Share Your Work

Every ministry is full of stories. *UU World* wants to share these stories with Unitarian Universalists across the continent, and we invite you to share some of yours. Each issue's "Reflections" section draws on sermons, meditations, readings, poems, scriptures, and fine art—mostly from Unitarian Universalist sources. We welcome your anecdotes, parables, essays, dialogues, favorite scriptures, recommended readings, seasonal meditations, and inspired newsletter columns. If someone in your congregation writes something

unusually insightful, encourage them to send us a copy. (We also welcome slides of fine art for the “Creations” feature.) Submissions and recommendations for “Reflections” may be sent to senior editor Christopher L. Walton at Reflections, *UU World*, 25 Beacon Street, Boston MA 02108 or e-mail to reflections@uua.org. Let others learn from your successes by sharing stories about exemplary congregational programs with Donald E. Skinner, editor of *InterConnections*, the UUA’s newsletter for lay leaders, and contributing editor of *UU World*. Contact Skinner at 8800 Norwood, Leawood, KS 66206; 800-298-8061 or e-mail to dskinner@uua.org. ●

Trauma Response Ministry

You pick up your phone, and a member tells you, “There’s been a shooting. . . .” Perhaps more traumatically, you yourself witness an act of terrorism in your city, or a violent death inside your own sanc-

tuary on Sunday. In these past few years, UUs (and the US) now know that such traumatic events are not improbable fiction.

After the initial shock, survivors often look first to clergy to understand what has happened. In serving the Columbine UU Church and experiencing firsthand the trauma of such violence, I was grateful for the UU ministers who came to Littleton to help. I was also counseled by a team of Presbyterian clergy who came to Littleton trained to counsel clergy and churches in such an event. There is, in fact, at least one very effective method to prevent post-traumatic stress in the aftermath of terror and violence, and I received the benefit of such services because of our Presbyterian spiritual kin.

But most UU ministers and churches would not receive such effective care—we haven’t prepared ourselves to respond to such traumatic incidents, exposing UU clergy and congregations to needless post-traumatic suffering. Yet we have colleagues trained to counsel us after a critical incident such as September 11 or the shootings at Columbine

High School. We propose to organize and offer a Trauma Response Ministry team to assist and counsel us in the aftermath of terror—as most other faith groups already do. It would take relatively modest resources to provide such an effective ministry.

Your colleagues proposing to assemble a Trauma Response Ministry are Shayna Appel, Rosemary Bray McNatt, Jan Carlsson-Bull, Joel Miller, Danita Noland, Lisa Presley, Kate Seitz Bortner, and Susan Suchocki Brown (anyone with CISM training is urged to contact Danita at danita.noland@worldnet.att.net). Our collective experiences include ministries as chaplains with police and fire departments, ministries at the devastation where the World Trade Centers once stood, and the shootings at Columbine High. Look for our workshops at General Assembly this June. With luck, you won’t ever need the care of such a ministry—but if you do, knowing you could call for this effective ministry could greatly minimize suffering. Meet with us at GA! ●

—Joel Miller



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA DEPARTMENT OF MINISTRY

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