



**BEACON
PRESS**

IGNITING HEARTS & MINDS

Report on Activities of Beacon Press, Fiscal 2016

Beacon Press is a department of the Unitarian Universalist Association, founded by the American Universalist Unitarian movement in 1854. Each one of our mission-driven books requires an accompanying written statement describing how it will affirm and promote the principles and purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association, adopted as Bylaws by the 1984, 1985, and 1995 General Assemblies. Over its 162 years of continuous work, Beacon Press has published some of the most notable titles in the history of U.S. book publishing, including: James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son* (of which we published a new edition in 2012, including an introduction by acclaimed novelist and author of *The Known World* Edward P. Jones); Pauli Murray's *Proud Shoes*; the Senator Gravel Edition of *The Pentagon Papers*; Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*; Viktor E. Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*; Jean Baker Miller's *Toward a New Psychology of Women*; Paul Robeson's *Here I Stand*; Marian Wright Edelman's *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*; Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*; Thich Nhat Hanh's *The Miracle of Mindfulness*; Gayl Jones's *The Healing*; and Cornel West's *Race Matters*. In 2009, Beacon became the exclusive trade book publisher of the works of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Cornel West recently described Beacon Press as “a long-distance runner for truth and justice.”

Our books receive attention from high-profile mainstream media sources, such as local and national NPR, The New York Times, TIME Magazine, Salon, Slate, Scientific American, The New Republic, The Atlantic, The Economist, Parade, Smithsonian Magazine, CNN, PBS NewsHour, as well as high-quality alternative media like In These Times, Mother Jones, AlterNet, Feministing.com, Ms., Bust, Bitch, Curve, The Daily Beast, and The Gay and Lesbian Review, and are also often recognized with awards ranging from the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award to the Christopher Award, Stonewall Book Awards, the Lambda Literary Award, the Phillis Wheatley Book Award, and the NAACP Image Award.

Our goal is to publish and promote works that address UU principles and advance the public witness agenda of Unitarian Universalism. Our books and their authors speak about the important and urgent issues of social justice in America today and how our present situation is shaped by our history. They often change the way readers think about fundamental issues; they promote such values as freedom of speech and thought; religious pluralism; anti-racism/anti-oppression; and respect for diversity in all areas of life. Our authors are often activists who use their books as platforms to further their progressive agendas. This tradition at Beacon includes **Marian Wright Edelman’s** Children’s Defense Fund; **Robert Moses’s** The Algebra Project; **Geoffrey Canada’s** Harlem Children’s Zone; **Eboo Patel’s** Interfaith Youth Core; **Terry Galloway’s** Actual Lives, a writing and performance workshop for adults with disabilities; **Stacy Mitchell’s** New Rules Project of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance; **Amy Seidl’s** Living Future Foundation; **Alan Michael Collinge’s** StudentLoanJustice.org; **Linda Nathan’s** Boston Arts Academy; **Eric Mann’s** Labor/Community Strategy Center; **Sue Hyde’s** Creating Change, the national conference for LGBT equality; **Gail Dines’s** Stop Porn Culture; **Rita Brock’s** Soul Repair Center; **Eric Schwarz’s** Citizen Schools; **Mark Ludwig’s** Terezin Foundation; **Anne Ream’s** Voices and Faces Project; and many other progressive organizations and activists. Many other authors are historians, teachers, sociologists, journalists, or legal scholars who challenge the injustices of contemporary society in important books that call for change, including: **Michael Bronski’s** *“You Can Tell Just By Looking”*: *And 20 Other Myths about LGBT Life and People*, **Cynthia Barnett’s** *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America’s Water Crisis*; **Philip Warberg’s** *Harvest the Wind: America’s Journey to Jobs, Energy Independence, and Global Stability* and **Chris Emdin’s** best seller *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood, and the Rest of Y’All too*.

In the past year, we had many successes, including:

- *An Indigenous People's History Of the United States* won the 2015 American Book Award; the hardcover, paperback and eBook editions now have combined sales of over 40,000 copies and the book is being widely discussed in UU circles. It has been featured on the UUA's multicultural resources page, and has been used as a resource for discussion during sermons, especially during Indigenous People's Day and Native American Heritage Month. As of November 2015, 40 professors have requested exam copies of the new paperback edition for use in their classes.
- We published *Liberation*, a collection of poems from poets around the world, and collaborated with the Terezin Music Foundation, dedicated to preserving the musical legacy of artists lost in the Holocaust. Anthology editor and Terezin Executive Director Mark Ludwig has appeared with contributing poet Rita Dove on PBS Newshour. The Dali Lama praised the collection, saying "This anthology of poems from people all over the world gives expression to the human yearning for freedom, which will serve as an inspiration to the present and future generations."
- We published *One Righteous Man: Samuel Battle and the Shattering of the Color Line in New York*, a biography of the life and times of the NYPD's first black cop. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture hosted a launch party for the book, which *The Wall Street Journal* praised saying, "Thanks to Mr. Browne's fine work, Battle can take his place alongside Jackie Robinson and many others in the ranks of African-Americans who rammed open the doors that thousands more have since walked through, seldom knowing who made it possible." The book has received significant attention in the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe*, and has been enthusiastically received by law enforcement history circles such as the National Law Enforcement Museum and the Police History Society, restoring a black pioneer to the history of policing at a critical time.
- We published *Enabling Acts: The Hidden Story of How the Americans with Disabilities Act Gave the Largest US Minority Its Rights* by Lennard Davis as a commissioned work published in time for the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We made a wide outreach effort to over fifty national organizations and individuals in the disabilities community. The book was well received by media sites both in and out of the disabilities field, including a large excerpt in Salon, a feature on CNN, and a special appearance by Davis at the US National Archives the week of this landmark anniversary to discuss the effects of the ADA on American history. I. King Jordan, the first Deaf president of Gallaudet University called the book "a page turning-account [that] puts the reader on the ground...an important an outstanding contribution." Senator Tom Harkin, a lead sponsor of the bill, also praised the book: "not only tells the insider story of a crucial event...but it does so in a way that inspires a renewed conversation around disability rights in America."
- Beacon Press joined the National Poetry Series in order to add the dimension of social justice to this important initiative. Pulitzer Winner Tracy K. Smith, an

extraordinary and highly acclaimed African American poet, served as our first judge. Another African American Pulitzer Prize winner, Gregory Pardlo, will be serving as our judge next year.

- We released a new edition of Ruthanne Lum McCunn’s classic biographical novel, *Thousand Pieces of Gold* for high schools, in order to bring an Asian-American woman’s story to students in a more welcoming edition. We are currently working on a YA edition of *A Queer History of the United States* and exploring a YA edition of *An Indigenous People’s History of the United States*. We are continuing to nurture MLK’s *A Time to Break Silence* in the school market. We also have in the works special YA editions of three other Beacon Books: *Man’s Search for Meaning*; *An Indigenous People’s History of the US*; *A Queer History of the US*.
- The Association of American University Presses selected fifteen Beacon Books for inclusion in its 2015 *University Press Books for Public and Secondary Schools Libraries* bibliography. The bibliography serves as a collection development tool for libraries with recommended age ranges and subjects of interest. The full list of Beacon books is appended.
- At a time when industry professionals are talking more than ever about the need for diverse books in publishing, the *Library Journal* featured four forthcoming Beacon books as recommended reading for Black History Month. The list includes *The Third Reconstruction* by the Reverend Doctor William J. Barber, *Soul Serenade* by Rashod Ollison, *Five Dollars and a Pork Chop Sandwich* by Mary Frances Berry, and *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood* by Chris Emdin.

In digitizing our backlist, we found that it is a long process, but as costs have continued to go down, we are on a good schedule. We brought out 22 titles in ePub format this year from our backlist, in addition to 32 new titles. We anticipate doing 50 more in the next year, and continuing this pace for the foreseeable future. One unknown factor will be the impact of Google’s digitization program of libraries on our own editions, which we will be tracking in the coming years.

Our social media reach this year increased to 35,000 fans and friends, while our blog experienced robust growth and received double the number of visitors in the first six months of the year as compared to the same period last year. Now that we’ve built significant social media communities and we continue to provide content and resources through these channels, we hope to develop deeper metrics to measure the impact of the “eyeballs” we’re attracting, metrics that measure that impact beyond book sales, which is reductive. The content itself serves the mission, and we no longer look at it as a way to increase book sales, but as a way to increase the reach of our author’s progressive thinking. We have launched a new redesign of the blog to be more mobile-friendly, which we anticipate will help more people engage with our blog content. See our Social Impact Report, which is appended, for more detail about these initiatives.

The work on the King Legacy was very rewarding in terms of *The Radical King*, particularly since Cornel West embraced the book and made 35 public and over 30 media appearances, including a spot on the Late Show with David Letterman. And of course we continue to be very

proud of the series, and all the books remain in print. We are hoping to have more collaboration with Bernice King on two of the titles: *Thou, Dear God*, and *A Gift of Love*, in the next year.

Beacon is embarking on four important initiatives this year, which we hope will receive the support of the entire UU Community:

- To develop an **entirely new format for the press: Beacon Press Audio**. We have begun exploring partnerships and options to make this exciting goal possible. With Audiobooks showing the greatest growth of all channels of book sales over the last 2 years with unit sales up nearly 39% in 2015, we believe we need and want to be in this business. In addition to providing a new format for sales, we also believe that audio is a format that speaks to the mission of making progressive ideas accessible to a greater number of people, particularly people with disabilities that make print daunting or impossible. We're proud to report that the first official Beacon Press Audio book went on sale on June 20, that the next will be on sale in July, and the third in September. We anticipate doing 10 books in audio format in the next year, and then increasing our output steadily each succeeding year.
- To **diversify our staff and our publishing program** in significant ways, and to be industry leaders in these initiatives. We have begun this important initiative by looking at diversity in the largest sense: to include racial, ethnic, class, geographical, sex and gender, and ability. We were very fortunate to hire two new editors at the beginning of the fiscal year, one based in New York, one based in Chicago, both African American women, who enrich our staff by providing new perspectives and opportunities. We have also been fortunate, in a year where we had unusually high turn-over, to be able to hire several other new staff members from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and well as gender identification. Every staff member here, presently 32 people, has a great deal to offer the press, and we value each individual, and we are clearly stronger for our greater diversity. We are also about to launch a new series of books which looks specifically at the intersection of race and gender: *Stride Toward Justice*, which will be edited by **Melissa Harris Perry and Jeanne Theoharis**.
- To **overhaul our information systems**, to better integrate data, to protect our data more effectively, to streamline data entry and retrieval. This is an ambitious program, but urgent and essential. We have formed a committee of advisors to help us design this progress, and hired a consultant to help us identify the best possible solutions to the big issues around the integration process. We expect the exploratory phase to run through this year, and then to have design and implementation in year two.
- We have established an **Endowment for the Press**, and launched it with a 1 million dollar investment from our own operating capital. With the help of the Stewardship and Development department, we hope to grow the endowment each year until we reach the goal of 10 Million. We feel confident that this move will help insure the future of the press over the long term.

The Beacon Social Impact Report for 2015

Like other publishers, we use business metrics to report on our sales, expenses and contribution. What metrics can we use as mission driven non-profit publishing house to measure our social impact and the “social earn out” of the books we publish? In what way do we touch lives and bring about change? For this we need new metrics. A used book sale, textbook rental, new Facebook Fan or Twitter Follower, a new share or retweet, a blog post, You Tube view, author event or interview are all ways to introduce new voices and spread the word. Bhutan developed a Gross Happiness Index to help them modernize in a way that was consistent with Buddhist values. Inspired by this, we offer our 3rd Annual Beacon Social Impact Report.

- **Overall Beacon shipped almost 800,000 books** to bookstores, libraries, schools and colleges around the world in 2015.
- **Becoming part of the College Curriculum.** In academic year 2014-15 (Fall 2014, spring /summer 2015), approximately 107,000 Beacon books were used by college students for their course work. (About 26% were purchased new, 31% used and 43% rented.) This is the only area in which, by the measures available to us, we do not appear to have increased our impact. Our hypothesis is that student sales have migrated to Amazon and are not captured by the tools we are using.
- **Entering the High School Classroom:** We had 36,830 views of our Teacher’s Guides for using Beacon books such as MLK’s *A Time to Break Silence*, Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Michael Patrick Macdonald’s *All Souls* and Octavia Butler’s *Kindred* in the classroom.
- **Creating Community Conversation:** Beacon Press authors were involved in at least **495** events in 2015 in 44 states (plus the District of Columbia) and at least 9 other countries. They spoke in bookstores, museums, universities, churches, synagogues, conferences, libraries, community centers, national parks, assisted living homes, book festivals, town halls, medical schools, high schools, corporate offices, and at non-profit fundraisers, among other places.
- **Connecting Online:** Our website had 233,646 visits for the year. Our blog had 133,778 visits--an increase of 66% over the previous year. Our Facebook fans grew to 23,477; content had 7.1 million impressions total (3 million of those organic/4.1 million paid) and there were 109,000 clicks on content. Our Twitter followers grew to 12,489. Content had 3.8 million impressions (nearly 2.2 million organic impressions/1.6 million paid impressions). We had over 82,500 views of videos on YouTube.
- **Reaching Beyond our Borders:** International sales remain our fastest growing channel. In 2015 54,000 units were sold directly to booksellers around the world. We also sold and renewed translation rights in 17 different languages, including Albanian, Chinese, Czech, French, Russian, and Swedish, just to name a few. Key backlist titles like *One-Dimensional Man* and *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* continued to be popular. More recent titles will also be translated, such as *Back to Normal* into Romanian and Polish, *Wrapped in the Flag* into Korean, and *Black Prophetic Fire* into Japanese.

- **Spreading the Word:** Beacon Press authors engaged with the public across a wide range of media platforms in over 700 reviews, features and interviews:

221 broadcast interviews, including on

- National and Local TV programs such as PBS NewsHour, C-Span's Book TV, MSNBC's Melissa Harris Perry Show and Andrea Mitchel Reports, MetroFocus/Channel 13 in New York, News One Now with Roland Martin, NBC King 5 Seattle, and ABC 7 Eyewitness News Los Angeles
- National NPR programs, including Fresh Air, All Things Considered, Morning Edition, Science Friday, Weekend Edition, On Point with Tom Ashbrook, Living on Earth, The Takeaway, Studio 360, To The Best of our Knowledge, The Diane Rehm Show, Only a Game with Bill Littlefield, On the Media, and Here & Now
- Regional NPR shows in New York City, Albany, Boston, New Hampshire, Vermont, Baltimore, Dallas, Tulsa, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, Wisconsin, and Minnesota

252 print features and reviews in

- National and regional newspapers, including the New York Times (book review, op-ed, science/health, metro, daily briefing, and education sections), USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, The Boston Globe, Houston Chronicle, The Seattle Times, New Orleans Times-Picayune, Minneapolis Star-Tribune, Chicago Tribune, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and the Baltimore Times
- Science/Health/Environment/Religion/History/Political/LGBT publications, including Scientific American, The Lancet, Health Affairs, Ability, Deaf Life, Pacific Standard, Sierra, Audubon, Orion, Nature, Shambala Sun, Tricycle, Curve, Ms. Christian Science Monitor, Christian Century, The Nation, American Prospect, Curve, Bitch, Bust, and The Gay and Lesbian Review.
- Other national magazines, including Essence, The New Yorker, U.S News & World Report, Sports Illustrated, and Smithsonian

295 online excerpts, articles and features in outlets such as Salon, Slate, Huffington Post, Daily Beast, Alternet, Truthout, In These Times, Time.com, Newsweek.com, Economist.com, ABC.com, CNN.com, Fox News.com, NPR Shots blog, NPR Ed blog, NPR Code Switch, NPR Books, Advocate, Outsports, NBA.com, Vox, Atlantic.com, Business Insider, New York magazine.com, Inside Higher Ed, BuzzFlash, Flavorwire, ProPublica, Women's eNews, Feministing, Lean In, Forbes.com, On Faith, LitHub, The Rumpus, The Root, Alt Muslim, and Guernica

37 international outlets (print, broadcast and online) including The Daily Telegraph.com, The Daily Mirror, Vanity Fair Italy, Marie Claire Australia, Elle Greek Edition, Cosmopolitan South Africa, News.com.au, Toronto Star, MacLean's, News Talk Ireland, The Guardian, Dawn (Pakistan), and Tapestry/CBC

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