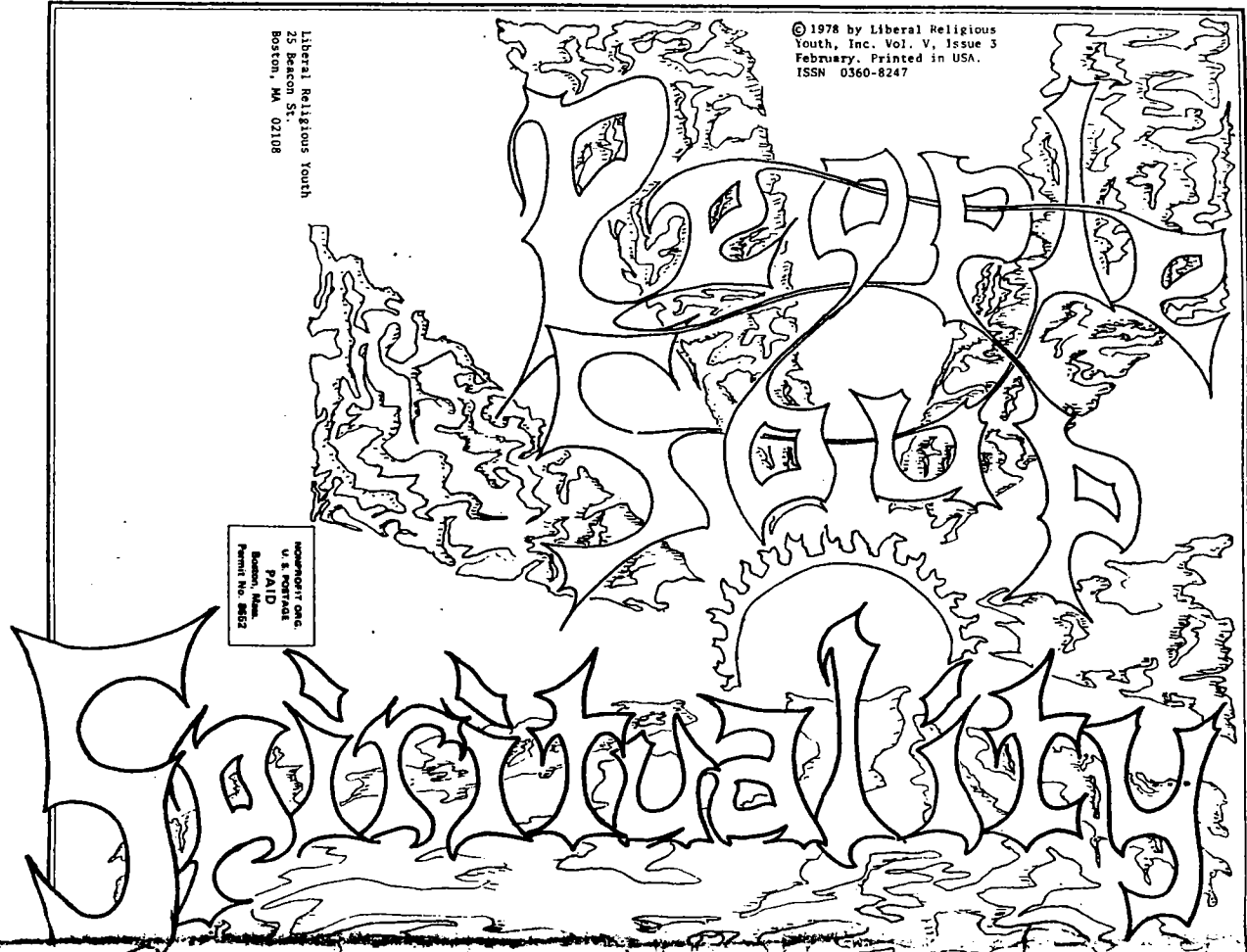


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LRV-UUA PARALLELS

by Abbe Bjorklund

Unitarian Universalism and Liberal Religious Youth have many parallels in their purposes and belief in the principles of religious freedom and liberalism. Both LRV and the UUA are ethical movements without doctrines, believing in individual freedom as the method and reason as the guide towards achieving religious truth.

The principal of religious freedom is that in order to advance humans must be free. There is no area of life more important to be free than religion. The free alone are at home in the world of nature, of ideas, of people and of the soul. Only in freedom can one fully live.

According to the LRV by-laws, some of the purposes of LRV are "to help individual young people to deal creatively and imaginatively with religion as the most exalted quality and spirit of living," and to "nurture the distinctively liberal tradition in religion: freedom and responsibility of belief and the free and questing mind." The UUA by-laws state that "the association is dedicated to the principles of a free faith" and that "no by-laws shall infringe upon individual freedom of belief."

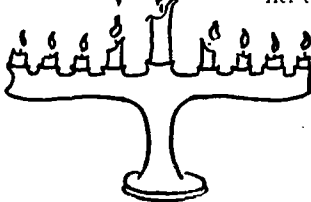
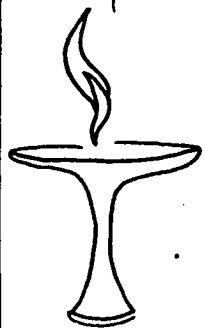
The principle of individual empowerment, the need for each individual to find their own personal truths, is important to both the UU movement and LRV. We share a belief in the value of every human personality. This value is the purpose and instrument of the struggle for a better society. The broad and encompassing religion of UUism strives to be spiritual yet practical, personal yet universal. LRV wants to help individuals "achieve a responsible and durable faith through personal and group experiences of learning, service, and worship" and "to understand and practice the privileges and responsibilities of a governing system that

embodies these ideals." The UUA wants to "affirm, defend, and promote the supreme worth and dignity of every human personality and the use of the democratic method in human relationships."

Because religion is human-centered and human-created, UU's and LRVers don't promote any one religious doctrine or faith, but believe that there are no final and conclusive answers. "Religion is a personal matter and must rest on the right of each person to search out the truth." (George Marshall)

As religious liberals, UU's and LRVers search, explore, and nurture the free and questioning mind in order to create an environment conducive to the development of individual truths. We believe that as one's experience and ideas change, so may one's faith. The UUA by-laws state that UUs "support the free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of religious fellowship" and "cherish and spread universal truths taught by great prophets and teachers, summarized as love to God and humankind". LRVers also utilize the religious teachings of many faiths and assimilate them into a more universal, yet personal faith. Revelation is continuous- nothing is complete, nothing is exempt from criticism and consideration. As James Luther Adams states in *On Being Human Religiously*, "We cannot properly place our confidence in our own creations- we must depend on a transforming reality that breaks through encrusted forms of life and thought to create new forms." All creeds of other religions were written by mortals; to advance we must continue searching and not accept old creeds as infallible.

In order to assimilate ideas UU's and LRVers use human reason. To cultivate responsible behavior and beliefs we need human reason and scientific method, but nothing is really an infallible guide. We must hear many ideas before we can find our own truth. It will be a truth or insight that one has arrived at personally, not a second hand belief that is accepted outwardly.



cont. on pg. 5

