

Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Appraisal Written Report to the 2006 General Assembly

During the 2005 General Assembly in Fort Worth the Commission on Appraisal's report *Engaging Our Theological Diversity* was officially released and made available for sale. Within six months all 5,000 copies of the print run had been sold. We on the Commission interpret this as indicative of the importance of the issues the report raised to the health of our movement and Association. The complete text of that report is now available for free download through the Commission's website, www.uua.org/coa/, along with a variety of study guide materials developed by religious educators, ministers, and layfolk from a number of congregations. These materials include two complete adult religious education curricula examining the report. We encourage congregations to make use of these materials and contemplate how their community's lives can be enriched through a healthy engagement with the theological diversity of our movement.

Also at the 2005 GA, three new members were elected to join our body. Over the course of this year one of them resigned for personal and professional reasons. With input from us and from the Nominating Committee, the Committee on Committees recommended and the UUA Board approved the appointment of Jacqui C. Williams of Albany, NY to fill this empty seat through the 2007 GA elections. She has joined Barbara Child and Michael Ohlogge, who were elected at the 2005 GA.

The Bylaws of the UUA mandate a periodic review of Article II, which includes the Principles and Purposes. The revisiting of this central document in the life of our Association is an important process in our living and evolving tradition. This obligatory review is now overdue, and, at the request of the Board of Trustees, the Commission on Appraisal has decided to undertake it. Our independence from both the UUA's Board of Trustees and Administration, and the fact that we answer directly to the General Assembly, puts us in a unique political position in comparison to a task force created specifically for the purpose of carrying out such a review.

We have been doing serious thinking about the Principles and their place in the life of our Association for several years, and discussed their relationship to the theological diversity of our movement in our last report. While the Principles may be the part of Article II that is most well-known, other parts of this article provide the basis for the inclusiveness, theological freedom, and mission of our Association, and these texts will also be examined in our work. We are excited about undertaking the important work of this review.

The early stages of our work will be focused on establishing a process that will maximize the input of Unitarian Universalists from across the continent. We are profoundly sensitive to the implications of this review for Unitarian Universalists, and we are committed to carrying it out in a way that will allow the members of our congregations to feel confident that their opinions are heard. While the timetable is still being determined, the Bylaws mandate that such a review be completed within three years. Recommendations resulting from our review will be brought forward for consideration at a future General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dr. Mark Hamilton
Rev. Linda Weaver Horton
Rev. Manish Mishra
Mr. Michael Ohlrogge
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Ms. Jacqui C. Williams