

**Report of UUA Trustees
Ministerial Fellowship Committee
March 2007 Meeting - Chicago, Illinois**

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) gathered in Chicago from March 22-25, 2007, and the following report highlights the activities of the MFC that are of special interest to the UUA Board of Trustees. This was the first time that our meeting was held at the Hotel Allegro in the heart of Chicago's theatre and financial districts, and the new location provided more flexible and accessible meeting space. Sadly, it was the last time that Linda Olson Peebles would be joining us since her tenure on the BOT ends this year. She was honored by the MFC for her considerable contributions in her two years on the committee.

Summary of Candidates Seeking Preliminary Fellowship:

We saw a total of 22 candidates (7 men and 15 women) ranging in age from 28 to 65 (with eleven of them in their 30's, two in their 40's, and eight over 50). They represented ten different theological schools, with Meadville Lombard having 5 graduates, Starr King 2, Harvard 4, and United Theological Seminary 3. Two candidates self-identified as people of color and one as Latino/a.

The Committee awarded the following Categories: Ten "1s" ("good to go!") . . . nine "2s" (cleared for fellowship providing contingencies are met) . . . two "3s" (individuals we'd like to see again following additional work on ministerial formation) . . . and one "4" (discouraging the candidate from further preparation for ministry).

Community Ministry: It was noted that community ministry is becoming an increasingly compelling choice for those preparing for our UU ministry. However, many of our community ministers are encountering difficulties with the requirement for affiliating with a UU congregation during the Fellowshiping process. It is clear that parish ministers, their congregations, district executives and UUs at large have not been educated about the need to support such a requirement. This has resulted in more than a few churches denying affiliation to community ministers who have come to them. The MFC supports an "educational blitz" to get the word out about the role of community ministers and the benefits of affiliation for congregations and districts.

Canada Regional Subcommittee on Candidacy: Following negotiations by Kay Montgomery and Gini Courter with representatives from the CUC, the MFC voted unanimously to close the Canada RSCC due to the low number of aspirants and the high cost of interviews. Plans to accommodate Canadian candidates include having two Canadians serve on RSCCs south of the Canadian border.

Qualifications for RSCC: It came to the attention of the MFC that one of our RSCCs has a ministerial member who is not yet in Final Fellowship. The MFC recommends to the Committee on Committees that all ministers serving on RSCCs should be in Final Fellowship and in good standing with the MFC.

Draft Edits of MFC Rules, Bylaw and Policies: Considerable time was spent prior to and during the MFC meeting reviewing the latest draft of proposed changes in the Rules, Bylaws and Policies. The current draft will be taken to GA 2007 as well as to stakeholder groups for comment. The final draft is expected to come to the BOT in 2008.

Executive Committee Members: The UU Ministers' Association (UUMA) presented a proposal to the MFC for a UUMA representative on the MFC Executive Committee. The MFC Executive Committee agreed to appoint a UUMA member to the Committee, although they will not change the rules in order to maintain flexibility.

Something for the BOT to consider: There is currently no requirement or even expectation that there needs to be consultation between the UUMA and the MFC Chair regarding the choice of UUMA representatives before their appointment. There is also no input from the CoC. Is this problematic, that with this new practice, there would now be a UUMA representative on the Executive Committee of the MFC (a Board committee) with no input from the BOT?

Sankofa Project Archives: Rev. Michelle Bentley, Archive Director for the Sankofa Project, presented an inspiring power point presentation to the MFC. The mission of the UU Sankofa Project is to advance an Archive collection that records and showcases the lives and works of Unitarian Universalist ministers and laity of Color and Latino ancestries. Sankofa is an Akan word which means: "to go back and reclaim the past so we can move forward; so we understand why and how we came to be who we are today." Visit their web site to see more than 40 photos and life narratives: <http://uusankofa.org/>

Respectfully submitted by Jackie Shanti and Linda Olson Peebles