

**Unitarian
Universalist
Retired
Ministers
Association**

November 1994

An Association of retired Unitarian Universalist ministers, their spouses,
and the surviving spouses of deceased Unitarian Universalist ministers

Volume X

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1993-1994**

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ELDERBERRIES

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A PARABLE

And it came to pass that a decree went out from the Sanhedrin to all the shepherds in the land, concerning their decorum with each other. Indeed there was much written about those shepherds who, having served in the pastures of the Lord, now sought quieter days. The epistle admonished them to cease from guarding their sheep of old for in their wisdom and skill they still held the admiration of many in former flocks. And they were even advised to "move to a foreign land."

There was a certain servant of the Lord who resided in the Northeast. He and his father before him had guided many flocks through "the valley of the shadow of death." He now desired to lay down his staff and pursue the trade of carpentry. Yet still the people called upon him to shepherd them in joyful times and sad and on the Sabbath as well. And he agreed for he was of gentle heart and eager to serve.

One day there came a messenger pleading that he travel to a nearby city to address a sisterhood whose shepherdess had taken a sabbatical. He accepted and promised to appear on a given day. But lo! the shepherdess had not departed. When she heard that the venerable shepherd was coming to address her flock she forbade him to enter her valley. She rent her garments and cried out in anguish to the Council.

They listened with compassion to all that had happened to her and her flock. In its wisdom the Council agreed that she had been wronged and that the shepherd/carpenter must be brought to account.

The old shepherd was rebuked and suspended from gathering with his beloved colleagues. He was further admonished not to appear at their assembly until such time as he confessed his sins, repented, and took a solemn oath to abide by the letter of the decree from the Sanhedrin.

(Continued on page 6)

WHAT IS A LIBERAL?

When some of us entered the liberal ministry about fifty years ago, the word "liberal" meant that one bearing that label was willing to listen with some degree of courtesy to all sides of every question. We believed that this was the way to find TRUTH.

How is "liberalism" doing now?

I do not hear of any conservatives being invited to speak to UU churches and fellowships. I do not hear of any UU ministers publicly opposing abortion, or opposing affirmative action, or opposing "women's liberation." Should we not hear once in a while from the likes of Bill Buckley? I am told by some that such would be a waste of time.

William H. Willimon is Dean of Duke University Chapel. Speaking at the General Assembly in Charlotte, he said as a person NOT a Unitarian Universalist, "You say you are Universalists. What does that mean? Are you really able to tolerate differences, or do you, like most liberals, insist that people first surrender their differences in order to be accepted?"

Is there a danger that, by going so far over to one side in our view, we might miss a chance for compromises, or at least some understanding, with our opponents?

Might we not approach dogmatism if we only listen to our own views? Is there not a danger that we will become, in some measure, like the fundamentalist we oppose? Will we become so unified in our "liberalism" that our "Liberalism" will become a dogma, a creed, which we always said we would not embrace?

There are many questions to be asked and much study to be done on controversial issues. Some important books are coming out on various sides to these questions. Let's read and discuss them all.

Paying attention only to our own point of view is a prescription for strife and upheaval.

Hugh W. Weston

From The Rev. Wayne B. Arnason, President, UUMA - September 13, 1994

Dear Gordon:

... I must respond to the letter from David Van Strien in your August 1994 issue of *Elderberries*, since I believe it misrepresents the content of the *UUMA Guidelines* and what they require.

There is a single sentence in our *Guidelines* that specifically applies to retired ministers: "Retired ministers who join a church other than the one they have served, must exercise particular care that their experience, status, and prestige be enlisted only in support of the minister." Readers are then referred to the Code of Professional Practice for a review of parts of the code describing collegial relationships that apply to all UUMA members, including those who have retired. They describe appropriate procedures for ministers who are members of a colleague's congregation to accept engagements for professional services in such a way that the incumbent minister is comfortable and supportive of these engagements. These paragraphs have received considerable scrutiny in recent years. I acknowledge that some UURMA members are uncomfortable with them. I would welcome any new draft language that the UURMA Exec or individual members want to propose to improve these sections of the Code of Professional Practice.

... In particular, I am sure that it is difficult for ministers who retire and continue to be members of the congregations they have served to live with the following sentence in the *Guidelines*: "the former minister must play no role and express no opinions concerning the internal or external workings of the church as an institution."

... This sentence was not added to the *Guidelines* in recent years. It is a line that has been there in one form or another since the inception of the *Guidelines*. It was first written and approved by the generation of ministers that are now members of the UURMA.

The *Guidelines* recognizes that ministers who are members of congregations that they previously served have the power to play both positive and destructive roles in the congregation. ... In my view, flagrant and persistent violation of this guideline is a just cause for a colleague to bring a grievance to the UUMA, or for a church board to bring a "conduct unbecoming" to the MFC.

... We are talking about our agreements with each other as professionals about what best serves the interests of our congregations and our movement as we function in our professional roles. We have decided, as ministers within the UUMA, that we will forego some of the rights that we might have as members of the congregations, recognizing that they individual exercise of those rights by those who have formerly served as minister can be destructive in a congregational conflict.

... I would hope that the UURMA's's regional conferences might include some discussion of these issues, and possibly some focus on the very real sacrifices and emotional struggles that retired ministers must endure when they choose to remain members of the congregations they have served. ...

Sincerely yours,

Wayne Arnason

SOUTHEAST UURMA CONFERENCE

March 3-5, 1995 St. Augustine, Florida

PROGRAM:

- Friday, March 3
- at the Fellowship, 2487 St. Rd. 3, St.: Augustine
 - 6:00 - 7:00 pm - Registration at the Fellowship
 - 7:00 - 9:00 - Check-In ("Where ya' been? what ya' doin'?")
 - 9:00 - Socializing - Snacks
- Saturday, March 4
- 8:00 - 10:00 am - Breakfast at the Fellowship
 - 10:00 - 11:30 - Dr. Karl Voss on the Holocaust
 - 12:00 - 1:00 pm - Lunch at the Fellowship
 - 1:15 - Dr. Patricia Griffin, Professor of Anthropology on the History of St. Augustine
 - 2:45 - Tour of St. Augustine
 - Evening - An Optional (extra cost) Riverboat Dinner Cruise or Dinner on your own
- Sunday, March 5
- Breakfast on your own
 - 11:00 am - Service at St. Augustine UU Fellowship
Rev. Dr. Max Gaebler, speaker
 - Light lunch following the morning service

Accommodations at the Ramada Inn / Oceanfront/ \$55.00 per night (Double Occupancy) plus 9% tax

Reservations:

Rev. Albert D'Orlando, 3630 White Oak Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70131

Costs are incomplete at this time

SAVE THE DATES!!!

Write to Al D'Orlando for more complete information

to be sent as soon as possible

**WESTERN AREA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
RETIRED MINISTERS AND PARTNERS ASSOCIATION**

March 20-23, 1995

at the Marianist Center, Cupertino, CA

A Planning Committee has been appointed, including (among others) Dan Lion as Chair; Rosemary Matson and Aron and Eve Gilmartin.

A stimulating program is promised. Registration fee (includes everything!) is \$210. Included are lodging, meals, jacuzzi, tennis, pool, and more! For more details, or to make a reservation, call or write the Registrar:

Virginia Stephens
1051 Haviland Terrace
Seaside, CA 93955
(408) 394-0771

From the Editor's Mailbag

....I feel pressed to respond to Mr. Van Strien's complaint since the basis of it - that the UUMA "overstepped its bounds" with respect to minister's First Amendment rights - reflects an American national bias which is unnecessary to his argument and blind to the presence of Unitarian Universalist ministers and laypersons outside the United States.

While the United States Constitution is a landmark document in the history of democratic institutions, it astonishes me that so many of my American friends view it (and utilize it) as some sort of sacred scripture. It is, in fact, a secular document which establishes the civil authority of a particular nation. Although many of the values expressed in the American Constitution also find expression in Unitarian Universalism, the Constitution is not the source of our religious values.

.... As a Canadian, the more troubling issue for me is the tendency of many well-meaning Americans to view the laws and customs of the United States as universal. This has often led to a disturbing tendency to expect those living outside the U.S. to abide by its laws and practices. No matter how passive or good natured this expectation may be, it amounts to cultural imperialism. ...

-- Stefan Jonasson, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

BARBARA GUDMUNDSEN indicates that the "Icelandic Unitarian Connection," chronicling the beginnings of Icelandic Unitarianism in North America, is still in print and available from Margaret Bjornson, 321 Moorgate Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3J 2L4, Canada; from the UUA, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108; or from Barbara Gudmundson, Box 17102, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Cost is \$11.00 (US) or \$14.50 (Canadian).

NOTES ON ENCLOSURE:

Pursuant to a resolution to the UURMA Board, passed by the Northeast UURMA Conference, the Board approved a DRAFT of some suggested changes in the UUMA's Code of Professional Practice and the Guidelines. This is being circulated for discussion. Any suggestions for changes should be directed to the Editor prior to the next UURMA Board meeting in Mid-April, 1995. At that time the Draft will be amended to reflect suggestions and submitted to the UUMA for consideration at the UUMA Annual Meeting in Spokane, Washington in mid-June, 1995

POSITION AVAILABLE BY THE SEA

A small (about 60 members), growing congregation is seeking a half-time minister. Responsibilities include two services per month and other pastoral duties such as rites of passage, possible adult religious education and comfort to the sick.

The Fellowship is located in a beautiful area on the coast of North Carolina. This area is widely known for its fishing, boating, scuba diving and beach activities, and thus is a tourist mecca. Duke University, the University of North Carolina, NOAA carry out teaching and research programs here.

If you are interested, please write to:
Phyllis Geringer, Search Chairperson
c/o Unitarian Coastal Fellowship
1300 Evans Street
Morehead City, North Carolina 38557
(919) 726-5406.

In addition, there is an answering machine at the church, (919)240-2283 where you can leave a message. You may also call Ted Odell at (919)726-3648

*Deadline for February
issue of
Elderberries
January 15, 1995*

From the NOMINATING COMMITTEE;

Anyone wishing to recommend Nominees (including oneself) for the following offices of the UURMA are asked to communicate the suggestions to the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Rev. Theodore Webb, 2212 Ralston Road, Sacramento, CA 95821:

President

Board Member

Board Member

Member of the Nominating Committee

*Recommendations should reach the Chair by
March 1, 1995.*

HOW THE UURMA pays the bills for its programs is not mysterious, though it sometimes seems a little magical. The Caring Network, the Conferences, advocacy on the part of the retired, yes, and *Elderberries* are underwritten by contributions from members. Since Retired Members are not required to pay dues to the UUMA, some make contributions in lieu of dues. Why not consider splitting the "dues" amount between UUMA and UURMA? Benefits are not contingent on making a contribution, but without contributions the UURMA will wither into impotence. Send your generous contribution to the Treasurer

Iska Cole
240 Argyle Road
Rocky River, Ohio 44116.

(Continued from page 2)

Though years have passed, and the shepherdess has left for another pasture, and though the old shepherd has tried to be understood, yet the hearts of the herdsmen are turned against him. Have they forgotten that the Lord requires them to practice reconciliation and forgiveness and never to close their hearts against one another?

-KaCy-

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

- GORDON ARTHUR CROOK** - **June 19, 1994** **age 75**
 Surviving: son Lt. Guy Evans, Long Beach, CA
- GEORGE RICHARD KUCH** - **July 18, 1994** **age 77**
 Surviving: no information available
- ELMER D. COLCORD** - **August 12, 1994** **age 98**
 Surviving: wife Evelyn Huntsinger, Boothbay Harbor, ME
 daughter Carol Smale, Washington, DC
- ROBERT EDWARD PAYSON** - **August 14, 1994** **age 62**
 Surviving: wife Marcia Payson, Cortland, NY
 sons Marc Payson, Watertown, NY
 Rev. Aaron Payson, Marietta, OH
- FRANK ANDREW WAHLSTROM** - **August 18, 1994** **age 83**
 Surviving: children Linda Wahlstrom, Bernardston, MA
 Rev. Jean Wahlstrom, Tolland, CT
 Richard Wahlstrom, Bernardston, MA
 William Wahlstrom, Westboro, MA
- PATRICK GLEN GREEN** - **August 21, 1994** **age 46**
 Surviving: father and stepmother
 children Garland and Gloria Green, Perrysburg, OH
 David and Ellen Green, New Brighton, MN
- BERNARD (SANDY) KREUGER** - **September 5, 1994** **age 49**
 Surviving: Partner Alan Flowers, Los Angeles, CA
 Father and Stepmother
 Bernard and Katherine Kreuger, Munster, IN
 Daughter Kay Ellen Kreuger, Ashland, OR

CHANGES IN CARING NETWORK CONTACT PERSONS

New Hampshire/Vermont:

Rev. Arthur and Marion Jellis
 Box 1495
 New London, NH 03257
 (603) 526-4872

St. Lawrence:

(US)

Rev. Harry Thor
 410 BunnHill Road
 Vestal, NY 13850
 (607) 785-3962

(Canada)

Rev. Charles Eddis
 463 Lansdowne Avenue
 Westmount, PQ
 H3Y 1V4 Canada
 (514) 933-3758

LESSONS FROM A LONG AND RETIRED MINISTRY

1. Absolute forgiveness
2. Absolute integrity.
3. Keep your sense of humor.
4. Be there when needed!
5. When you are preaching, remember the old lady in the rear with her hand cupped behind her ear.
6. Remember the man whose doctor just told him that he has terminal cancer.
7. Open on time and close on time.
8. Be ready to be there when the dung heap smells the worst.
9. Success is being right more than 50 percent of the time.
10. We are all children at heart.
11. Don't be afraid to cry.
12. Do your home work.
13. The other person is just as scared as you are.
14. Continue to learn lest you perish.
15. You never know what important effect your most casual words may have..
16. Don't be afraid to break the rules if you are sure you're right.

-- Rev. George C. Whitney

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

c/o Gordon B. McKeeman
 24 Lake Forest Drive
 Charlottesville, VA 22901

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST RETIRED MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

Suggested Amendments to the UUMA Code of Professional Practice

Section 2. COLLEAGUES

Seventh Paragraph - First Sentence

Present wording: "I will inform my colleagues in advance of any public engagement I may accept in his or her community or church, which might bear upon congregational issues or policies."

PROPOSAL: "I will inform my colleagues in advance of any public engagement I may accept in the church which he or she serves, which might bear upon congregational issues or policies."

Ninth Paragraph - First Sentence

Present wording: "If I am a member of a colleague's congregation, I will in all ways honor the priority of his or her call to the ministry of that congregation, and I will carefully shun inappropriate influence which other members may tend to yield to me."

PROPOSAL: "If I am a member of or a participant in a congregation served by a colleague, I will in all ways honor the priority of his or her call to the ministry of that congregation. My participation in the life of the congregation will reflect my commitment to the well-being of the church, to my right to participate in its deliberations, to the congregation's decision-making authority in matters of policy, and to respect and support my colleague in his or her called ministry to the congregation."

Suggested Amendments to the Guidelines of the UUMA

Article IX - Other Ministries Section C - Ministers Emeriti/ae

Sub-Section 3 - Second Sentence

Present Wording. "The incumbent minister should endeavor to make the other welcome and valued when there are church occasions appropriate for the minister emeritus/a to attend."

PROPOSAL: Strike out the clause, "when there are church occasions appropriate for the minister emeritus/a to attend."

Sub-section 3 - Third Sentence

Present wording: "The minister emeritus/a should be supportive of the incumbent and should not offer solicited or unsolicited advice or criticism to the members of the congregation."

PROPOSAL: Add at the end of the sentence, "regarding the ministry of the called and settled minister."

Rearrangement of Sub-sections 6 & 7

PROPOSAL: Renumber sub-section "7" to "6" and sub-section "6" to "7".

Subsection 6 First and Second Sentences.

Present wording: "If the minister emeritus/a cannot make the transition, it is his or her responsibility to sense this fact. Ultimately she or he may have to move to another community and sever all ties to avoid damaging the ministry of a successor."

PROPOSAL: "If problems arise in achieving an effective transition, an exploration of possible remedial steps is necessary. Such a situation indicates the desirability of third party intervention by a Good Officers Representative, a District Executive and/or a person or persons skilled in conflict resolution."

SECTION D - Former Ministers

Sub-section 2(b)

Present wording: "The Minister must play no role and express no opinions concerning the internal or external workings of the church as an institution."

PROPOSAL: "The former minister may participate in the deliberations of the congregation of which he/she is a member or a participant. This participation must be guided by his/her responsibility to support the settled minister's prerogatives, and to avoid public or private criticism of the settled minister's performance of professional services."

SECTION E - Retired ministers

Present Wording: "Retired ministers who join a church other than the one they have served must exercise particular care that their experience, status and prestige be enlisted only in support of the minister."

PROPOSAL: "Retired ministers who join or participate in a church other than one they have served should exercise particular care that their experience, status and prestige be devoted to the support of the church and its ministry."