

# The Employment Relationship as Covenant

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# Our Goals

- To offer understandings and tools that guide employer-congregations in their relationships with staff
- To help employer-congregations express their highest values
- To explore challenges in employment relationships through the lens of covenant
- To introduce resources for further learning

# Position Description

Documents shared understandings  
about the work

- Discuss/modify upon hire and periodically
- Outlines both key responsibilities and core competencies
- Need not be exhaustive
- Review regularly

# Employment Agreement

Documents shared understandings  
about the relationship

- Refer to and attach position description
- Accountability, review system
- Compensation (starting salary, benefits)
- Working conditions and other provisions

# Performance Management

- Conversation with supervisor about responsibilities, competencies, needs, and goals
- Document for clarity and memory, but *it's not about the form!*
- No surprises

Employment Relationships  
&  
Covenantal Relationships

# Covenant

- Sacred agreement
- Shared responsibility
- Respects fallible humanity
- Parties have obligation to call one another back
- Distinct from promise (1-sided, assumes perfection)



# Ethical Orientation

Employment Relationship:  
UTILITARIAN

Covenantal Relationship:  
CO-CREATION

*Source: When Moses Meets Aaron (Rendle/Beaumont)*

# Focus

Employment Relationship:  
SUPPLY & DEMAND, ACHIEVE OUTCOMES

Covenantal Relationship:  
MUTUAL NEED AND PROMISE

*Source: When Moses Meets Aaron (Rendle/Beaumont)*

# Accountability

Employment Relationship:  
STATING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS  
(COVENANT)

Covenantal Relationship:  
STATING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS  
(EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT)

*Source: When Moses Meets Aaron (Rendle/Beaumont)*

# VALUES AND IDEALS in our congregations

- Mission
- Congregational covenant
- Bylaws and policies
- Activities and deeds

love

dignity

# VALUES AND IDEALS

Form a group of 3.

Make a list of 3-4 important UU values.

# CASE STUDIES

In your group of 3:

- Read your assigned case study.
- Discuss possible ways to proceed and desired outcomes.
  - What conversations need to happen?
  - What concrete actions should take place?
  - Evaluate options against the values your group chose and through the lens of covenant.

# CASE STUDIES

Whole-group processing

Challenges and tensions with respect to  
aligning with your values?

# TAKEAWAYS

- Employment relationship is both covenantal and contractual
- Clarity and accountability are values that honor the relationship
- Staff team in covenant
- Trust as foundational to healthy system



# UUA OFFICE of CHURCH STAFF FINANCES

[www.uua.org/careers/compensation/index.shtml](http://www.uua.org/careers/compensation/index.shtml)

(or search from [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org))

- Benefit plans
- Aid funds
- Fair compensation

# OTHER RESOURCE PEOPLE

- District/regional staff
- Jan Gartner, [jgartner@uua.org](mailto:jgartner@uua.org)\*\*  
(RE, Music, staff team development)
- Professional organization websites and Good Offices programs

*\*\* New staffing resource in development*

# UUA BOOKSTORE RESOURCES

- ***When Moses Meets Aaron\****  
By Gil Rendle & Susan Beaumont
  
- ***Who's In Charge Here?***  
By UUA Commission on Appraisal

\*Don't worry about "Large Congregations" in the subtitle. 😊

# CLOSING

Thank you for joining us.

