

Vice Moderator's Report January 22, 2015

Tentative Agenda

The Ballou-Channing District has submitted the Business Resolution "Thanksgiving Day Reconsidered," which will be part of the congregational poll process under Rule G-4.18.3. (See Attachment 1.)

Proposed amendments to Rules and the Bylaws, as well as proposed Business Resolutions, may be submitted up to February 1.

Proposed Guidelines for Moderators of General Assembly Mini-Assemblies

Attached are guidelines proposed by legal counsel for strengthening the mini-Assembly process and ensuring consistency in the training of moderators. The Board will discuss and approve at the April Board meeting. (see Attachment 2.)

Procedural Rules

Attached are the proposed and adopted Procedural Rules for General Assembly 2015. We will be discussing and adopting in April Procedural Rules for GA 2016.

The Board has discussed both the value and challenges of discussion of unincorporated amendments in General Sessions. Legal counsel has suggested, if the Board would like to continue this procedural practice, that only unincorporated amendments that have more than 50% support in mini-Assemblies be reported in General Session, along with the actual straw poll results. This procedural change would not affect the AIW or CSAI processes as established in the bylaws. We will discuss in the April Board meeting; I attach the current version of the Rules now so that Board members have adequate time to review before April. (See Attachment 3.)

Attachment 1

Proposed Business Resolution for General Assembly 2016

THANKSGIVING DAY RECONSIDERED

WHEREAS the year 2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the ship "Mayflower" in the region that is now known as New England

WHEREAS concern has been expressed by Native American tribal leaders, by human rights advocates, by environmental justice advocates, and by others, about the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the colonization of New England; and

WHEREAS several of the New England congregations that were established during the 1600s continue today as Unitarian Universalist congregations; and

NOTING the role of Unitarian Universalists in developing the holiday that is known as "the American Thanksgiving Day"; and

NOTING the desire of Unitarian Universalists to work for peace and justice for all of the world's people.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this General Assembly encourages all Unitarian Universalists to enter a time of education, careful reflection, and healing, for the years 2016-2021. We ask that special attention be given to the suffering, indignity, and loss that native peoples have suffered since the early 1600s; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this General Assembly asks the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association to report to the 2017 General Assembly on national, tribal, and congregational plans for both the 400th anniversary of the "Mayflower" voyage and the 400th anniversary of the first harvest festival in Plymouth Colony; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this General Assembly asks the President of the Association to work with congregations, districts, camps, and theological schools, to make recommendations for the Americans who wish to observe what is often called "the first Thanksgiving Day in America"; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we encourage Unitarian Universalists to work with all of the religious groups that trace their religious roots to the Pilgrims and the Puritans. When we confront the past that we share with others, we ask for wisdom with charity as we try to better understand the people and the environment of the 1600s.

To prepare for the future, we must make peace with our past. As we approach the

Plymouth Colony quadricentennial dates, we ask for religious education programs that acknowledge the Radical Reformation and the religious Dissenters and Separatists of the 1600s. The story of religious Dissenters and Separatists is part of our Unitarian Universalist story and their influence is still with us. We ask for religious education programs that affirm the spiritual wisdom of Native American leaders. In today's world, we know that we are part of an interdependent web of all existence. With this awareness in mind, we ask for a time of truth and reconciliation for all Americans for the years 2016-2021.

**GUIDELINES FOR MODERATORS OF
GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINI-ASSEMBLIES**

From the 2015 Delegate Guide

A Mini-Assembly is an opportunity for delegates to learn more about and to propose amendments to matters on the final agenda and to the proposed Actions of Immediate Witness admitted to the final agenda. In years when the selection of a Congregational Study/Action Issue is on the agenda, the Mini-Assembly is also an opportunity to work collaboratively with other delegates on ways to garner support for their issue. In years when a vote to adopt a Statement of Conscience is on the agenda, the mini-assembly is an opportunity to work collaboratively with other delegates to draft amendments. Mini-Assemblies save time in General Session and permit freer debate than General Sessions do. It is not possible to offer an amendment to a business resolution, bylaw change, rule change, or social witness statement during General Session debate if it was not submitted for consideration at the appropriate Mini-Assembly.

There is a Mini-Assembly scheduled for the bylaw and rule changes listed on the final agenda. All Mini-Assemblies are listed in the program. After a Mini-Assembly and before voting in a General Session, the Board of Trustees may incorporate proposed amendments into a business Resolution or a Bylaw, and the Commission on Social Witness may incorporate proposed amendments into a Statement of Conscience or an Action of Immediate Witness. For statements of Conscience, the Commission on Social Witness is required to report all amendments to the Assembly. The Commission on Social Witness may prioritize the amendments, including the order of their presentation at the amendment microphone in General Session. If you wish to modify the Statement of Conscience, plan to attend the entire Mini-Assembly and work collaboratively with other delegates to suggest amendments.

Purpose of the Mini-Assembly

Because there will be time on the floor of GA to discuss the pros and cons of proposed bylaw amendments, SOCs, and AIWS, all or substantially all of the time in Mini-Assemblies should be devoted to (a) describing the proposal and responding to questions concerning its meaning and intent, i.e., clarification; and (b) considering amendments to the proposed amendment. Mini-Assemblies tend to be less productive when the overall merit of proposed bylaw amendments, SOCs, or AIWs, is discussed as a group.

Suggested Attendees at Every Mini-Assembly

Historically, Mini-Assemblies have worked best when they are attended by a moderator; a proponent who can answer questions about the proposal; a person who is able to post a proposed amendment on a screen for all delegates to see; and legal counsel or CSW representative who can work with delegates to draft amendments.

Order of Proceedings at Mini-Assemblies

One approach that has been effective is to start the Mini-Assembly by having the Board/CSW/AIW proponent explain that proposal, and giving attendees the opportunity to ask questions of clarification. While this is occurring, people with proposed amendments _____ be working with legal counsel or a CSW representative to prepare amendments on amendment forms. No amendments should be considered unless the proponent has prepared a written amendment form so that it be posted on the screen so all Mini-Assembly participants may review it.

Divide the time remaining after questions to discussion of the proposed amendments. It probably makes sense to divide the time equally among the proposed amendments. So, if there is one hour left after questions, and there are four proposed amendments, allot 15 minutes to each amendment. At the end of discussion on each proposed amendment, take a non-binding straw vote on the amendment, and record the results. These straw votes are used by the Board and CSW in deciding whether to incorporate an amendment and how to prioritize discussion of amendments they decide not to incorporate.

Note: While only delegates are permitted to speak on the floor of GA, we have been more flexible in permitting non-delegates to speak at Mini-Assemblies if time permits. Moderators should exercise their discretion in permitting non-delegates to speak at Mini-Assemblies.

Offsite Delegates

Moderators should endeavor to call on off-site delegates as if they were on-site. In the past, off-site delegates have sometimes been forgotten; at other times, they seem to have gotten priority over on-site delegates. Neither is appropriate.

Conclusion

Remember, as moderator, you are in charge of the process of your Mini-Assembly.

Attachment 3

Rules of Procedure GA 2015

RULE 1. ORDER OF BUSINESS Consideration of and action upon items must proceed in the order set forth in the Final Agenda unless during the meeting that order is changed by majority vote.

RULE 2. MEANS OF VOTING So long as a quorum is present, action on any question, unless the Bylaws otherwise provide, will be decided in the first instance by an uncounted show of hands/voting cards and off-site delegate input. If the Moderator wishes a counted vote or if a delegate requests it and the Moderator determines that at least 99 of the other delegates join in the request, the vote must be counted. Except for Congregational Study/ Action Issues (Rule 11) and selection of AIWS for inclusion on the final agenda, no vote will be taken by written ballot unless the Assembly orders a written ballot by a two-thirds vote. Provided a quorum is present at each General Session, all matters submitted to a vote of the Assembly will be determined by the number of votes cast by delegates and Trustees voting on the matter. The required proportion of votes cast by delegates and Trustees to approve any action or resolution will be as set forth in the Bylaws or Rules or these Rules of Procedure.

RULE 3. MINUTES The Board of Trustees will approve the minutes of the General Assembly General Sessions, which will be prepared by the Recording Secretary in consultation with Legal Counsel.

RULE 4. PRESENTATION OF ITEMS The provisions of Rule 5 notwithstanding, the Board of Trustees and/or the Commission on Social Witness will, at their discretion, move the item as printed on the Final Agenda or move an amended version of the item.

RULE 5. AMENDMENTS Except for clarifying amendments, amendments to the main motion and motions to refer, table or to call the question will not be in order until there has been at least fifteen minutes of debate, if that much is needed, on the merits of the main question as moved. Amendments to a business resolution, a bylaw, a rule, an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW), or a proposed amendment must be submitted for consideration at the appropriate Mini-Assembly in order to be offered in the general session. No amendment or other change to any motion under consideration will be entertained unless it is submitted in writing on forms prescribed by the Moderator, who may, however, waive this requirement. Only the section of particular bylaws that are proposed to be amended may be amended during GA. The remaining text of a bylaw, which may have been printed for the convenience of the reader, may not be amended. The Moderator will determine whether a particular section of text is eligible for amendment.

RULE 6. TIME LIMITS The following time limits are imposed on all business transacted by the Assembly except as otherwise provided in these Rules for Actions of Immediate Witness, Congregational Study/Action Issues, and UUA Statement of

Conscience. If, however, there is no objection from the floor, the Moderator may grant minor extensions of time. Any time limits imposed by this rule may be extended by a two-thirds vote.

a) No person may speak on any motion for more than two minutes, and not more than once, so long as there are others who have not spoken who desire the floor, except that persons having special information may, with the permission of the Moderator, reply to questions.

b) Thirty minutes is allowed for discussion of any proposed bylaw or rule amendment, resolution, or action on a report that is on or admitted to the Final Agenda. Whenever possible, the discussion time will be equally divided between proponents and opponents through equitable recognition of speakers at microphones designated Pro and Con and off-site delegates.

c) A motion to call the previous question on the main motion shall not be in order if there are potential speakers at both Pro and Con microphones or in the off-site queue and the original or extended time for discussion has not expired. A motion to call the previous question is in order after the earlier of (a) 10 minutes of discussion concerning the amendment and (b) the absence of potential speakers at the pro and con microphones and in the off-site queue.

RULE 7. MICROPHONES

a) Pro and Con Microphones. Usage of the microphones designated “Pro” or “Con” and off-site “Pro” and “Con” queues is limited to statements in support of or in opposition to motions.

b) Amendment Microphone. Usage of the microphone or off-site queue designated “Amendment” is limited to presenters of motions and members of the Board of Trustees who may use the microphone only for:

1) making an amendment to a main motion or another amendment, provided the motion is otherwise in order;

2) using such additional time remaining under Rule 6, if any, to speak in support of the amendment; and

3) stating the Board of Trustees’ position at the outset of debate on those items on the Final Agenda on which the Board takes a position.

c) Procedure Microphone. All other matters must be brought to the Procedure microphone or offsite procedure queue.

RULE 8. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE At any stage of the meeting, the Moderator, without a vote of the Assembly, at his or her discretion from time to time may order the

meeting resolved into a Committee of the Whole or reconvened in regular Session. While the meeting is acting as a Committee of the Whole, the following Special Rule will apply: The Presiding Officer, without a vote of the Committee of the Whole, may permit reconsideration of any action taken by the Committee of the Whole and other departures of the Rules of Parliamentary Procedure if it appears to him or her that the work of the Committee of the Whole will thereby be expedited. When the General Assembly is reconvened, the only motion in order will be to adopt the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole. A motion recommended by the Committee of the Whole will not be subject to amendment, debate, or delay.

RULE 9. BUDGET MOTION Any motion concerning the 2015-2016 budget that is to be made at the time provided for such motions during the formal business sessions must be filed in writing in the Volunteer Office not later than 5:00PM Saturday. All such motions must provide for reductions in specific other categories of spending equivalent to the increase in spending recommended in the motion. Adoption of the motion requires a two-thirds vote.

RULE 10. RESOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS NOT ON THE FINAL AGENDA A Resolution or Action not on the Final Agenda may be considered only under the following circumstances:

a) under Bylaw Section 4.16(c), which permits the addition of Actions of Immediate Witness to the Agenda and consideration of non-substantive resolutions; and

b) under Bylaw Section 4.16(d), which permits the addition of Responsive Resolutions in response to a substantive portion of a report by an officer or committee reporting to the Assembly. The author of a Responsive Resolutions must notify the Moderator in writing of the title and content of his/her Responsive Resolution as soon as it is practical to do so, but not later than 6:00PM on Saturday for Responsive Resolutions based on reports delivered in general sessions 1 through 4. A resolution submitted to the Commission on Social Witness for consideration as an Action of Immediate Witness may not be submitted as a Responsive Resolution.

RULE 11. CONGREGATIONAL STUDY/ ACTION ISSUES Pursuant to Bylaw Section 4.12(a): In a year in which Congregational Study/Action Issue(s) are proposed, up to five Congregational Study/Action Issues may be presented to the General Assembly. A sponsor of a Congregational Study/ Action Issue determined by the Commission on Social Witness to be eligible for consideration will have two minutes to speak in support of obtaining the vote necessary to be selected as the Congregational Study/Action Issue referred for study. Following the presentation by the sponsors for all Congregational Study/Action Issues eligible for consideration, time will be provided for up to four additional statements of support for each Congregational Study/Action Issue. Persons wishing to speak shall use the microphone or off-site queue designated for the Congregational Study/ Action Issue for which he/she advocates.

After debate concerning the proposed Congregational Study/Action Issues, a written or electronic ballot, prepared by the Commission on Social Witness, will be used to receive the vote of the delegates and Trustees for which one of the Congregational Study/Action Issues will be referred for study. The Congregational Study/Action Issue receiving the highest number of votes among all Congregational Study/Action Issues shall be referred for study providing, however, that if no Congregational Study/Action Issue receives a majority of the votes cast, then a second vote shall be taken between the two Issues receiving the highest number of votes cast in the initial election.

RULE 12. UUA STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE In a year in which a UUA Statement of Conscience is proposed, one hour will be allowed for debate. The Commission on Social Witness may recommend for Assembly approval by majority vote an amount of time for the Statement to be debated before amendments are in order. If no such recommendation is proposed and approved, no amendment shall be in order unless there has been at least 30 minutes of debate, if that much is needed, on the merits of the proposed UUA Statement of Conscience.

A motion to amend a proposed UUA Statement of Conscience is not in order in the General Session unless it first was presented to a Mini-Assembly as described in Rule 4.12.4. Up to twelve minutes will be allowed for the debate on an amendment. The Commission on Social Witness will have the discretion to prioritize the amendments including their presentation at the amendment microphone in General Session.

RULE 13. ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

- a) The proposed Action of Immediate Witness must be in writing.
- b) A copy for posting at the Commission on Social Witness booth in the Exhibit Hall must be delivered to the booth in the exhibit area no later than 5:00PM Thursday, so that proposals may be made available for viewing prior to the filing deadline.
- c) The copy to be filed must have attached signatures showing the requisite delegate support specified in Bylaw Section 4.16(c)(3) and must be filed with the Commission on Social Witness in the Volunteer Office by no later than 5:00 PM Friday.
- d) The Commission on Social Witness will provide a summary of up to six proposed Actions of Immediate Witness that meet the criteria during Saturday morning's General Session.
- e) Each sponsor of a proposed Action of Immediate Witness determined by the Commission on Social Witness to be eligible will have two minutes to speak in support of obtaining a vote supporting the admission of the action to the agenda.
- f) Delegates and Trustees will vote by ballot for up to three AIWs that they would like to see added to the final agenda.

g) After the tellers count the ballots, the CSW chair will make a motion to add to the agenda each of the three proposed AIWs with the most votes. Those that receive a two-thirds vote are admitted to the Final Agenda for a vote at a subsequent General Session.

h) The motion to admit is not debatable and requires a two-thirds vote of support.

i) A motion to amend an Action of Immediate Witness is not in order in the General Session unless it first was presented to a Mini-Assembly, as described in Bylaw Section 4.16(c)(5). The Commission on Social Witness will have the discretion to prioritize the amendments including their presentation at the amendment microphone.

j) Up to twenty minutes will be allowed for debate, if needed, on each proposed Action of Immediate Witness admitted to the final agenda. No amendment shall be in order unless there have been at least twelve minutes of debate, if that much is needed, on the merits of the proposed Action of Immediate Witness.

k) Debate and voting on adoption of an Action of Immediate Witness will occur during General Session on Sunday. Adoption must be by two-thirds vote, as specified in Bylaw Section 4.16(c) (6). Proposed AIWs are not in competition with one another as are proposed Congregational Study/ Action Issues. Each of the proposed AIWs admitted to the Final Agenda may be adopted or rejected by the delegates & Trustees.

RULE 14. AMENDING THE RULES OF PROCEDURE These Rules of Procedure will be adopted by a two-thirds vote and may be amended, suspended, or repealed during the course of the Assembly only by a two-thirds vote, except for the preceding Rule 9, the amendment, suspension, or repeal of which requires a four-fifths vote.

RULE 15. PRECEDENCE OF THE BYLAWS AND RULES In the event of a conflict between these Rules of Procedure and the Bylaws or Rules of the UUA, the Bylaws and Rules of the UUA take precedence.

RULE 16. ADJOURNMENT The final business session of the 2015 General Assembly will be adjourned no later than 4:45 p.m. on Sunday, June 28.