

## JTWTC 2008 Report to GA

(Jose will introduce the members of the JTWTC team, introducing Monica and Carolyn last. Carolyn will present her piece via DVD.)

Thank you, Jose. Greetings from Hartford, CT! I come to you today via DVD as an accommodation by the UUA to my physical disability. Because I have a significant mobility impairment, I elected not to come to Fort Lauderdale and GA this year rather than face tiring and unreliable plane flights, the risk of damage to my power wheelchair, the potential for inaccessible and/or challenging transportation and hotel accommodations, and the charming chaos that is part of being at GA. Many of you at GA have bravely elected to confront the physical and emotional challenges presented by GA; you have my appreciation and gratitude for your commitment to this work. While I may not be there in reality, I am with you in spirit and cyberspace.

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 Multi-cultural association of congregations.

We are very proud of our accomplishments over the last twelve months, particularly the results of our 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 assessing and monitoring the ministerial preparation process as it relates to Anti-Oppression, Anti-Racist and Multicultural efforts. We surveyed and then personally interviewed members of the Ministerial Formation Committee and the four Regional Sub-committees on Candidacy. We focused on the cultural competence of committee members and their ability to assess the cultural competence of Aspirants and Candidates, as well as the Anti-Oppressive, Anti-Racist Multicultural policies and procedures embedded in those committees.

The surveys and interviews were intended for us to obtain a “snapshot” from members of the MFC and RSCCs from their individual and personal vantage points to learn about committee policies, procedures, mission statements, trainings, etc that have influenced and enhanced their perspectives and understanding of AO/AR/MC issues and how they use that perspective and understanding to evaluate the AO/AR/MC competencies of ministerial Aspirants and Candidates. We were also interested in learning how they identify ways in which Aspirants and Candidates can enhance their cultural competence and how that is monitored as part of the fabric of our structure of ministerial formation.

We believed they have a wealth of experience, information, and perspective that is invaluable to the work we all do...and we were right.

Our report contains another collection of snapshots on the journey toward becoming a Beloved Community. If we are to become who we want to be, we cannot continue as we are. We need ministers and leaders, who are each culturally competent with a wide variety of cultures and identities; we need structures that promote and implement cultural competence; and we need methodologies that are inclusive, pastoral, and transformative. We must understand that

oppression is linked; racism breeds ableism; homophobia links to classism; and ageism does not exist without sexism. Until we are all whole, none of us will truly enter the Beloved Community.

We submitted 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 cultural competence and the structures, 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; copies were also available at our worship service celebrating cultural competence held on Thursday.

This past year we officially added ableism and disability concerns to those issues we assess and monitor. In light of our expanded responsibilities, we have added two new members to our committee and welcome Arthur Tackman and C. J. McGregor to our team. Monica...?

Next Steps: Thank you, Carolyn. Our next area of focus for assessment and monitoring will be related to the process of leadership development in the UUA. We will examine how people are nominated for UUA Board appointed committees. Some of the questions we begin this assessment with are: how are leaders identified? Do they rise from service in their districts and/or congregations? Are they leaders in affinity groups or are they self-selecting? While we are aware that the Nominating Committee is responsible for submitting the names of potential leaders to the Committee on Committees, we are also aware that they are operating within a larger system. A system that has a limited number of people from marginalized communities within Unitarian Universalism from which to draw. We realize that with a limited pool of people to draw from, many leaders from traditionally marginalized communities find themselves stretched thin by over-commitment and frustrated by the expectation that they represent all the views and be the experts for their respective communities.

Therefore, whereas in the past we have spent one year assessing and monitoring our chosen area of study, we have concluded that examining how leadership is developed, identified, and chosen for UUA board appointed committees will require at least two years of study. The Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee believes this area of Association life is vital to our commitment to becoming an authentic anti-oppressive, anti-racist, multi-cultural faith community. To fulfill our desire to become the multicultural and multiracial beloved community we profess to desire, we need to ensure that all board appointed committees are as diverse as the people whose membership and community partnerships we seek. And we need to have a vital and energized pool of leaders from which to draw.

As Carolyn has already stated, this past year we officially added Ableism and disability concerns to those issues we assess and monitor. This year marks the 11th anniversary of the passage of the Accessibilities and Journey Toward Wholeness resolutions. In 11 years there has been progress, progress that needs to continue so the people who live with disabilities 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. Let us be the standard bearers in promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every person.