

THE CONSULTATION ON MINISTRY TO AND WITH YOUTH

HISTORY

Youth involved with YRUU discuss the need to evaluate YRUU. There is also talk of how YRUU can be restructured to become truly anti-racist, as a part of the UUA and YRUU's commitment to becoming anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and multicultural organizations.

January 2003:

Long-Range Planning Meeting is convened by YRUU and the UUA to look at the future of youth ministry in our movement. The meeting creates recommendations for change and suggestions for implementation.

July 2003:

In response to the LRP Meeting, Youth Council member Jennifer Dunmore introduces a resolution called "Common Ground III: Can we just change the world already?" proposing further goal setting and re-imagining of youth ministry and YRUU. The name "Common Ground" comes from two meetings that happened in the early 1980s which dissolved Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) and created Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU). Youth Council comes to consensus that Youth Council Representatives should take the idea back to their districts and encourage discussion.

2003-04:

UUA President Bill Sinkford and the YRUU Steering Committee dialogue about the Common Ground III proposal. They create a survey (paper and online) and distribute it widely. They receive 461 responses.

June 2004:

Youth Council members Jennifer Dunmore, Megan Dowdell and Tim Fitzgerald revise the Common Ground III resolution and present it to the UUA Board of Trustees at GA in Long Beach.

July 2004:

The YRUU Steering Committee brings the Common Ground III resolution back to Youth Council to be reconsidered. Following the consensus process that Youth Council uses to do its business, consensus on the resolution is blocked and it was sent to committee. The majority of Youth Council's members supported the resolution with the two blocking concerns being: (1) not enough grassroots support for having a new Common Ground gathering had been cultivated by the previous Steering Committee and (2) not enough of the work done at the Long-Range Planning Meeting had been implemented.

From the 2004 Resolution: "Specific Problem being addressed: YRUU has not had a serious large revisioning session in a long, long time. Figuring out what it means to be a sponsored organization of the UUA, to be accountable to all UU youth and to exist as a unique cross-border organization with a relationship with the UUA and the CUC. We would also like to clarify the role of UU youth in the UUA and the denomination as a larger body."

October 2004:

The UUA Board of Trustees discusses the UUA's youth ministry and resolves to convene the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth in an effort to make the revisioning of youth ministry an

Association-wide effort. The Board decides that UUA President Bill Sinkford and Youth Trustee Megan Dowdell will be the co-conveners of the Consultation.

From the October 2004 Board Minutes: *“MOVED: To request that the President convene a consultation for the purpose renewing the Association’s vision of its ministry for and with youth. We request the President to seek a youth co-convener for the consultation, and to consult with the Moderator, the Board, and staff, including the professional and volunteer staff leaders of YRUU, regarding the invited participants.”*

Winter 2004-05:

Bill and Megan invite people from all groups who have a stake in the process to attend the Convocation on Ministry to and With Youth.

February 2005:

Bill and Megan convene the Convocation on Ministry to and With Youth in Essex, MA with YRUU youth, non-YRUU youth, UUA staff, Board of Trustees, DRUUMM, LREDA, ministers, district staff, youth advisors, parents of youth, Canadians, and adults involved in YRUU. This group identifies areas that need examining in youth ministry and brainstorms process suggestions.

The Convocation identified five priorities to be addressed:

- Youth Ministry needs to be served at a more robust, flexible, diverse level than YRUU currently offers.
- Denominational youth work needs to serve local congregations.
- YRUU and UUA administration needs to define an authority structure that respects the rightful role of institutional youth and adult leadership at the same time that it supports the growth and empowerment of all UU youth.
- Anti-Racism and anti-oppression work is an important part of youth ministry, although there is not necessarily only one way of doing it, and the “right” way depends on individual identities. We need to move this work ahead.
- There needs to be more and better communication between continental, district, and local levels, and within congregations.

April 2005:

The Consultation Design Team, composed of a smaller group of people from the Convocation, meets in Auburndale, MA to design a process and timeline for the Consultation. The Design Team creates a Draft Process Recommendation.

May and June 2005:

UUA staff share the Draft Process Recommendation with the co-conveners, the Board of Trustees, the Convocation attendees, and the YRUU Steering Committee. Timeline revisions are made and the document is finalized.

June 2005:

The plan is shared with Youth Caucus, Congregational and District Presidents, LREDA, UUMA and others at General Assembly in Fort Worth.

August 2005:

Members of the Taskforce on Ministry To and With Youth are selected.