

## Report of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee to the General Assembly, 2004

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee is one of the standing committees of the Board of Trustees, established by the bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The fourteen members include twelve persons appointed by the UUA Board of Trustees, including two members who are themselves Trustees, and two persons appointed by the UU Ministers Association. Eight members are clergy and six are lay members. The Committee has met three times during this year. We met once in Boston, once in Berkeley, and once in Chicago, to accommodate candidates from the three historically related Unitarian Universalist seminaries, Harvard Divinity School, Starr King School for the Ministry, and Meadville/Lombard Theological School, and from non-UU schools in the various regions of the country.

Our primary charge is the jurisdiction of ministerial fellowship, beginning with the credentialing of candidates for Unitarian Universalist ministry. The basic requirements for fellowship, which are established by the MFC, include an undergraduate degree and a Master of Divinity degree or their equivalent, a career assessment program, a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, an approved internship, sponsorship by a UU congregation, and an interview with the MFC.

Over the course of the past year, we have interviewed sixty-nine candidates. As part of the interview process, candidates preach a brief sermon, and we discuss with them the findings from the required components of their preparation, listed above, and expect them to demonstrate required competencies by answering questions in those areas.

Although the majority of meeting time (and many hours of pre-meeting preparation) is engaged in candidate interviews, the MFC also grants renewals toward final fellowship, considers complaints and other possible disciplinary matters, and is engaged in constant review of its own processes and procedures. Committee members met with faculty at Starr King School for the Ministry and Meadville/Lombard Theological School to discuss areas of common interest and concern and invited the Rev. Dr. Stephen Ott, Director of the Center for Career Development and Ministry, for an hour of exchange of information and commentary.

The year began with a day devoted to a consultation on anti-racism and anti-oppression, facilitated by Paula Cole Jones and the Rev. Josh Pawelek. As a result of this very productive day, the committee developed a series of plans and "next steps." Each meeting thereafter included progress reports on these plans. One immediate outcome was the addition of a process observer attending to anti-racism and anti-racism issues.

A major focus of this year's work was the continuing development of the proposal to redesign fellowship. At this writing, major proposed changes include

- the granting of preliminary fellowship for "preliminary fellowship in UU ministry" rather than for preliminary fellowship in a category of ministry;
- the use of the five competency areas of ministry defined by the UUMA Task Force March 2003 (pastoral, prophetic, teaching, practical arts, and worship) for all ministers receiving preliminary fellowship;
- awarding of final fellowship in UU Ministry as distinct from specialty recognition;
- and the expectation of a self-designed program for achieving competence in a specialty by the minister in preliminary fellowship. Recognition in a specialty by the MFC shall be ascertained: (a) through the minister's completion of a self-designed continuing education program, and (b) second renewal of preliminary fellowship as a UU minister and (c) the successful completion of an evaluative review of their knowledge, skills and performance by a Specialties Review Panel, to be recruited and monitored by the MFC.

The proposal is available on the web site (<http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/mfc/>) and will be addressed at a number of workshops at this General Assembly.

Several new policies were adopted regarding waiver requests and other procedures; these can also be found on the web site. Candidates will now be asked to write a short reflection paper, as part of the packet, "explaining how your analysis of anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism is reflected in your ministry." The Committee also adopted a plan to open portions of the business meeting to observers for consistent and published periods of time. The agenda for this portion of the meeting is posted on the web site in advance. The reading list for candidates is under review.

A thorough report from the Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy Evaluation Panel, chaired by the Rev. Eugene Pickett, was received, and is posted on the MFC web site. It includes a number of recommendations.

This was the year for committee turnover; members leaving the committee in December were the Rev. Dr. Leslie Westbrook, the Rev. Dianne Arakawa, Les McGukin and Dr. James Robinson. Their contributions were invaluable and they are missed. In March, we welcomed new members the Rev. Geoff Rimositis, Dr. Paul David Wadler, Dr. James T. Brown, and the Rev. Dr. James Zacharias. Continuing committee members are the Rev. Dr. Mark Belletini (Vice Chair), Betty Bobo Seiden (Executive Committee), the Rev. Jory Agate (Executive Committee), the Rev. Dr. Carolyn S. Owen-Towle (convenor Process Working Group), the Rev. Dr. Stephan Papa (convenor Settlement Working Group and UUMA liaison), Abbey Tennis (convenor Candidacy Working Group), the Rev.

Wayne Arnason (UUA Trustee liaison), Sue Stukey (UUA Trustee liaison) and the Rev. Ken Reeves (UUMA liaison). The Rev. David Hubner serves as Executive Secretary and we are ably supported by staff members the Rev. Dr. Michelle Bentley, the Rev. David Pettee, Griffith Bell and Christine May.

Respectfully submitted,  
Phyllis Daniel  
Chair