

Dear Ministerial Fellowship Committee:

I am writing with the deepest appreciation for granting me the honor of being part of the MFC Committee procedure in December 2009 as a Liaison to Candidates.

This is my experience on how having seen both sides of the procedure impacted me.

Through the pre-MFC interview process I always saw MFC as a group of gate keepers with unique set of standards into which I had to fit myself in order to prove having excellent fitness for the path of UU ministry. This reflection has not changed; I just now better understand the MFC's ground on why maintaining such stance for candidates is necessary to the health and sustainability of our UU ministry. And I am glad to realize there is much more into this initiation –MFC interview- than the ability to answer to competency questions intelligently and whole heartedly.

Sitting on MFC committee taught me how much of hard work are involved to come to the decisions MFC makes. The amount of depth, passion and compassion put into the process (readings, meetings, education, compassionately analyzing, discussing, and delving before and after interviews, and the comradeship between the members) were unbelievably eye-opening. During every single interview I observed how intensely, genuinely and caringly the members discussed their perceptions, concerns, and understanding of each candidate. The diverse background and skills of each member was overwhelmingly amazing. Each member brought in a wealth of knowledge and experience from the vast fields of human experiences: trained and rooted in our UU beliefs and purposes. The members' knowledge and intentionality were captivatingly wrapped in a blanket of diverse theologies -ingrained in their own living spiritualities – which provided even a healthier quality of welcoming care for candidates who stepped into the interview room some shaking, some nervous, some exhausted yet all determined.

The members of MFC committee were present in the room deliberately and with a sense of purpose in unison to both keep high standard bars for the Excellency in UU ministry and to remain genuinely open to the goodness inherited in each person- each candidate- while examining the depth and width of their knowledge and commitment. The members' caring presence and depth of their questions allowed candidates to better relax in order to show their abilities and purposes knowing that the MFC members where

there not to ask tricky questions but to witness and celebrate candidates' hard work in preparing to become ministers.

I had heard myths about MFC before my own interview – talks about hidden meaning of questions, about tricky questions, etc. - my MFC interview experience was a spiritual experience during which I felt heard, acknowledged, affirmed and supported to remain consciously loyal to the call that brought me to serve our UU movement. Having the opportunity to serve this year only confirmed the same spiritual experience in a deeper and more insightful level. I am so humble and grateful for this chance to learn more on how MFC works and strives to impact and encourage candidates to hone their skills and tools.

In conclusion I would like to mention that one of the most amazing parts of serving on MFC as liaison to candidate was the opportunity of working with the representatives of many aspects of our ministry: community, parish, religious education, young adult, and lay leaders' ministries as well as to learn more about the structure behind the work of staff and their role in the process.

I am ever grateful to be blessed by the presence of such diverse voices of compassion manifested through the multitude of experienced members.

In gratitude and in faith,

Rev. Nayer Taheri

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