

JTWTC Report to 2007 GA

Charlie can introduce the members of the TC team, introducing Monica and Carolyn last. Carolyn will read her piece either by live feed or DVD.

Thank you, Charlie. Greetings from Hartford, CT! I come to you today via this video feed as an accommodation by the UUA to my physical disability. Because I have a significant mobility impairment, I elected not to come to Portland, OR and GA this year rather than face multiple long plane flights, the risk of damage to my power wheelchair, exhaustion upon arrival, the potential for inaccessible and/or challenging transportation and hotel accommodations, and the general wonderful chaos that is part of being at GA. Many of you at GA have bravely elected to confront those and other physical challenges presented by GA; you have my appreciation and gratitude for your commitment to this work. My cyberspace presence and physical absence are both indications of how far we have come as an Association in the 10 years since the passage of the Accessibilities resolution in 1997 and how far we still have to go. I look forward to continuing the journey together.

The Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee was created and its members appointed by the UUA Board of Trustees. Our charge is to monitor and assess the transformation of the UUA into an authentic anti-oppressive, anti-racist and multicultural association of congregations.

We are very excited about our accomplishments over the last twelve months, particularly the results of our newly focused approach to assessment and monitoring responsibilities. In keeping with the agreement made between the JTWTC and the Board in April 2006, this past year we continued our work by monitoring and assessing the anti-oppression, anti-racist and multicultural efforts at the district level nearly ten years after the passage of the Journey Toward Wholeness and Accessibilities resolutions at the 1997 General Assembly.

We began our work by sending an online survey to all districts in May 2006, then selecting five districts to study in depth, intentionally choosing districts diverse in geography, size, and history in anti-oppression, anti-racism and multicultural work. We conducted interviews with district leaders and staff, aimed at gathering a “snapshot” of where each district is on the Journey Toward Wholeness. We presented our report to the Board of Trustees in April and we are honored to present it to you at this GA. We believe our observations about the structure, methodologies, and leadership it takes to do this work successfully will be helpful to the Association at all levels. The report is currently available on line at the UUA website and were also available at our worship service, celebrating the 10th anniversaries of the Journey Toward Wholeness and Accessibilities resolutions held earlier today.

This past year we have had some turnover in committee membership. We would like to thank past member and chair Sean Parker Dennison for his service on this committee, and we welcome Janice Marie Johnson, Catie Chi Olson, and Michael Sallwasser.

Next Steps:

Our next area of focus for assessment and monitoring for the next year will be in the area of Ministerial Development. Having had preliminary conversations with staff, professional and lay leadership we think this area of Association life is vital to our commitment to becoming an authentic anti-oppressive, anti-racist, multi-cultural faith community.

The current debate about Immigration Reform has exposed the fact that in 10 years the demographics of the US will most likely look radically different in terms of racial, ethnic and cultural composition than it does today. This projected radical shift in demographics will directly impact many UU congregations that are predominately composed of White or European Americans. If we are to become a truly inclusive and diverse faith community, we will need to equip ministers and other religious professionals to minister to an increasingly multiracial and multicultural world.

We as faith community need to be prepared to minister across cultures, and in order to know how to prepare, we need a sense of the current state of our ministry with regard to multicultural knowledge, skills and practices. To fulfill our desire to become the multicultural beloved community we profess to desire, we need ministries as diverse as the people whose membership and community partnerships we seek.

As Carolyn has already stated, this year marks the 10th anniversary of the passage of the Accessibilities and Journey Toward Wholeness resolutions. In 10 years there has been progress, progress that needs to continue so the Carolyn's in our communities are not excluded.

Let us continue our journey toward wholeness, building and creating a Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations that is authentically anti-oppressive, anti-racist and multicultural. If we do not, who will?