

From Programs to Ethos

UUA ADMINISTRATION REPORT TO THE UUA BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON THE
2013 GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESPONSIVE RESOLUTION
CALLING FOR RENEWED COMMITMENT TO ANTIOPPRESSION/MULTICULTURALISM

January, 2014

Prologue

More than 1,000 candles formed a constellation outside Tent City in the desert of Arizona one dark June night. Unitarian Universalists answered the call to shine a light on the injustices committed against migrants and their families in Arizona and across the United States.

UUs came to Phoenix in 2012 to stand on the side of love, bend the arc of the universe toward justice, and witness humbly with a community suffering from oppressive immigration laws. Birthright UUs and “come-inners,” veterans of the Civil Rights Movement and veterans of foreign wars, children of Sesame Street and the Sponge Bob Square Pants generation said with their presence, “We see the cruelties you endure in Sheriff Joe Arpaio’s Tent City. We hear your community’s call for justice. You are not alone.”

UU witness didn’t end at Tent City. When Unitarian Universalists went home they visited detention centers, advocated for just immigration policies and pathways to citizenship, opposed mass deportations, organized to stop mass incarceration, built solidarity with those who are directly affected by injustice.

The preceding story shows how Unitarian Universalists are living Beloved Community as expressed in the General Assembly 2013 Responsive Resolution. This document reports on the UUA’s actions to achieve the Responsive Resolutions aspirations. The full report describes in brief the UUA’s evolution from a program-centered focus to an ethos that permeates every staff group.

Major points of the Report to the UUA Board of Trustees on the 2013 General Assembly Responsive Resolution include:

- Commitment to Beloved Community is more than steps. It is a vision and purpose to be lived into daily.
- Justice grounds and sustains multicultural community. Multicultural community grounds and sustains effective social movement building.
- The UUA’s anti-oppression/anti-racism/multicultural (AOARMC) work exists as a continuum: we must learn from the past, adapt to the present, and anticipate what the future will require of those who lead transformation in our faith
- The transformation we seek requires UU leaders and covenanted communities equipped to meet the challenges of a volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous world.
- As we have learned more about the developmental stages of change, the UUA’s AOARMC has evolved from a Program-centered Orientation to an Ethos-centered

Orientation summarized in the chart below. Note: the chart is intended to underscore the *evolution* of the work: it is not an either/or comparison.

Program-centered Orientation	Ethos-centered Orientation
One pathway to AOARMC transformation	Multiple pathways to AOARMC transformation
One staff group has primary accountability for AOARMC work of the Association	Every staff group incorporates AOARMC values in their roles and responsibilities
Focus on training, workshops and curriculum to advance AOARMC transformation	Focus on leadership development, consultation, coaching, and learning communities to achieve AOARMC transformation
UU ministries, faith development, AOARMC, and social justice work exist in silos	UU ministries, faith development, AOARMC, and social justice work deepen UU identity and values through collaboration and connection
Resource intensive training of select group of UUA-sponsored “expert” trainers and facilitators	Taps talents and expertise of broader UU community, interfaith partners, and AOARMC coalitions to serve UUs more broadly
Emphasis on internal transformation as prerequisite for community engagement	Emphasis on community engagement as opportunity for internal transformation and building right relationship
Designated team guides AOARMC transformation in congregations	AOARMC transformation is the work of every congregational leader. Entire congregation engages AOARMC and multigenerational transformation

- Finally, the work of Beloved Community is never done.

The UUA welcomes the 2013 Responsive Resolution as an opportunity to lift up our continuing commitment to the vision and values of Beloved Community. The Association partners with all Unitarian Universalists to advance this commitment. We appreciate that the General Assembly encourages and empowers the work of the UUA towards building Beloved Community.

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UUA BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON THE
2013 GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESPONSIVE RESOLUTION
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ANTIOPPRESSION/MULTICULTURALISM

This is a report from the UUA Administration to the Board of Trustees on actions to date to achieve the aspirations articulated in the General Assembly 2013 Responsive Resolution. The report articulates the foundational understanding that guides the Association's anti-oppression/anti-racism/multicultural (AOARMC) commitments, and how the UUA is currently enacting that commitment.

Foundation:

The UUA understands commitment to Beloved Community to require more than steps. It is a vision and purpose to be lived into daily.

When Unitarian Universalists live into Beloved Community it is

- an individual and collective adventure
- a spiritual practice of standing on the side of love
- love expressed in faith-based advocacy and witness, and
- solidarity with those who struggle against injustice that builds deepened understanding and deep human connection

As the UU faith community and our cultural context evolves, the UUA is adapting its organizational systems, culture, and programs to enable Unitarian Universalists to meet the challenges of living in a volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous world. We are harnessing shrinking resources to support systems and strategies that lead to lasting, sustainable transformation in Unitarian Universalism. Our goals are to:

- ground UU transformation in faith
- encourage and empower courageous and compassionate leadership, and
- equip Unitarian Universalists to cross borders of race, class and culture.

UUA Commitment:

UUA Administration and staff work across disciplines to advance the justice-centered, multicultural, intergenerational Beloved Community that Unitarian Universalists aspire to. Just as faith development is lifelong, so Beloved Community is lifelong work. This report lifts up UUA benchmarks in anti-oppression/multicultural work. First, the Administration explains how our work has progressed from program to ethos.

From Programs to Ethos

Since the 1997 Journey Toward Wholeness Business Resolution, the UUA's anti-oppression/multicultural and intergenerational work has evolved from a program-centered orientation to an ethos that infuses every staff group. Our early years focused on providing an analytical framework and designating leadership teams to guide and assess anti-racist transformation at the Association, District, and congregation levels. *The Arc of the Universe* (Skinner House) documents the work of many years.

Since the 1997 Journey Toward Wholeness and Accessibility Resolutions, UU congregations moved from an emphasis on workshops, training, and curriculum to an emphasis on leadership development, experiential learning, and direct engagement. The UUA responded with various initiatives such as JUUST Change, the Diversity of Ministry Initiative, and Standing on the Side of Love.

Today's work exists in a continuum that incorporates past learning, but accommodates the social shifts that require different responses. The Association with UUs is building on past initiatives, and taking the logical next steps of integrating and living the anti-oppression/multicultural values through our faith. The lists below describe the characteristics of program-centered and ethos-centered orientations in the UUA's anti-oppression/multicultural work.

Program-centered orientation:

- One pathway (analytical framework and methodology) to the goal of anti-oppressive/multicultural transformation
- One staff team has primary accountability group for AOARMC transformation of the Association

- Focus on training, workshops, curriculum to advance AOARMC transformation
- UU ministries, faith development, AOARMC, and social justice work exist in silos
- Resource intensive training of select group of UUA-sponsored “expert” trainers and facilitators
- Emphasis on internal transformation as prerequisite for community engagement
- Designated team authorized to lead congregational AOARMC transformation

Ethos-centered orientation:

- Multiple pathways to AOARMC transformation with emphasis on developmental learning/leadership competencies, community engagement, interfaith partnership, and multicultural coalitions
- Every staff group incorporates AOARMC values in roles and responsibilities
- Focus on leadership development, consultation, coaching, and learning communities to advance AOARMC transformation
- UU ministries, faith development, AOARMC, and social justice deepen UU identity and values through collaboration and connection
- Taps talents and expertise of UU community and people committed to our values for effectiveness and sustainability
- Emphasis on community engagement as opportunity for internal transformation and building right relationship
- AOARMC is the work of every congregational leader. Entire congregation engages AOARMC and multigenerational transformation.

The 2012 Justice General Assembly demonstrates how direct engagement – informed by past anti-oppression/anti-racism analysis -- encourages and empowers Unitarian Universalists’ anti-oppressive/multicultural understanding. The ethos of Beloved Community permeated the 2012 Justice General Assembly in Phoenix, AZ. “Justice GA” continues to infuse the UUA’s prophetic advocacy and witness with UU congregations, and with interfaith and multicultural coalition partners. Justice GA transformed UUs’ vision of who we are as a faith and who we can be. UUA staff provided before, during, and after General Assembly multiple opportunities for

- theological reflection
- study/action
- online and on the ground witness and organizing
- experiential learning,
- interfaith and multicultural community

The 2014 General Assembly echoes the Beloved Community ethos with the theme “Love Reaches Out.”

The UUA applies the Beloved Community ethos to initiatives for congregations and marginalized communities with opportunities to strengthen their spirituality, intercultural leadership and justice-centered engagement. The UUA encourages and empowers these UUs with the *Mosaic Makers Conference* for congregations doing intentional multicultural ministry and the *Multicultural Leadership School* for youth and young adults of color. Note: *Mosaic Makers* and the *Multicultural Leadership School* emerged as direct requests from intentional multicultural congregations and UU communities of color for Association resources that directly serve their aspirations and needs.

The UUA Public Witness Team applies the ethos with the *grounding, accountability, fit, and opportunity* frame used to assess opportunities for Unitarian Universalists to be a voice and force for justice and compassion in the world. Grounding encompasses General Assembly resolutions and UU Principles and Purposes. UUA solidarity and support for oppressed communities demonstrates anti-oppressive accountability. Fit concerns resources and capacity of staff, the UU community, and our interfaith and multicultural justice coalition partners. Finally, Opportunity considers the long-term sustainability of the impact of UU witness and advocacy.

Beacon Press, the UUA’s voice for justice in the wider world, publishes important books that give progressive people a depth of understanding and powerful arguments that support their work for justice. A prominent example is Beacon’s exclusive arrangement with Martin Luther King, Jr.’s estate to publish King’s prolific work. The press builds on its history of publishing important books about ground-breaking issues. Beacon identifies and promotes books on LGBTQ issues; on the rights of immigrants, people with disabilities, and marginalized people; on the environmental crisis; and especially race and class issues.

Beacon books lift up a liberal religious perspective in a vibrant community of general readers, thought leaders, activists, and seekers. The books are supplemented by electronic media and a wide range of social media. The press brings important voices to the UU community, including Marian Wright Edelman, Geoffrey Canada, Eboo Patel, Rashid Khalidi, Anita Hill, Cornel West, and many others.

The **UUA International Office** staff team lives out our vision of Beloved Community/ARAOMC through soul-to-soul relationships with faith, interfaith, and justice partners around the world. These relationships are guided by a philosophy of mutuality, accountability, and long-term commitment to expanding human rights and other shared goals. Helping UUs locate

themselves within the global story of Unitarian Universalism, and building broad commitment to shape their story's future is basic ARAOMC work that builds Beloved Community.

In partnership with the **UU Service Committee (UUSC)**, the UUA developed the **UU College of Social Justice (UUCSJ)** to help our congregations and individuals develop new ways to deepen and sustain their justice work. To date, the UUCSJ has developed and led service-learning journeys to India, Haiti, Mexico, New Orleans, Chicago, and Guatemala. In the coming year all journeys will be supported by the new UUCSJ Curriculum for Cross-Cultural Engagement, which explicitly offers a lens of anti-racism, multicultural awareness, and economic justice as participants prepare for their journeys. In all cases the UUCSJ journeys are designed to support UUs in deepening their effectiveness and awareness within a multicultural context.

Programs in **Ministry and Faith Development** encompass resources for faith development, religious education, youth and young adult ministry, lay leadership development, and professional development for UU religious professionals. The Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office is creating an anti-racism training grounded in the intersectional reality of today's young Unitarian Universalists. The **Faith Development Office** adapted *Building the World We Dream About, a Tapestry of Faith* curriculum on race and ethnicity, for high school-age youth. The UU Military Chaplaincy provides a portal to the diversification of UU ministry and ministering to the theological, racial/ethnic, and sexual diversity in the U.S. military. Beyond Categorical Thinking, administered by the Transitions Office in MFD, provides congregations in search a tool to identify and address the conscious and unconscious biases around ability, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation for professional religious leadership.

Multicultural Growth & Witness (MG&W) collaborates with UUA staff groups, the larger UU community, interfaith partners, and multiracial/multicultural coalitions to equip UU leaders and their communities to minister effectively in a multicultural world. A list of MG&W resources is included in the addendum of this report.

The entire **Congregational Life** team has participated in intercultural competency development work. The MassBay District and Clara Barton District has offered specialized training in intercultural competency and how it affects their team's work styles. Justice Ministries, including anti-racism work, is core to the districts' missions.

Congregational Life staff includes an intentional AOARMC and intergenerational lenses to a variety of programming. They support congregations and UU leaders in deepening their AOARMC understanding in the following ways:

- Providing Leadership Schools such as UULTI and AOARMC leadership programming at District Assemblies

- Charging District Committees with advancing AOARMC in their jurisdictions (Ohio-Meadville, Metro New York, and Joseph Priestley).
- Engaging in training in intercultural competency, including staff who have garnered advance training in order to resource congregations. Future webinars will introduce UU leaders to intercultural competency as both a general introduction and how intercultural competency applies to conflict.

All the work with youth and young adults supports an intergenerational focus, and this work also includes resources that empower congregations to sponsor age-specific events such as “Cons.” In addition, Ohio-Meadville, Metro New York, and Joseph Priestley Districts all have committees focused on advancing AOARMC in their jurisdictions.

The sections on Systemic Resources and Programmatic Resources provide further examples of how the ethos is reflected in the UUA’s systems, programs, and practices.

Systemic, Programmatic and Financial Resources:

The Responsive Resolution calls for the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee (JTWTC) to provide an audit of the systemic, programmatic, and financial resources that support congregations and marginalized communities in deepening their ARAOMC understanding. The UUA will support the JTWTC with the data they need to conduct this audit. In the meantime, this report to the Board of Trustees summarizes existing UUA systemic and programmatic resources.

Systemic Resources:

- UUA Human Resource policies and practices strive to make the UUA a justice centered workplace grounded in Unitarian Universalist values.
- The UUA’s shareholder advocacy deploys Association financial resources to achieve a just society
- Information Technology staff employs digital resources to enable people to connect for the purpose of spreading love and justice
- Skinner House publishes UU faith voices from the margins, which expands Unitarian Universalists’ perceptions of what our faith is and can be
- UUA partners with communities directly affected by injustices that divide the human family – racism, homophobia; economic, environmental, and reproductive “injustice” – to bring more compassion and justice to the world

Programmatic:

- The UUA website lists numerous resources for congregations doing multicultural ministry, intergenerational ministry, faith-based advocacy and witness, and working in community coalitions as people of faith. These resources include practical skills that prepare UUs to show up as representatives of UU values and identity, connects them in faithful/spiritual networks, and encourages their solidarity with oppressed communities as spiritual practice.
- General Assembly – the UUs’ largest community gathering -- provides an annual opportunity for Unitarian Universalists to learn and practice behaviors that lead to culture change in congregations through worship, witness, workshops, and attention to right relationship.
- Justice General Assembly and the UU College of Social Justice underscore the power of collective, experiential learning and social action that is grounded in Unitarian Universalist vision, values, and identity.

For UUs who experience marginalization in our faith community and the larger society, the UUA provides support and spiritual sustenance through collegial gatherings, leadership schools, and virtual community. These face-to-face and online communities offer opportunities for spiritual renewal, leadership and professional development, and collegial/peer relationships. Examples include

- Finding Our Way Home, the annual retreat for religious professionals and seminarians of color (Multicultural Growth & Witness)
- Regular seminarians of color conference calls and collegial support (Multicultural Growth & Witness)
- Multicultural Leadership School for youth and young adults of color (Ministries & Faith Development/Resource Development Group)
- UUs of Color online spiritual community (Faith Development Office of Ministry & Faith Development)
- General Assembly gatherings, including Youth and Young Adult Caucuses at General Assembly (Ministries & Faith Development/Youth & Young Adult Ministry Office)
- Diversity of Ministry Initiative that offers ministers of color and the congregations that call them pre-call consultation for congregational leaders, customized start-ups for ministers of color, and continued consultation and coaching (UUA President, MG&W, MFD, Congregational Life)

- Beyond Categorical Thinking equips congregations in search to identify conscious and unconscious biases around ability, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity.

Steps Toward Vision:

The work of Beloved Community is never done. The UUA recognizes the many challenges to anti-oppressive/multicultural transformation. In all that we do, the UUA connects multicultural inclusion, anti-oppression, and our work for justice as expressions of UU faith and values. We list a handful of initiatives in process that demonstrate continuing commitment:

- The Sharing Project – a survey and dialogue process to increase understanding of UUs’ from marginalized communities experiences, needs, and aspirations.
- Voting Rights and Moral Mondays – the UUA is applying our learning from Justice GA to build solidarity with communities resisting voter suppression – a state-based movement with national implications for democracy.
- 30 Days of Love – Standing on the Side of Love and other UUA social media serve as critical tools for advancing faith-based witness, advocacy, and building justice networks: SSL connects spiritual activists in networks to build justice-centered Beloved Community both physical and virtual.
- Interfaith and multiracial/multicultural coalitions: UUA partnerships facilitate UUs capacity to work at the intersections of identity and justice with groups such as Trans Faith, organizing around mass incarceration and The New Jim Crow, and seminars on intergenerational seminars on Indigenous People’s Rights (UU-UNO).
- Online Resources: the UUA researches, curates, and develops resources to equip professional and lay UU leaders to minister effectively in a multicultural world through worship, welcome, religious education, and social justice (See Inventory Resource List from 2012).

In the coming year, the UUA Administration will focus on articulating a vision as called for in the Responsive Resolution. The “vision” and “steps” will build on past learning and current reality. Preliminary commitments include the:

- Intercultural Development Inventory – the Leadership Council has engaged a consultant to administer the Intercultural Development Inventory and coach the Leadership Council in its intercultural development plan.

- Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee (JTWTC) Audit – the Leadership Council will provide systemic, programmatic, and financial data to the JTWTC. Data will include the UUA’s guiding ethos and how resources are allocated to ARAOMC work.
- Board of Trustees – the Administration has prepared this report for dialogue with the Board of Trustees at the January 2014 meeting in San Diego, CA.
- 2014 General Assembly -- the Leadership Council will provide a President and Administration report on the Responsive Resolution at the 2014 General Assembly.