COLUMBUS UNIVERSITY

A UNIFYING MYTH AND CORRESPONDING RITUAL FOR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM: THE UU SERVICE OF MEANING THROUGH REMEMBRANCE

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ABSTRACT

Unitarian Universalism is poised for another period of growth as it satisfies two seemingly contradictory human needs—freedom and security. In order to address these needs and provide a safe spiritual home for potential faith family members, Unitarian Universalists must recognize a unifying myth underlying their theological and spiritual differences, provide communal rituals that engage members within the mythology and shed their reluctance to actively share a mythology intended to liberate the individual within the context of a loving and creative community.

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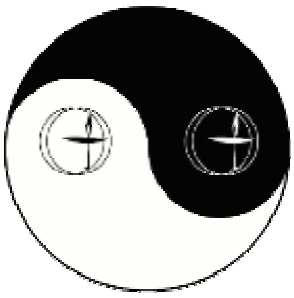

This symbol expresses my commitment to Unitarian Universalism and belief that it addresses the mythic problem of existential separation from our source by resolving the paradoxical human need for freedom and security.

PREFACE:

THE PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

My interest in the subject of a unifying Unitarian Universalist myth precedes academic curiosity. Ten years ago I made the choice to explore my spiritual path within the Unitarian Universalist religious community. I finally took responsibility for my lack of faith after decades of struggling to understand my inability to experience the transcendent mystery as dictated by Christian doctrine. I had spent an inordinate amount of spiritual energy wrestling with doubt, jealousy and distrust before discovering Unitarian Universalism.

An exposure to Biblical criticism, church history and comparative world religions accomplished the precise result my pastors and Sunday school teachers had feared—by the time I was in my early twenties I could no longer accept Biblical-based teaching as the sole revealed arbiter of moral and religious instruction. My circle of family, friends and acquaintances did not include any iconoclasts. I was utterly miserable in the midst of such trusting faith, certain I was the only person from whom God was withholding his Grace. I envied their staunch convictions regarding the validity of our shared religious tradition in contrast to my rampant confusion.

My doubt and jealousy eventually produced distrust. I could no longer confide in people who espoused answers I felt to be disingenuous. I felt completely marginalized and disenfranchised as a woman called to ministry within a decidedly patriarchal faith

community. My contributions to the faith were, if not entirely unwelcome, accommodated in less than a personally fulfilling manner.

A vicious cycle ensued as the harder I struggled, the more dissatisfied I became. I desperately wanted to believe but my heart and my mind forbid it. I lacked the courage to express my pain and suppressed it instead, not only ignoring my calling for several years but also eschewing religious communities completely. I became reacquainted with my spiritual and religious needs in a manner familiar to many contemporary Unitarian Universalists—I married outside of my family's faith tradition. We sought a community within which we could both feel comfortable in anticipation of providing a spiritual home for our future children. I had never heard of the denomination before but was fortunate to marry a man familiar with the name Unitarian Universalism even if he was not quite certain of their beliefs.

We located a nearby congregation and attended our first service in January 1995 beginning a decade spent developing our personal spiritual journeys and our combined family religious traditions. The faith community offered intellectual challenge, philosophical stimulation and unconditional encouragement. It nurtured my ministerial calling, allowing me the opportunity and freedom to answer one of the questions life has demanded of me.

I am called as a Unitarian Universalist apologist but I am also fully aware of the denomination's vulnerabilities and the great gifts bestowed by other faith systems. May the joy I have found in my own faith and my respect for individual freedom of religion be evident in this exploration of a unifying myth and corresponding ritual for Unitarian Universalism.

CHAPTER I: IN THE BEGINNING

A large group of adults were on a guided tour when three of their number slipped away and entered an intriguing building next door. An older gentleman was the first to leave followed a few minutes later by a younger man and a very young woman. They were strangers and had not realized they held similar thoughts of escape. They each took their time wandering around the large room in which they found themselves. The young woman turned to the men after some time had passed and asked, "What do you think this place is?"

The older man responded, "Clearly it is a church of some kind," with a touch of wariness in his voice.

She disagreed. "No, this is no church. I don't see anything telling us what the people who come here believe."

The younger man said, "I don't know what this is, but it feels…comfortable."

They continued their explorations and then sat down to rest in a small alcove containing sitting room furniture and a bookshelf. The older man sat down in an armchair and put his feet up on the ottoman then groaned, "I need a rest."

The young man stretched and said, "I think I shall join you," and settled down on a comfortable sofa. "My name is William Mathers, and you?"

"Ralph, Ralph Jameson. Pleased to meet you."

The young woman turned around from the bookshelf she had been perusing to introduce herself. “My name is Clara,” and turned back to rummage through the dusty titles along the wall.

“So William, why did you take a break from the tour?” Ralph asked.

William sighed. “I wasn’t seeing or hearing anything new. I could have had the exact same experiences if I’d stayed home. I had no idea how much things were the same everywhere.”

Ralph laughed. “More and more every year my boy.” He turned to Clara, “Why did you sneak off?”

Clara decided to join them and sat down at the other end of the sofa responding, “Like William I was bored. I was tired of not being able to touch anything. I don’t want to just hear about what I’m seeing. I want to be able to feel it, handle it, perhaps even make something out of it.”

William glanced pointedly at the green streak in Clara’s hair and then the tattoo on her arm. “I thought you might be an artist of some kind.”

“Why would you think that?

She laughed as William sputtered and blushed.

“That’s okay, I think I know why. Actually I’m studying to be a veterinarian. How about you, what do you do?”

“I’m an attorney,” William answered.

Clara rolled her eyes and gestured toward William’s button-down shirt and khaki pants. “I thought you might be a corporate weenie of some kind.”

“For the ACLU.”

Now it was Clara's turn to blush. "Oh."

Ralph chuckled. "I wish I could tell you when you get to be my age you won't jump to conclusions like that, but most of my generation still does."

Clara was curious, "Ralph, why did you leave the tour?"

Ralph thought for a moment. "I'm not sure. Something just told me I was in the wrong place. I was feeling suffocated by all the people. You may not have seen anything unique, and you may not have been able to experience anything new, but I didn't meet anyone different. I guess I was hoping I would find people who didn't all think and act alike if I took a break from my routine."

William thought for a moment. "Yes, I guess everyone is the same these days."

"Not everyone!" Clara exclaimed.

Ralph said, "Clara do you mind if I ask you a question? I truly do not intend any offense."

Clara shrugged, "Why not?"

"Do you look different because you are expressing yourself or because you are expressing your desire not to be like everyone else?"

Clara remained silent for a few moments. "I guess I've never really thought about it before. My friends in high school all dyed their hair and a bunch of us went and got this tattoo the day after we graduated. Sheesh, in a way it means I'm being exactly like everyone else…everyone else in my circle of friends anyway. I love the tattoo, but truth be told I'd just as soon let my natural hair color grow back in."

"I always wished I'd had the courage to get a tattoo or an ear piercing," said William. "Not exactly what they want to see in a court room though."

Changing the subject William asked Ralph, "Well you know she's a student and I'm a lawyer. What do you do?"

Ralph chuckled, "Not a blessed thing. I'm retired."

Clara sighed, "Well, what did you do before you retired?"

Ralph answered, "A teacher. I taught high school social studies during the week, Sunday school on the weekends and Vacation Bible School during the summer. I think I'm all taught out."

"Is that why you thought this was a church?" William asked.

"It has that feel to me, yes."

"What does that mean?" Clara asked.

"Well if we're being honest with one another, it was a bit of an uncomfortable feeling really."

William said, "Wait a minute. I thought you were religious."

"I *am* religious, but I no longer participate in a religion." Ralph answered.

"Why not?" asked Clara.

Ralph sighed. "My, this conversation is getting personal."

"Well," Clara said. "You did say you wanted to meet different people. This is your lucky day. I'm an atheist."

"Indeed?" Ralph was intrigued but returned to the original question. "My religion began espousing ideas about people that I could not reconcile with my faith in

God. I witnessed too many people harmed by those teachings and decided that God does not need or require organized religion despite what my preacher said. So I left."

William said, "I can understand that. My family never went to temple, but I went once or twice with my grandmother." He shrugged. "Seemed to work for some, but I could never be sure it would work for me."

"So Clara, why are you an atheist?" Ralph asked.

Clara said, "No point. Doesn't matter if there is a God or not so why worry about it. Besides, the idea of an all-powerful, all-knowing God who created everything doesn't make much sense to me. If God exists, created everything, saw it was good and loves all his people, why in the world would he let such awful things happen? No, I can't really say I've ever seen the appeal of religion. Our history would be a lot less bloody without it."

Despite his agnostic tendencies, William seemed shocked. "Well I'll grant you the last part, but you don't see anything spiritual about life at all?"

"Not in my experience I'm afraid. Why? Do you?"

"Absolutely, I just don't know what it is. I don't think we can know. I feel there is more to me than just my body and my mind. That left over part is what I experience as my spirit." William responded. "I spent some time visiting a Buddhist monastery a few years ago preparing for a case, I found Buddhism very appealing because divinity wasn't something out there but something experienced in here." William emphasized his comments by pointing first to the ceiling, then placing his hand over his heart.

Ralph said, "Does that mean you believe in reincarnation?"

William responded, “No. I have no idea what happens after death. Could be reincarnation, could be oblivion. It’s the great mystery none of us can know.”

Clara shook her head and stretched. “Oblivion. A nice long glorious nap.”

William turned to Ralph, “So do you believe some people are going to be rewarded in heaven and some people will be doomed to hell?”

Ralph looked sad. “I used to. I used to think I could tell who would be the chosen and who would be the damned.” He shook his head as if to clear it. “I still have a very strong faith in God. I think we are reunited in God’s presence when we die, but I cannot begin to fathom how a loving God would doom his own creation to suffer throughout eternity. It’s sadistic. I thought that for a long time before I left the church, but I was too afraid to say anything.”

“Bah,” Clara said, “ That fear I know. Sometimes it is best if atheists keep their mouths shut in our society. We’re not exactly in the majority you know.”

“It sounds like we’re back to being uncomfortable if we’re different.” William commented.

Both Clara and Ralph nodded.

“Uncomfortable isn’t quite the right word,” William continued. “It’s darned frightening and I can’t help but cheer for the people who have the courage to dare to be different. I get to see that in my work. Liberty isn’t easy.”

The three people lapsed into silent reflection. Ralph leaned back and closed his eyes. William picked up a magazine on the table beside him and began to thumb through it. Clara resumed her exploration of the bookshelves.

A short while later Clara interrupted the men's thoughts when she turned around waving a piece of paper in the air. "Hey guys, you should read this."

She sat back down on the couch, placed the paper on the table in the middle of the room and tried to smooth out the wrinkles and creases. William and Ralph bent over to read the words written on the page. Clara looked up at the men and said, "Pretty powerful stuff, isn't it? I wonder who wrote it."

Ralph read the words again and said, "That feels like revealed truths to me. Surely these words were divinely inspired."

Clara made a scoffing noise and then quickly apologized when she noted the hurt expression on Ralph's face.

William picked up the paper and said, "Does it really matter if it was written by a person or if it is the word of God? If it feels like wisdom what do we care?"

Ralph looked at Clara, "I suppose he has a point…but I still think God had a hand in this."

Clara giggled. "If that works for you, who am I to say otherwise? At any rate, it's an affirmation I can accept."

"Actually it looks like some sort of covenant." William paused for a moment and then continued tentatively. "What do you think about us making this covenant."

"The three of us?" Ralph asked surprised.

"Sure! Why not?" Clara answered. "But first we should read them aloud and make sure we all understand them, don't you think." Clara reached over and took the paper from William and handed it to Ralph. "Here, you read it."

Ralph cleared his throat and began. “We, the member congregations of…see, I told you it was a church…of the Unitarian Universalist Association…”

Clara interrupted. “See, I told you it *wasn’t* a church.”

William shot her a look and motioned for Ralph to continue.

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.”

Clara interrupted again. “That one seems pretty obvious, doesn’t it?”

William nodded. “I think so.”

Ralph shook his head. “Obvious perhaps, but certainly not easy to put into practice. Do you see inherent worth and dignity in a death row inmate or a third world dictator?”

“Hmmm, I see your point. Still, it’s a worthwhile goal.” Clara responded and William nodded in agreement. “Go on.”

“Justice, equity and compassion in human relations…” Ralph continued.

“I suppose that would logically follow if you accept the inherent worth and dignity of every person, wouldn’t you say?”

The other two murmured their agreement.

“Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations. What do you think they mean by that? Wouldn’t acceptance of one another be the same as the first two items?” Ralph asked.

Clara answered, “Sort of, but think about you and me. We’re very different in terms of our religious beliefs, or lack thereof in my case, yet we seem to be able to accept that our personal beliefs work, just not for one another. I think the last part

is saying that I will encourage you as you explore your spiritual beliefs and you encourage William. I'm not so sure what the two of you are supposed to do with me though."

William thought he knew the answer and said, "We are here to expose you to different paths and support you should you ever have questions. Basically we're there for when you are curious."

"Ah, that makes sense. Okay, Ralph, keep going," she said.

Ralph continued, "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning…a free and responsible search for truth and meaning…free and responsible. I'm pretty sure that means we don't have to listen to what anyone else tells us to believe. In fact it makes it clear we have a responsibility to be serious and diligent in our search. That is going to take work."

"I'm interested in what they mean by truth and meaning." Clara said. "Haven't we pretty much admitted your truth and my truth aren't the same thing?"

"That's the point." William said. "Meaning doesn't refer to why the universe is here, or even why *homo sapiens* are here. It's referring to why you and you are here." He pointed first at Clara and then at Ralph. "Are we finding meaning in our individual lives?"

Clara was impressed. "Excellent point."

Ralph cleared his throat again and continued reading from the crumpled paper. "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large."

"I find it hard to believe any of us couldn't accept a democratic approach to decision making," Clara offered, "but what does the right of conscience mean? Conscience has a right to do what?"

William laughed. "That's not how I interpreted it. I think the word 'right' refers to the correctness of conscience. In other words, listen to what your conscience tells you. It's probably right."

"Oh. That makes sense."

Ralph said, "There was a time I would have bristled at the thought of a democratic approach to my religious community, but now I think I'm comfortable with offering my own opinion. I have no problem with this one."

"Me either," William said. "Go on."

Ralph picked up where he had left off, "The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all."

William sighed, "That sounds nice."

"Very nice," Clara agreed rolling her eyes. "Sounds like an unattainable Utopia to me though."

"Well it does say it's a goal." Ralph responded. "Okay, last one. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Anyone care to tackle that one."

"I see that all the time," said Clara. "The life cycles and food chains of the animals I study are perfect examples of our interdependence. And what about our dependence on the sun, the rotation of the earth and the orbits of the planets? Those are all necessary for life."

"Examples are found in society too," added Ralph. "I remember the looks on my student's faces when we would trace the shirts on their backs through the commerce system back to the person who planted the cotton seed and forward to the person spending the money they spent on the shirt."

William softly added, "I think this is what hurts me most when I see oppression and injustice in this world. If people really thought about our interdependence they might not inflict harm so casually."

"Amen!" said Clara.

Both men glanced at her sharply.

"What?" she said with a grin.

Ralph chuckled and then said, "Alright. How do we go about covenanting and affirming these principles?"

"Democratic process of course!" said William. "All in favor say, 'Aye!'"

"Aye!" Clara and Ralph answered in unison.

"Hey, what would have happened if one of us had wanted to vote 'Nay' instead?" asked Clara.

"I imagine that is where acceptance and compassion come in," said Ralph. "The majority would have to abide by the covenant and accept the dissenting opinion. We will have to remember that and make sure the minority voice is always treated with respect and compassion lest we become oppressive as a majority."

"Well said!" boomed a friendly female voice.

The three startled friends turned toward the door to see a tall middle-aged woman standing just inside the room. She exuded a strong presence but was not in the least bit intimidating. She seemed confident and amiable.

"I'm terribly sorry for eavesdropping," she said. "I couldn't help but overhear your conversation."

Ralph leaped to his feet and extended his arm to give the woman a hearty handshake. "Please excuse us, we didn't mean to trespass, the door was open and your building seemed like a nice place to rest and recharge."

"Not at all, but this isn't my building." She said as she motioned Ralph to sit down again.

"Whose is it?" asked Clara. "And if you don't mind me being so bold, who are you?"

The woman laughed heartily and responded, "Dear girl, this is *your* home."

Puzzled Clara said, "No it's not. I haven't been home in almost two weeks."

The woman then pointed to Ralph and then to William. "And it is his home and his home."

William laughed and said, "I don't think so. Though it is a nice place and it does feel like a home."

"And why do you think that is?" the woman asked.

William shrugged, "I don't know."

"His typical answer," Clara said as she rolled her eyes. "You still haven't told us who you are."

"To you I am your Intellect," she said, then turned to Ralph. "You know me as the Voice of God." She tapped a finger on William's heart and said, "You my boy know me as Conscience."

Stepping away from William, the woman took Ralph and Clara into her arms. "Ralph, from now on you shall be known as Faith. Clara, you shall be known as Reason." She hugged them and gave each a quick kiss on the cheek then turned back to William.

Drawing William into her arms she said, "William, your role is not as comfortable as theirs but is by no means less important. You shall be known as Doubt," and she gave his cheek a kiss then turned to leave.

"Wait a minute, you can't go yet." said Reason. "You still haven't told us your name."

Faith smiled. "I know her and we won't be without her."

The woman smiled back, "When the unique individuals of Faith, Reason and Doubt join in community I am there. Be Free. Be Unique. Be One. I am with you. I am Courage."

Storytelling

In the beginning… we told stories. Skillful storytelling remains a vital activity in preliterate societies and confers honor and esteem in literate societies. Virtually everyone enjoys a good story. Human beings are compelled to tell stories about themes and events they deem worthy of transmission—stories conveying ideas so integral to the purpose of

the society they must be bequeathed to each successive generation. Such stories may provide the society with information about its origins, ethical and moral guides for communal existence and predictions about its end.

Humans are differentiated from all other members of the animal kingdom by our unique capacity for language—expressing ourselves symbolically. Rollo May asserts that the phrase "In the beginning was the Word…" (John 1:1, NIV) is true experientially as well as theologically. "For the beginning of man as man is the capacity for language." (Campbell 1970, 210) Expressive language includes speaking, writing and signing. Receptive language consists of listening, reading, and in the case of sign language, observing. These faculties require an ability to code for meaning and syntax. In the examples of speaking and listening, coding for sound structures is also necessary. Perhaps this aptitude for coding and decoding language explains the prerequisite abilities hinted at in his next sentence, "This Word can be communicated only by symbols and myths." (Campbell 1970, 210)

Humans also possess the foreknowledge of their own demise. Awareness of unavoidable death inevitably leads humans to speculate about the meaning of their personal existence. If I am in existence but a miniscule fraction of the life of the cosmos, why am I here? Where did I come from? Where will I go after I am gone? We speculate upon an "I" unrelated to the physical shell moving us through our daily lives. An innate tension is present in these two uniquely human capacities. While the questions themselves may defy a universally accepted answer, the capacity for language, a conscious function, cannot precisely articulate and express any type of answer to these wondrous questions.

The limitations of language are numerous—mistranslation, misunderstanding, illiteracy and inadequate vocabulary to name a few. Although words alone often fail to plumb the depths of human meaning, they are not our only means of expression. Images, symbols and dreams are instruments of communication, yet in order to describe an image, explain a symbol or relate a dream we are once more indebted to language. As with language, the perspective of the recipient may very well alter the intended message of an image or a dream. Humans are compelled to tell stories about experiences that transcend our ability to communicate with one another. What a dilemma!

The opening story is a way of explaining my perceptions of the nature and appeal of Unitarian Universalism. The potential for the creation of this faith system is always present as the solution to an inherent human paradox. It simply requires the presence of two or more people who possess doubt, reason and faith and desire to exercise their responsibility to act creatively. Jesus is cast in the role of Courage when he says "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20, NIV) Two thousand years ago a wise man understood that community generates more than the sum of its parts.

The mythology of salvation through Christ ceases to be relevant for some while these same symbols are being concretized and literalized by others. This latter form of Christianity, conservative fundamentalism, is performing a dreadful disservice to countless traditional Christians who found solace and inspiration in the teachings of Jesus rather than being trapped by beliefs about Jesus. Conservative fundamentalism propagates the autocratic and conformist means of escape from individual responsibility creating psychological turmoil and a spiritual vacuum. Unitarian Universalism is a

religion in sharp contrast to the conservative fundamentalism active in the three major monotheistic faiths today.

Fundamental human needs, an inspiring faith history, and a dynamic tradition providing adaptive rituals for a new world-view merge within Unitarian Universalism to meet a critical longing in contemporary American society--the need to actualize the freedom chartered in our country's founding documents and anticipated by our spiritual ancestors. As it develops, may the *Unitarian Universalist Service of Meaning Through Remembrance* increasingly provide the participants with knowledge, inspiration and courage to live responsibly and free within relationship.

CHAPTER II:

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM: A TRULY SEPARATE AND UNIQUE RELIGION

The Unitarian Universalist Association created a marketing campaign proclaiming Unitarian Universalism as the "Uncommon Denomination."[1] Unitarian Universalism is technically both a denomination *and* a unique and distinct religion. The denotation of denomination includes "a religion" as a definition but the contemporary connotation is of a divergent branch or a sect of a larger faith system. I believe it is misleading to refer to Unitarian Universalism as a denomination in casual conversation and doing so often conveys the impression that Unitarian Universalism is an active denominational member of the Christian faith.

Both the Unitarians and the Universalists began as radical heretical sects of Christianity but the religion's development over the last two centuries has resulted in an even greater divergence from mainstream Christianity. A handful of Unitarian Universalist congregations belong to the Council of Christian Churches within the Unitarian Universalist Association (CSCUUA) but most Unitarian Universalists do not consider themselves Christian in the conventional or traditional sense of the term. Even those who self-identify as Christian Unitarian Universalists tend to use phrases such as "I follow the teachings of Jesus rather than beliefs about Christ." Overall, Unitarian Universalists generally have a "bottom up" approach to Christology emphasizing the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth. Such generalizations are problematic as the religion itself is non-creedal and requires no statement of faith about Jesus or any other religious figure

or doctrine. A trinitarian Christian is perfectly welcome to join a Unitarian Universalist congregation and any member congregation of the CSCUUA could take exception to my characterization of "typical Unitarian Universalist" beliefs.

The non-creedal nature of Unitarian Universalism is precisely why the religion is highly congruent with the psychological theories of Abraham Maslow, Viktor E. Frankl and Erich Fromm. This compatibility is evident in the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association adopted in the mid 1980s—particularly the fourth on the list which includes the key words, "free," "responsible" and "meaning."

> We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:
>
> - The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
> - Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
> - Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
> - A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
> - The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
> - The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
> - Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. (UUA 1985)

The individual "will to meaning" is implicit, as well as the acknowledgment that community is indispensable to the process. Our creative and relational values are fully realized in a community advocating acceptance despite differences, acknowledging the positive influence of following one's conscience and espousing democratic rather than authoritarian processes. The individual is valued for his or her unique contributions to the community not for merely being an additional member.

Viktor Frankl's perspective on religion is decidedly Occidental based on his assertion that "the goal of psychotherapy is to heal the soul, to make it healthy; the aim of religion is something essentially different—to save the soul." (Frankl 1986, xxi) Buddhism, Taoism and tribal cults that worship the ancestor are examples of religions in which salvation of the soul is clearly not the aim. Unitarian Universalism is another. Some Unitarian Universalists may be concerned with salvation but that should be considered an individual goal not connected with the entire faith and common to every Unitarian Universalist. The concept of salvation or a saving message can be interpreted in many different ways not necessarily in line with the Occidental myth that the fall of man necessitates an external source to save mankind from the consequences of the fall.

The aim of Unitarian Universalism, if a unified aim can be identified for a religion with no creed, would seem to be closer to Frankl's goal of psychotherapy—healing or maintaining a healthy soul. Erich Fromm touches upon this perspective as well. His concept of mental health "coincides essentially with the norms postulated by the great spiritual teachers of the human race. This coincidence appears to some modern psychologists to be a proof that our psychological premises are not 'scientific' but philosophic or religious 'ideals.'…Ikhnaton, Moses, Confucious, Lao-tse, Buddha, Isaiah, Socrates, Jesus have postulated the same norms for human life, with only small and insignificant differences." (Fromm 1967, 68-69)

Both adherents and critics have claimed Unitarian Universalism is not a religion.[2] This perspective is not surprising in a society more familiar with the concept of religion requiring a theology and creed to which all adherents must agree in order to be considered members. A community that allows its members to establish their own

religious beliefs is a puzzling type of community in our historical experience. “Some people have said that Unitarian Universalism is not a religion, but rather, that it is a way of being religious. An open-minded, open-hearted way of being faithful to what matters most in life.” (Lynch 2004) This is a meaningless grammatical construction. If Unitarian Universalism provides its members with a way of being religious and faithful to what matters most in life within the context of an encouraging community, than the fact individual Unitarian Universalists have unique ways of accomplishing this goal is immaterial. I believe the decision to act communally in order to provide members with the means to explore the spiritual path, albeit diverse paths, renders the denomination a religion.[3]

Unitarian Universalism claims a living tradition that draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature. (UUA, 1985)

This list directly echoes Fromm’s observation and affirms Unitarian Universalism as a religion—a religion with a fascinating history and a promising future.

A Brief History of American Unitarian Universalism

Unlike many Protestant sects of Christianity, Unitarian Universalism does not trace its denominational beginning to any particular founder although many historical figures serve as sentimental origins for the faith. Sympathetic philosophical and theological ideas can be identified throughout the history of Christianity, but most notably during the period of the Church Fathers and then again during the Reformation and the Enlightenment.

The roots of Unitarianism are at times attributed to Bishop Arius who defended the theological position that Jesus was a created being and of a similar substance than God at the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E. The council endorsed the trinitarian position represented by the presbyter Athanasius, asserting Jesus as pre-existent and of the same substance of God. The theological doctrine of the trinity became the position of the church by the Second Council of Constantinople in 381 C.E. and Arianism firmly established as heresy.

The Universalist tradition has claimed the early church father Origen (185 to 245 C.E.) as the first Universalist since he rejected the notion of hell, believing in a benevolent deity granting salvation to all. He emphasized Jesus' humanity at a time when beliefs about Jesus were no more important than the teachings of Jesus. Origen was an influential theologian of his generation who was posthumously declared a heretic several centuries after consolidation of church doctrine and authority.

Translation of the Bible into the vernacular, growing dissatisfaction with the excesses of the Roman Catholic church and advances in scientific exploration were among other factors of the European Reformation resulting in the conviction man had the responsibility to interpret Scripture based on his own capacity for reason. Personal study

of the Bible was pivotal to the development of Unitarianism and Universalism as more individuals failed to find a scriptural basis for the doctrine of the Trinity or the existence of Purgatory and Hell.

Miguel Servetus, Faustus Socinus and Francis David are Reformation era intellectuals claimed by the Unitarians. Miguel Servetus, a Spaniard, wrote a treatise, "On the Errors of the Trinity" for which John Calvin had him burned at the stake in 1555. Faustus Socinus, an Italian, fled from persecution in Italy and Switzerland after he published his anti-trinitarian and universalist views. He settled in Poland where anti-trinitarian theologies continued to spread and communities espousing freedom of religious thought flourished for a time. Francis David, a Hungarian, began as a Calvinist Bishop but his personal doubts eventually led to the advent of Unitarianism in Hungary and Transylvania. He was largely responsible for the first European edict of religious toleration granted in 1568 in Transylvania under the only Unitarian King, John Sigismund. Unitarianism has existed continuously in Transylvania for more than 400 years where congregations accepted refugees expelled from Poland by the Jesuits in the seventeenth century. Unitarian congregations there form alliances with American congregations today.

An independent Unitarian movement developed in England in the seventeenth century and moved to America during the late colonial period. Joseph Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen and a regular correspondent with Thomas Jefferson, came to America to escape religious persecution and helped establish Unitarianism in Philadelphia. Congregational polity in Massachusetts enabled a number of communities in that colony, especially in and around Boston, to transform into Unitarian churches but

engendered an ongoing tension between religious liberals and the Calvinist establishment. William Ellery Channing's[4] famous May 5, 1819 sermon "Unitarian Christianity" marked the high point of these tensions and forever established a permanent split from mainstream trinitarian Christianity.

Universalism arose in America primarily in the Middle Atlantic and Southern states as another affirmative response to the grim brimstone-laden doctrines of conservative Calvinism. Their evangelical tradition and joyous message resulted in the denomination becoming the sixth largest in the United States by the 1840s. Universalists ordained the first female minister in the United States, Olympia Brown, in 1864.

Unitarianism was generally a faith of urban intellectuals while Universalism was more widespread in rural areas and among self-educated less affluent populations. These generalizations spawned the amusing comment attributed to Thomas Starr King, a 19th century minister who had served both Unitarian and Universalist congregations, "The one thinks God is too good to damn them forever, and the other thinks they are too good to be damned forever." (Scholefield 1983, 32) The truth behind this humorous statement is one reason why the two denominations were so long in uniting despite similar attitudes and theologies.

The American Unitarian Association formed in 1825 and the General Convention of Universalists formed in 1855 beginning an organizational heritage. Both denominations experienced growth following the Civil War and were deeply involved in the social reform initiatives of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Clara Barton, Jane Addams, Susan B. Anthony, Dorothea Dix, Clarence Darrow and Samuel G. Howe are among the notable Unitarians and Universalists influential in social reform.[5] Humanism

and Unitarianism influenced one another in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Of the thirty-four signatories to the 1933 *Humanist Manifesto*, fifteen were Unitarians. Humanism continues to be a vital force in contemporary Unitarian Universalism and significantly flavors the identity of some congregations.

Unitarians and Universalists both promoted devotion to religious freedom, absence of a creedal requirement, social and environmental concern and belief that our understanding of truth is not restrained to a single moment in time, prompting talk about merging as early as 1899. The social, economic and educational differences indicated by Starr King's pithy comment prevented an immediate alliance, but the Unitarians and Universalists finally consolidated in 1961 as the Unitarian Universalist Association that advises and supports the faith today.

Unitarian Universalism as a Contemporary Faith Community

Unitarian Universalism has approximately 150,000 adult members and 50,000 children in more than a thousand congregations in North America and around the world. The Unitarian Universalist Association provides support to isolated Unitarian Universalists through the activities of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, an online virtual community.[6] The Unitarian Universalist Association is not a governing body dictating policy, supplying ministerial resources or establishing creeds for its members. The stated mission of the Unitarian Universalist Association is, "…to serve the needs of our member congregations, to strengthen and extend Unitarian Universalism and to implement our principles. Our field staff in districts across the country and staff based in Boston provide services that individual congregations would find difficult, if not impossible, to provide by themselves." (UUA 2005)

Unitarian Universalism has retained the congregational polity of its colonial roots resulting in a rather varied local character within each of its member congregations. One community may tend toward more spiritual services, while another tends toward more cerebral sermons, while still another attempts to alternate or combine both approaches. Prospective and current members are free to choose the congregation most closely aligned with their beliefs and needs.

A noticeable change in Unitarian Universalism since Channing's landmark 1819 sermon mentioned above is the exchange between noun and modifier. Unitarian Christian has become Christian Unitarian—an important distinction.[7] Unitarian no longer describes a sect of Christianity. Instead, Unitarian is proclaimed as the religion with Christian explaining the theological bent of the Unitarian Universalist using the label. This change allows for an amazing degree of diversity and provides a spiritual home for those individuals desiring to retain tenets, practices and affinities to specific faith systems. The names of their organizations reflect a respect for these faith systems when they reverse back and use Unitarian Universalist as the modifier. Among the myriad organizations affiliated with Unitarian Universalism are:

- Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship: http://www.uua.org/uubf//
- Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship: http://uuchristian.org/
- HUUmanists: http://www.huumanists.org/
- Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans: http://www.cuups.org/
- Unitarian Universalist World Pantheists: http://www.pantheism.net/uu/uupantheists.htm[8]

Choices are virtually limitless as anyone is free to organize an association around their own personal theology or spiritual beliefs. Unitarian Universalist principles proclaim the utmost respect for individuality and convey an attitude of trust. Psychologist Robert Sardello[9] directly addresses just such trust in individualism and captures the attraction of Unitarian Universalism when he states:

> "To observe another working toward individuality as I am also trying to do, while respecting each as fully independent and always finding ways not to interfere, this is a true wonder…While one cannot direct another in the development of individuality, there is great joy in seeing the process occurring. The answer to what sustains the movement toward individuality can be found in this capacity to begin to observe another developing in such a direction. One then freely chooses to sustain that direction of development, not because another person is also moving this way and it is something to copy, but because of seeing that it is being done, because of seeing a new possibility…Movement toward individuality is a pure and free act of choice, an act that does not seek anything outside of itself." (Sardello 1996, 39-40)

One of the criticisms of Unitarian Universalism as a denomination is that it is too cerebral and lacking in spiritualism. (Rhodes 2001, 241-242) While the criticism is not without merit at times, it is also indicative of a cursory examination of Unitarian Universalism as a religion. When compared with the symbolism of a Catholic mass, the historical and religious significance of a Passover Seder and the breathtaking beauty of a Hindu temple, Unitarian Universalism can seem quite dry. How is one to find spiritual guidance and assistance with personal soul-making in a denomination that prides itself on lack of doctrine and refuses to provide answers to such basic questions as: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go when we're gone?

Unitarian Universalists *are* typically committed to intellectualism and appear to eschew more traditional religions as too fanciful, yet soulfulness resides within the essence of Unitarian Universalist choice. The personal decisions necessary within a religion that deliberately declines to provide doctrinal answers to life's deepest questions

perfectly illustrates depth psychologist Thomas Moore's[10] definition of faith when it is soulful. "Faith is a gift of spirit that allows the soul to remain attached to its own unfolding. When faith is soulful, it is always planted in the soil of wonder and questioning. It isn't a defensive and anxious holding on to certain objects of belief, because doubt, as its shadow, can be brought into a faith that is fully mature." (Moore 1992, 253) Unitarian Universalists honor doubt as the catalyst for responsible decision-making.

Freedom of choice is both a source of strength and vulnerability in Unitarian Universalism. Respecting independence entails allowing others to leave as graciously as accepting them into a community. The advantages of a democratic congregational polity outweigh the deficiencies but polarized issues or disaffected minorities can, and do, leave congregations to form their own faith communities, join other communities or abandon organized religion completely. Unitarian Universalists affirm and promote tolerance and individualism but still find actively living these values to be a challenge. This struggle between personal choice and allegiance to a group is actually a sign of spiritual health, indicating a resistance to abdicating the rights of human freedom. Unitarian Universalism is not an easy faith system because being a fully engaged responsible human being is not easy.

John Buehrens and Forrest Church[11] selected the title, A Chosen Faith, for their introduction to Unitarian Universalism. "For most of us, our faith did not choose us, we chose it. Born Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Muslim, or into a secular or "mixed" household, when it came time for us to affiliate with a religious institution we sought one that fit our own thinking, not one that imposed its thinking on us…We are a people who

choose." (Buerhrens 1998, xx) Choice requires a sense of responsibility in an atmosphere of freedom. Contemporary Unitarian Universalists can rightly claim a thoroughly heretical tradition since the English word "heresy" is linguistically related to the Greek word *hairetikos*—able to choose.

Unitarian Universalist Ritual

Unitarian Universalists celebrate rites of passage familiar to almost everyone in our society. The standard hymnal, Singing the Living Tradition, published in 1993 includes readings intended for child dedications, ordinations into the ministry, marriages and services of union, and memorial and funeral rites. These rituals are common throughout the religion but do not follow prescribed formats. Honorees and participants are encouraged to assist in the shaping of the ritual to extract personal meaning from it. As no two marriages are alike, neither should each wedding ritual be identical.

In addition to traditional rites of passage, Unitarian Universalist congregations include a variety of other rituals within their liturgy. Many congregations have unique coming of age ceremonies, celebrate the Passover Seder, perform a Christmas pageant and offer a host of other rituals borrowed from world traditions. No two Unitarian Universalist congregations have the same liturgical calendar. Indeed, a single Unitarian Universalist congregation may alter ritual offerings from year to year. The Flower Communion, Water Ceremony, Joys and Concerns and the Chalice Lighting are the most popular distinctly Unitarian Universalist rituals.

The Flower Communion originated in Czechoslovakia in 1923 as a ritual intended to unite the congregation in a way that would not alienate people who came from a variety of faiths. Attendees bring a flower of their choice and place it themselves

in a large vase waiting in the church. Personal placement signified the independent desire to unite with others. The vessel containing the bouquet symbolized the united fellowship. Upon exiting the church, participants select a different flower symbolizing a willingness to join in communion with people unlike themselves. Unitarian Universalist congregations that include this service in their church calendar typically do so in late spring or early summer.

The Water Ceremony is another example of symbolic communalism. The service began at a Unitarian Universalist Women and Religion Convocation in East Lansing, Michigan in 1980. The communion quickly became a popular feature in Unitarian Universalist services in the autumn. Many Unitarian Universalist services are lightly attended in the summer due to vacations, ministerial sabbaticals and seasonal populations; so "ingathering" services upon everyone's return have become quite common. The water communion is a beautiful means of reuniting a dispersed congregation.

> The original service grew out of an intuitive response to the potential of water as a symbol of spirituality and a desire for an inclusive symbol and ritual that would speak to our connectedness to one another and to our place on this planet. Life cannot survive without water, nor flourish without tending to the spirit of community that flows around and through us all. (First Parish Church)

Like the flower communion, this ritual is generally included within a regular Sunday service rather than performed on its own. Congregants are asked to bring a small amount of water, either literally from a meaningful source or "straight from the tap" with a symbolic association. Each individual may say a few words about the source and meaning of the water and then adds the contribution to a communal vessel. The Flower Communion and Water Ceremony are both distinctly Unitarian Universalist in origin but

are neither required, nor universally celebrated, in every Unitarian Universalist community.

Perhaps the only ritual uniting Unitarian Universalist congregations is the Lighting and Extinguishing of the Chalice (See Fig. 1) to open and conclude a service, class or meeting. Most congregations light a flame inside a chalice with words intoned in unison to signal the start of a communal experience. At the conclusion, another phrase is uttered as the flame is extinguished to signify the conclusion of the communal experience. Singing the Living Tradition provides a variety of readings from which to choose and individuals and congregations have the freedom to compose their own accompanying words. Just as the Cross represents Christianity and the Star of David represents Judaism, the Flaming Chalice represents Unitarian Universalism to the world.

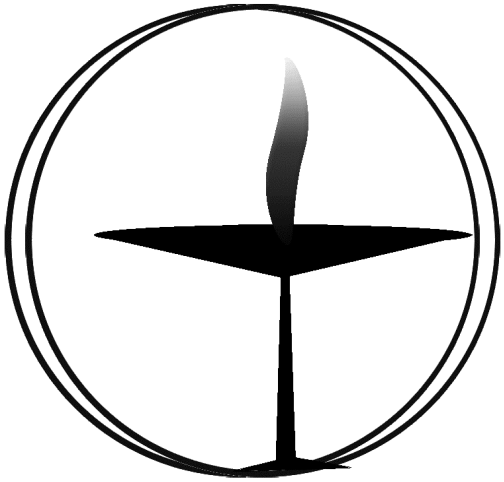

Figure 1. Representative Symbol of Unitarian Universalism: The Flaming Chalice

The world's great literate religions all utilize the analogy of light when speaking of the divine presence in human life. The enormous power, life-giving presence and practical import of the sun renders light an evocative symbol of transcendence.

- Hinduism: “Let us contemplate the beautiful splendor of God Savitri, that he may inspire our visions.” To this day, pious Hindus recite this mantra at dawn and at dusk to receive the divine Light manifesting in the luminous orb of the sun. (Feuerstein, Kak, and Fawley 1995, 129)
- Buddhism: “Be a lamp unto yourselves.” are part of Buddha’s final liberation instructions in the Sutra on the Great Final Liberation. (Neusner 1997, 60)
- Judaism: After God creates the heaven and earth he separates the light from the darkness and declares the light good. The Hebrew bible continues to use light to represent God. “The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.” (NIV, Isaiah 60:19)
- Christianity: Christianity carries forward the Hebraic usage of light when speaking of God. The Nicene Creed, written during the fourth century CE has Christians recite their characterization of Jesus in the words, “We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,..” The gospel of John records Jesus himself using this metaphor. “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’” (NIV, John 8:12)
- Islam: “The most one can say is that Allah is like unceasing light illuminating those who seek in faith: “Light upon life! Allah guides to his light those whom he wills.’” (Bowker 2002, 328) The Quran contains a sura entitled Sura of Light.

Illumination is also a symbol for the capacity for human reason—the intellectual movement of eighteenth century Europe and North America was coined, “The Enlightenment.” Illustrations convey the concept of a new idea by picturing a light bulb above the subject’s head. The expression “to shine a light on a subject” means to bring attention to it through examined study. Irish poet and philosopher John O’Donohue[12] beautifully describes the connection between divinity and intellect:

> Ultimately, life is the mother of life. Where there is no light, there can be no life. If the angle of the sun were to turn away from the earth, all human, animal and vegetative life, as we know it would disappear. Ice would freeze the earth again. Light is the secret presence of the divine. It keeps life awake. Light is a nurturing presence, which calls forth warmth and color in nature. The soul awakens and lives in light. It helps us to glimpse the sacred depths within us. Once human beings began to search for a meaning to life, light became one of the most powerful metaphors to express the eternity and depth of life. In Western tradition, and indeed in the Celtic tradition, thought has often been compared to light. In its luminosity, the intellect was deemed to be the place of the divine within us. (O'Donohue 1997, 5)

The flame within the chalice is a fitting symbol for a religion dedicated to the proposition that man is not only intellectual and spiritual, but intelligence and soul are one.

The Chalice: International Symbol of Unitarian Universalism

Austrian artist Hans Deutsch created the symbol in 1941 at a time when he had never even seen a Unitarian or a Universalist church. Deutsch met Reverend Charles Joy, the executive director of the Unitarian Service Committee in Portugal after fleeing from the Nazis. The Service Committee was in the midst of aiding Eastern Europeans, including both Unitarians and Jews, in their flight from Nazi oppression. Trust was difficult to muster in a time of intense fear and secrecy. Rev. Joy recognized the urgent need for an official symbol to generate immediate confidence in the Service Committee's endeavors.

He asked Deutsch to design a symbol that could be used on their correspondence, "to make them look official, to give dignity and importance to them, and at the same time to symbolize the spirit of our work." (Hotchkiss 2001) Deutsch responded with the symbol of the flaming chalice that began as a seal and badge for agents responsible for bringing oppressed and persecuted peoples to freedom. It later became the official

symbol of the Unitarian Universalist Association and a logo for congregations around the world.

Reverend Joy sent these words to his board in Boston:

> …a chalice with a flame, the kind of chalice which the Greeks and Romans put on their altars. The holy oil burning in it is a symbol of helpfulness and sacrifice. . . . This was in the mind of the artist. The fact, however, that it remotely suggests a cross was not in his mind, but to me this also has its merit. We do not limit our work to Christians. Indeed, at the present moment, our work is nine-tenths for the Jews, yet we do stem from the Christian tradition, and the cross does symbolize Christianity and its central theme of sacrificial love. (Hotchkiss 2001)

The beauty of the flaming chalice is that no official interpretation of the symbol exists. Unitarian Universalists are as free to ascribe any unique and personal meaning to the flaming chalice as they are to seek their own spiritual path. Combining the flaming chalice with other religious symbols only enhances its value. (See Fig. 2) This symbol reaches to the core of what it means to be human in that it enables the individual to identify a singular meaningful interpretation while it binds unique humans into a reasonable, just and compassionate community.

Figure 2. Combining the Flaming Chalice with other religious symbols.[13]

The above figure illustrates the diversity within Unitarian Universalism and the respect for personal freedom but obscures the existence of a unifying myth within the faith—a myth identified when we embrace the paradox between our psychological and spiritual needs.

CHAPTER III:

A HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY CONGRUENT WITH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

Being a uniquely responsible conscious human being encompasses three distinct realms that are inextricably entwined—the physical, psychological and spiritual. These aspects of human existence refer to the body, mind and spirit and each possess particular requirements in order to maintain optimal health. Optimal health of the human being is what allows for our transcendence in the sense of progressing beyond what we consider to be our typical limitations and restraints. The desirability of progress and advancement has become a firmly entrenched social paradigm in the west, particularly in American culture.

Our popular culture has communicated to each successive generation via textbooks, television, advertising campaigns, political speeches, and other pervasive means the firmly entrenched notion that bigger is better and more is always possible. This social paradigm ignores the facts of finite natural resources, unequal access to opportunities and acquisition becoming a source of unhappiness rather than satisfaction. A radical mythological shift must occur for American culture to maintain a healthy and realistic view of progress. I refer to myth in the sense offered by the twentieth century's foremost mythologist Joseph Campbell.[14] Myth is "the expression of man's total response to his encounter with reality and his subsequent effort to secure his own existence meaningfully in the face of that reality." (Campbell 1970, 52)

The contemporary American responds to a concept of reality limiting to spiritual growth. He secures his own existence by complying with cultural values that may or may not harmonize with the personal values he would explore and create as a unique individual within a supportive community. Instead he exists as simply another body within a cultural mass. Erich Fromm states that "mental health cannot be defined in terms of the "adjustment" of the individual to his society, but on the contrary, *that it must be defined in terms of the adjustment of society to the needs of man*." (Fromm 1967, 71)

The work of countless psychologists and psychiatrists over the last century and a half have provided valuable insight into what constitute the needs of man beyond the obvious physiological needs such as air, nourishment and water. Optimal psychological and spiritual health is developed and maintained by needs every bit as crucial. I was first exposed to Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs in a corporate training course in the early 1990s, became acquainted with Viktor E. Frankl's work in my graduate studies and stumbled upon Erich Fromm's psychological and sociological perspectives purely by chance. Each encounter profoundly influenced my perception of Unitarian Universalism as a faith community uniquely qualified to address the full range of human needs. The ideas of these three men seemed to be a natural progression towards a unifying worldview for Unitarian Universalists.

Viktor E. Frankl says "that mental health is based on a certain degree of tension, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one is still out to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become." (Frankl 1985, 127) Erich Fromm defined mental health as:

> …characterized by the ability to love and to create, by the emergence from incestuous ties to clan and soil, by a sense of identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside of ourselves, that is by the development of objectivity and reason. (Fromm 1967, 68)

These two definitions of mental health share common elements so perhaps the two men would have mostly agreed with one another. Other psychologists may find exception to their descriptions of mental health. "In Sigmund Freud's view, mental health is found through the pain-staking work of the analyst in uprooting the subconscious fears and neurosis of the patient in order for them to become a more 'aware' and fully functioning human being." (Rich 2003) We may or may not find compatibility with the previous definitions as this would depend entirely upon what Freud means by a "fully functioning human being." If he means an objective reasonable person with the ability to love and create, he concurs with Fromm. If he means someone who is comfortably held within the tension of past accomplishment and future achievements he also concurs with Frankl.

There are three main theories regarding the primary human psychological drive that governs mental health. Freud proposed the "pleasure principle" that asserts people are driven by a desire to eliminate suffering and experience pleasure. They will default their decision-making to the options that achieve this desire. Alfred Adler disagreed and asserted the primary motivating force as striving for perfection or the "aggression drive." The desire for power and superiority are seen as the reason why people arrive at the choices they make. Viktor Frankl disagrees with both Freud and Adler and says "the striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man." (Frankl 1985, 121)

Optimal psychological health is another way of indicating the ideal of human achievement. Various psychologists have coined terms referring to concepts that bear some similarity to one another. Freudians refer to the genital character, Abraham Maslow to the self-actualizing personality, Adlerians to the active-constructive style of life and Erich Fromm to the productive character type. Erich Fromm points out "the description of the genital character does not go far beyond the statement that it is the character structure of an individual who is capable of functioning well sexually and socially" and ascribes this vagueness to Freud's splendid work with the neurotic character rather than with healthy individuals. (Fromm 1990, 83) Maslow, Frankl and Fromm better address the psychological relationship between contemporary American culture and Unitarian Universalism due to their focus on normalcy and ideals rather than neuroses and psychoses.

Frankl's theory recognizes the third component of human health by including the needs of the spirit. The spiritual component of health is the most controversial of the three elements of human existence. Bodies are physical objects that can be manipulated and measured—they occupy space and development or decay is typically observable. While the mind cannot be physically observed, both Cartesian and non-dualist philosophers acknowledge the human ability to perform mental functions and recognize the behavior this mental activity affects.

The spiritual aspect of humanity is not as universally accepted, particularly within atheist philosophies. Spirituality contains the connotation of religious beliefs whether intended or not. While my personal philosophy is not one of traditional Occidental monotheism, I recognize the spiritual component of humanity and therefore find Frankl's

theories particularly enlightening. The work of Abraham Maslow, Viktor Frankl and Erich Fromm describe a human condition with needs and motivations that the Unitarian Universalist faith community is well suited to satisfy.

Abraham Maslow

Abraham Harold Maslow *(1908-1970),* the first of seven children, was born in Brooklyn, New York to uneducated Jewish immigrants from Russia. Maslow became interested in psychology after moving to Wisconsin and earned a B.A., M.A. and PhD. in the field at the University of Wisconsin. He moved back to New York in 1935 to teach and met European intellectuals immigrating to the United States at that time – psychologists such as Alfred Adler, Erich Fromm, and Karen Horney. Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of need was initially conceived around 1943.

The Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow maintained that unsatisfied needs are the primary motivating factor for humans and that needs are ranked in order of necessary fulfillment. For example, an individual suffering from a life-threatening lack of food and water is unable to address the need for companionship or the self-esteem associated with mastery of a task. An illustration of Maslow's hierarchy demonstrates the primacy of physical needs. (See Fig. 3) Only when physical needs are met can psychological needs function as essential motivating factors.

Maslow makes a point worth considering, but more importantly, his work:

> was a radical departure from two of the chief schools of psychology of his day: Freud and B.F. Skinner. Freud saw little difference between the motivations of humans and animals. We are supposedly rational beings; however, we do not act

> that way…Skinner, on the other hand, studied how pigeons and white rats learn. His motivational models were based on simple rewards such as food and water, sex, and avoidance of pain. (Gwynne 1997)

Maslow's alternative to the bleak perspective of Sigmund Freud *(1856-1939)* and B.F. Skinner *(1904-1990)*[15] should not be misunderstood to imply that meeting needs at the lower level of the hierarchical structure allows for proper human development. One should never accept the position that "at least she is physically healthy, feels safe and loves her family" when assessing psychological and spiritual strength. No educated caring parent assumes a newborn infant would thrive on nutritional intake alone. Although Maslow presents needs as a hierarchy, he is addressing the concept of motivation, particularly with respect to discrete circumstances.

In order to optimize all three aspects of human health, the entire hierarchy of needs must be met, but this does not presume that satisfaction of these needs is an ethical norm. Satisfying a craving for food does not make someone a better person. The longing to form a loving relationship is not a moral imperative conferring favored status upon those who succeed in fulfilling their desire. The pursuit of happiness, Freud's "pleasure principle," is not overtly present in the hierarchy precisely because happiness is not a goal but a result. The transitory nature of existence ensures that enduring happiness will never be achieved if pleasure is the underlying motivation for satisfying human needs.

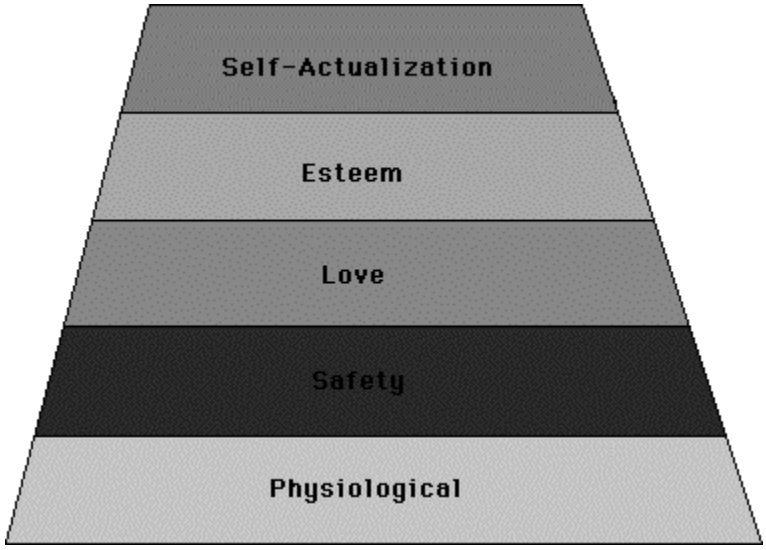

Figure 3. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The bottom tier of Maslow's hierarchy quite clearly refers to the physical aspect of the human being. When we do not address our basic physiological needs such as air, food, and sleep we experience discomfort and risk illness and death. We are unable to focus on our psychological and spiritual needs until physiological desires are appeased.

The middle three tiers of Maslow's hierarchy of needs mostly relate to the psychological aspect of human nature. The desire for safety is associated with protecting the physical body but is really the need to live free from fear. We are unable to address our need for loving relationships and functioning actively in a caring community if we are enslaved by unease and fear. Oppression by means of denying physiological needs is readily apparent. Oppression by means of denying security or instilling the illusion of insecurity is far less perceptible but at least as effective. History is rife with examples of nation states and theologies exerting control over masses of people by activating the human desire for security by manufacturing or exaggerating fear.

We have a desire to belong to a community once we have conquered our feelings of insecurity—we wish to love and be loved by others. Maslow's hierarchy of needs then progresses to the need for esteem, both self-esteem and the recognition and admiration of others. Only when these needs are met are we able to address the top tier, which corresponds to the spiritual realm of human existence. Maslow uses the term "self-actualization" and describes it as "the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming." (Gwynne 1997)

The attainment of spiritual health relies on physical and psychological health according to Maslow. This perspective explains why living the Unitarian Universalist principles—which affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every human being and promote encouragement to spiritual growth—engender a faith-based demand quality to social justice projects intended to alleviate poverty, provide adequate housing and ensure the availability of universal health care.

I propose an amended model to illustrate human needs and motivation. (See Fig. 4) The traditional model of Maslow's hierarchy suggests a discrete linear progression—with clear divisions between the various needs—and fails to address the concept of spirituality. Viktor Frankl's experience in German concentration camps during World War II offers evidence that higher needs are not necessarily sublimated when lower needs are frustrated. Indeed higher needs *can* be alleviated despite physiological and psychological deprivation. An interactive flow, rather than a linear progression, would seem a more appropriate model.

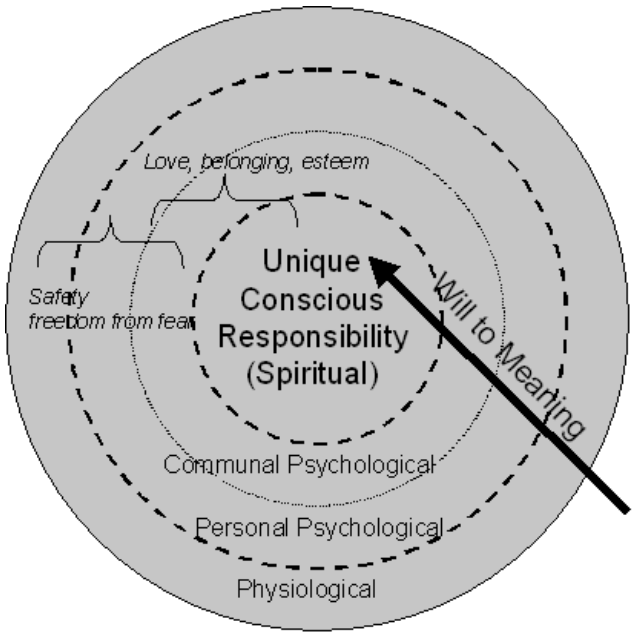

Figure 4. Amended Hierarchy of Human Need and Motivation

In this model, the need for security overlaps the physiological and psychological realms. Love is not simply a need but a creative action belonging to the spiritual as well as psychological realm. Dashed lines, rather than solid ones, divide the realms to indicate permeability, overlap and multi-directional flow. The shading remains constant throughout the model to further eliminate the perception of solid barriers between the realms. The desire to identify and fulfill personal meaning in life is indicated as the underlying force propelling the individual as he or she addresses the collateral needs of human existence.

Maslow's Optimism and the Effects of Fear

Maslow did believe humans tend toward growth and love. The potential for deprivation of the lower needs to thwart such growth is supported by biological research antedating Maslow's research. Maslow lists a need for safety as the second tier in his

hierarchy. Absence of safety results in feelings of anxiety and fear and may generate a fight or flight response. Fear is paralysis and anyone who attempts to influence others through the use of fear is practicing a form of oppression that stifles creativity, diversity and rationality. Maslow's theory explains these stifling results by claiming that withholding security prohibits people from progressing to the higher levels necessary to become a fully functioning self-actualizing personality. Even if it does not constitute a total prohibition, instilling fear certainly acts as a grave obstacle.

Joseph Chilton Pearce[16] explains why fear and anxiety have such an impact on human development:

> …anxiety is a state of chronic, free-floating fear—fear without an object. Such a state acts as a catalyst, changing every object, every event into its target, making an event fearful whether or not it deserves to be considered so. Anxiety can become the lens through which we interpret our ongoing experience…Like anxiety, culture embraces every negative idea or possibility as its own until all that's embraced in turn embraces. (Pearce 2002, 119)

The reptilian hindbrain, which develops first both in terms of evolution and in the human organism, is responsible for the instinctive "fight or flight" response to fear. The emotional and cognitive brains develop later and allow for more sophisticated intellectual and emotional response to events and environments experienced by the human being. The amazing aspect of how the brain develops is the fact that "when the higher incorporates the lower into its service, it transforms the lower into the nature of the higher." (Pearce 2002, 49) The complete brain complex transcends the original purpose of the reptilian hindbrain. An atmosphere of fear, even if the fear is not overtly directed at a specific object but exists as a barely sensed disquietude, has enormous impact upon the brain and human behavior by augmenting development of the hindbrain at the expense of the emotional and cognitive forebrain.

This connection is particularly poignant with respect to children. The human brain continues to develop until approximately twenty-one years of age. How it develops is dependent upon the child's environment. "The question of whether they feel safe and loved, or whether they feel like they must protect themselves against a hostile world has a profound effect on the intelligence of the child," according to Pearce. (Debus and Mercogliano 1999) Nature and nurture *both* make powerful contributions to a child's potential as a compassionate and intelligent adult.

Brain development appears to have finite limits and defaults to the hindbrain when the child perceives himself to be in an unloving or unsafe environment. A shift to hindbrain dominance automatically deprives the child of emotional and cognitive development in the forebrain. Buddhist Jack Kornfield[17] alludes to this problem when he says, "the power of our fear, the habits of judgment within us, repeatedly prevent our touching the sacred." (Kornfield 1993, 188) The forebrain includes the prefrontal cortex and is the highest evolutionary brain, carrying humans beyond their animal instincts. The prefrontal cortex allows for the civilized mind and "it is this civility that is the prerequisite for the development of our capacity to transcend." (Pearce 2002, 48)

The brain develops according to a timetable established by our biological nature and takes for granted the child's environment is appropriate for optimal growth. The biological development of the brain does not take into account the prevalence of fear in contemporary American culture. The problem is disheartening in a single child and catastrophic when shared by the vast majority of children. Unfortunately, Americans are living in an environment that has traditionally been pervaded by fear and today is being outright exploited. Half a century ago, children grew up crawling under wooden school

desks to prepare for the event of a nuclear attack. The next generation did not bother with such drills. They grew up knowing a wooden desk would not save them from a nuclear attack. The Cold War was a constant reminder of impending annihilation until the Soviet Union collapsed from within and the Wall came tumbling down.

The Soviets could no longer serve as an overt object for our fear and loathing but within a few short years Americans shifted their attention to a new threat: the Muslim Terrorist. Following the Cold War we had the Gulf War, World Trade Center bombing, Kosovo, U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the U.S.S. Cole and September 11, 2001. The current presidential administration visibly controls our level of fear through the use of color-coded alerts and military invasions.

The message surrounding American children today is that their world is a dangerous place and no citizen is safe except perhaps those who stock up on plastic sheeting and duct tape. Parents are hard pressed to provide a safe, loving and encouraging environment for their children in the midst of such overwhelming anxiety. The tragedy is the number of parents who are so enculturated by the pervasive atmosphere of distress they are unaware of its negative impact on the development of their children. Fear has become the accepted state of being—to the point its affects are no longer consciously acknowledged.

Fear must be conquered if humanity is to attain real progress toward building a society in which self-actualizing personalities predominate—thereby ensuring higher and higher percentages of creativity, diversity and rationality within each successive generation. Self-actualization is congruent with Viktor Frankl's proposition that humanity's primary motivating factor is a "will to meaning" and Erich Fromm's

description of the ideal character type—the productive orientation. The pervasiveness of anxiety is central to the theories of both of these men.

Viktor E. Frankl

Viktor E. Frankl (*1905-1997*) was born in Vienna, Austria and was the middle of three children. He was extremely precocious and claimed to have known by the age of four he wanted to be a physician. Frankl first published his thoughts on psychology and the meaning of life when he was still a teenager. During the 1920s Frankl's work in psychiatry moved beyond both Freud's psychoanalysis that focuses on the "will to pleasure" and Adler's individual psychology that addressed man's "will to power."[18] By contrast, Frankl believed man's primary motivation was a "will to meaning." Frankl had the unfortunate opportunity to witness his theories put into practice and validated when he was taken to a concentration camp during World War II. Following his release he became the chief of the Poliklink Hospital neurological department in Vienna and continued to practice and refine his theories and methods on countless patients.

Frankl is considered an existential theorist and one of the themes "running throughout existential theorizing is that through vigorous symbolization, imagination, and judgment one can achieve freedom. Through mental activity, one is supposed to create a world." (Maddi 1996, 162) Although the possibilities rendered by such freedom and creativity are compelling, they are not without limits. Existentialism accepts necessary givens—we would be absurd to ignore mortality and gender specific biology for example. There are also social situations that result in necessary limits, Frankl became acquainted with such restrictions within the Nazi concentration camps, but as his

experience demonstrates, even severe limits do not curtail all freedom. Salvatore Maddi explains the importance of recognizing limits when he says:

> …accepting limits set on the possibilities of your existence by certain imposed biological and social forces enables you to be more authentic because you do not have to lie to yourself. The value of accepting givens is the same as accepting ontological anxiety and guilt as inherent aspects of living. It is only by remaining honest that one has any chance at all of pursuing those possibilities that are available. Accepting your inability to influence certain things makes you more aware of what you can influence, paradoxical though that may seem at first. (Maddi 1996, 163)

Viktor Frankl's work addresses such limits and provides a means for resolving this paradox.

The Will to Meaning

The first of three primary tenets of Frankl's work is that life has meaning--even during suffering—because there are three ways in which meaning can be realized: creatively, experientially and attitudinally. These three ways of attaining meaning in life refer to creating, experiencing or relating, and accepting. Examples would be writing a book, listening to a beautiful symphony or interacting with another human being, and adopting a noble attitude towards a fatal diagnosis.

Frankl is quick to point out that acquiescing to suffering is only meaningful if the suffering is unavoidable. To endure silently when one has the ability to affect change in the situation is simply masochism. "The destiny a person suffers therefore has a twofold meaning: to be shaped where possible, and to be endured where necessary…Only when he no longer has any possibility of actualizing creative values, when there really is no means at hand for shaping fate—then is the time for attitudinal values to be actualized…" (Frankl 1986, 111-112)

The second tenet is that the primary motivation for living is our will to experience meaning in life. Humans are fortunate to experience boredom and strife as constant reminders that we must take an active role if we are to live a meaningful life. If we pay attention, these admonitions point to our responsibility to answer the questions life puts to us rather than passively inquiring into the meaning of life and waiting for an answer that will never come without our active contribution. Frankl says, "If to be human is, as we have said, to be conscious and responsible, then existential analysis is psychotherapy whose starting-point is consciousness of responsibility." (Frankl 1986, 25) Although we have the will to experience the meaning of life, we must become participatory and actively seek that meaning in order to experience it.

The third tenet is that we have the freedom to find meaning in what we do, what we experience and the attitude we adopt when addressing inescapable suffering. Erich Fromm says, "Men are born equal but they are also born different." (Fromm 1941, 263) Frankl would most heartily agree and add this uniqueness results in a meaning of life relative to the individual rather than the existence of a grand unifying meaning of life applying equally to everyone at all times. The meaning of life not only varies by individual but changes through time—the action, experience or attitude bringing meaning to one's life is dependent upon the unique moment in time. Frankl suggests there is only one correct choice available to each person at any given moment but it is my personal belief we have the ability to choose among a variety of "healthy" and "unhealthy" options without having to discern which single option is the best.

The three tenets together make it clear that for each person to live a meaningful life he or she must be actively aware of the choices present at every moment and be

conscious of the potential consequences. Once a decision has been made, the individual must be prepared to accept such consequences and retain the confidence to continue making choices responsibly and consciously. The individual must avoid submitting their value system to an authority or dissolving their personality by conforming to cultural expectations. Frankl combines these tenets in the aphorism, "to be human means not only to be different, but also to be able to become different, that is, to change." (Frankl 1986, 78)

Logotherapy

Viktor Frankl's theories compelled him to develop a form of therapy known as logotherapy. He first coined this term in 1926 to indicate "therapy through meaning." While developed within the context of a psychiatric practice, logotherapy employs techniques useful for the schizophrenic, neurotic and mentally well alike. Although the word "therapy" implies treatment of disorders and maladjustments, any individual may experience an experiential crisis. Logotherapy can be very helpful in times of grief, frustration and stress even if no psychological disorder is present.

Logotherapy is predicated upon assumptions about the nature of humanity that coincide with the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Frankl asserts the human being consists of not just body and mind, but also spirit. He states "three factors characterize human existence as such: man's spirituality, his freedom, his responsibility." (Frankl 1986, xxiv) Man ignores his spiritual aspect to the detriment of both his physical and psychological well being.

Logotherapy assumes life has meaning even during suffering as stated above, but even more importantly, life has a demand quality to which we must respond if our

decisions are to be meaningful. In other words, we are not in the position to ask what life means but instead must provide the answers to the questions life asks of us. Such a perspective requires consciousness and a sense of responsibility and obligation. We must be present to every situation so if called upon we can improve the world with our conduct or enhance ourselves with our experiences. We will consciously make the choices that bring about the fullness of the meaning of life.

Logotherapy assumes humans have a "will to meaning" and experience a sense of fulfillment when correct choices are made. Angst, anxiety, depression, addiction, apathy and other uncomfortable states or neuroses are produced by making incorrect choices when the individual is experiencing an existential crisis in which they either cannot identify their present meaning in life or are unaware such a concept even exists.

Logotherapy assumes each individual is unique and people have the freedom in all circumstances to activate the will to find meaning. These last two assumptions have been consistently stifled throughout human history and are under considerable attack in contemporary western society. Frankl says, "true community is in essence the community of responsible persons; mere mass is the sum of depersonalized entities…Man begins to be human only where he has the freedom to oppose bondage to a type." (Frankl 1986, 73) Unfortunately, contemporary American culture is perpetuating the sublimation of the community concept to the glorification of the mass at the same time it sustains stereotypes according to race, ethnicity, religion, wealth, etc. We refer to our major news sources as mass media intended to quickly disseminate standardized information to a large audience. This inevitably introduces the danger of creating an audience "especially susceptible to the influence of modern mass-media techniques such as advertising and

propaganda." (Wikipedia 2005) When large numbers of people abdicate their personal value systems to adopt an external system simply because it is prevalent and popular, they abandon their uniqueness and potential to identify and fulfill their meaning in life.

Discovering meaning in life is dependent upon recognizing and fully appreciating the uniqueness of the individual. In Escape From Freedom, written over six decades ago but still highly relevant today, Erich Fromm points out "in any society the spirit of the whole culture is determined by the spirit of those groups that are most powerful in that society." (Fromm 1941, 112-113) Fromm is referring to institutions such as schools, churches, popular culture, the advertising industry and the mass media. He proposes human beings are fearful of the prospect of actualizing their free nature and will gladly submit to authority or supress their individuality through conformity in order to escape this fear. Frankl concurs—in the preface to The Doctor and the Soul, also written over six decades ago, Frankl lists four symptoms of a collective anxiety neurosis:

1. a planless, day-to-day atittude toward life

2. a fatalist attitude toward life where man feels helpless and the victim of life rather than a result of his own choices.

3. collective thinking—where man abandons himself as a free and responsible being and ignores his own personality

4. fantaticism—where a man ignores the personality of those who think differently and he does not really have opinions, the opinions of his group have him.

Frankl says, "We may thus speak of the pathological spirit of our time as a mental epidemic…Ultimately, all these four symptoms can be traced back to man's fear of responsibility and his escape from freedom." (Frankl 1986, xxii-xxiii) No wonder so

many people are seeking answers in places of worship, self-help sections of the bookstore and on the doctor's couch. That which consistutes our humanity are the very things which people fear and avoid—our responsibility and our freedom.

Viktor Frankl had the unenviable occasion to witness his theories put into practice and his experience helps us understand why people respond strangely to odd circumstances. They are not responding strangely at all because an abnormal response to an abnormal situation *is* normal. His incarceration demonstrated when all other freedoms are stripped away; man still possesses the power to choose his emotional response to his situation. Frankl witnessed acts of unspeakable barbarity and unimaginable selflessness. His anecdotes demonstrate Gandhi and Mother Teresa are not unique in their immunity to the "will to pleasure" and the "will to power." Their examples of compassion and selfless giving are indicative of a capacity that resides in the hearts of all mankind.

Frankl teaches us love is "the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire." (Frankl 1985, 57) Granting this and the other assumptions about logotherapy are true, we are in possession of the key to exercising our free will wisely and responsibly. If we make a choice that creates love rather than diminishes it, we can be assured we have chosen wisely. When life demands meaning of us and we answer with love we find the "soul of life." Unitarian Universalism can help address this fundamental human need when our faith fellowships engage in the act of creating the soul of life by encouraging the unique and priceless contribution of the irreplaceable individual member within a communal context.

Erich Fromm

Erich Fromm was born in 1900 in Frankfurt, Germany to a very religious Orthodox Jewish family. He later became what he called an "atheistic mystic." World War I left a tremendous impact on Fromm as he witnessed the tragic consequences of extreme nationalism. He wanted to understand something irrational -- the irrationality of mass behavior -- and he found some answers in the writings of Karl Marx. Fromm earned his PhD at the University of Heidelberg in 1922 and began a career as a psychotherapist. He moved to the United States in 1934 and settled in New York City along with other great refugee thinkers gathered there. Towards the end of his career, he moved to Mexico City to teach and continued considerable research into the relationship between economic class and personality types there. He died in 1980 in Switzerland. (Boeree 1997)

Fromm's perspective on human psychology is a unique blend of Freudian and Marxist theory, two distinctly determinist philosophies. Freudians posit a biological basis to human drives and character while Marxists view behavior and character as driven by social conditioning, primarily economic factors. Fromm's contribution to the amalgamation of Freudian and Marxist thought is pertinent to the unifying mythological basis of Unitarian Universalism.

While granting both biology and society have profound impact upon human thought, emotions and behavior, Fromm suggests we also possess freedom. "He allows people to transcend the determinisms that Freud and Marx attribute to them. In fact, Fromm makes freedom the central characteristic of human nature!" (Boeree, 1997) Fromm acknowledges an animal nature but emphasizes our human nature and can thus be considered a fulfillment theorist. He does make a comment in his 1947 book Man For

Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics reminiscent of conflict theory where he presumes the tension between human and animal nature provides the stimulus to personal development. (Fromm 1990, 41) Yet when humans revert to their baser instincts, Fromm prefers to describe such behavior as avoiding "humanness" rather than embracing "creatureness."

Human Nature

According to Fromm, human nature is unique in that we are aware of our separation from nature because we have the capacity to know ourselves and to recognize what differs from us. This separation is a state of freedom when affirmed as a positive and a state of estrangement and alienation when considered a negative. Occidental mythological systems have helped to enculturate western societies into a negative point of view. Consider the Judeo-Christian myth involving an expulsion from paradise or the Greek story of Pandora in which humans are culpable in the release of strife into the world. Westerners have assumed guilt and developed religious traditions that beseeched the intervention of a transcendent deity or pantheon to bridge the gap created by the awareness of our unique and separate status as relational beings. Need for relatedness is one of Fromm's core characteristics of human nature along with the need for transcendence, rootedness and personal identity.

In order to form relationships, humans depend upon other people's intentions and the knowledge they possess. Not all knowledge is equal with respect to cooperation, as renowned anthropologist Pascal Boyer[19] points out with his definition of strategic knowledge: "Strategic information is the subset of all the information currently available (to a particular agent, about a particular situation) that activates the mental systems that

regulate social interaction." (Boyer 2001, 152) This term refers to information that triggers a behavioral or mental response to a situation without regard to the relative importance of the information. Gossip may be the most obvious example in which enticing, but not particularly relevant strategic information, is shared.

Lacking the ability to read minds, humans are limited in the accuracy with which they can determine strategic information. Our perspectives, individual abilities of discernment and the willingness of others to share information inhibit our acquisition of flawless and relevant strategic information. Our assumptions about the mental state or motives or other people in our social lives may or may not be correct. We know that complete and accurate information about ourselves is not accessible to others and this is precisely why humans perceive their separate nature so acutely. We are always alone whether or not we are lonely. The individual has the opportunity and the responsibility to decide whether or not this state of isolation is a source of freedom or alienation.

Fear of Freedom

Tragically, while we have the capability to achieve freedom, we find the idea terrifying. In his 1941 book, Escape From Freedom, Fromm explains three ways in which humans avoid the discomfort associated with transcending our biological, psychological and sociological impediments to freedom—authoritarianism, destructiveness and conformity.

Authoritarianism provides an escape when individuals either willingly submit their decision-making to an authority figure or become an authority figure applying structure to others. Dictatorial governments such as Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union or Peron's Argentina are obvious examples of authoritarianism but the tendency is

not always as overt. The typical classroom environment or church hierarchy provides examples of seemingly benign authoritarianism—although they perpetuate a social climate in which youth become conditioned to submitting to authority and are therefore less prepared to make independent decisions as adults.

Subtle indications of authoritarianism crop up within American mass media. During the July 4, 2005 10 a.m. edition of *MSNBC Live,* anchor Amy Robach implied vocalizing dissent against an American leader constituted a lack of patriotism.

> The President there striking a patriotic chord in West Virginia at the West Virginia University. On this Fourth of July during his Independence Day address, he thanked those who have served and who are serving this country. He said that we are all praying for families who have lost loved ones during this time of war -- the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This, by the way, was Bush's third Independence Day trip to the state of West Virginia, of course, a state that certainly helped him win the election with those five electoral votes, a swing state. Certainly, the key is paying tribute to and thanking clearly for their support of him during his presidential race. And he certainly spoke to those who came out, and many have said they came out to support him. ***There were a couple of protesters we heard with a few signs, but for the most part, looks like a very patriotic crowd there.*** (Schulman 2005)

The underlying message is that submission to authority is acceptable behavior and the societal ethical norm while the independent voice is not. After repeated exposure this lesson breeds compliance and apathy as the audience associates loyalty with unquestioned silence. The irony of the broadcast lies with the date and occasion of the speech. Thomas Jefferson's writings and actions are a large part of what we celebrate on Independence Day. A man who later went on to say, "All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent."

While some Americans are content to rally behind the administration despite personal reservations,[20] the more conservative branch of the Republican Party and the Christian far right are escaping from personal freedom by attempting to propagate and

legislate their own coordinated agenda. On April 24, 2005, well-known fundamentalists, including a United States Senator, used divisive tactics to influence a receptive audience when they simultaneously addressed Christian congregations throughout the United States in an event dubbed "Justice Sunday." They claimed Democrats were fighting judicial appointments based solely on the candidate's faith. They focused on the erroneous message that liberals are devoid of faith and contemptuous of it. They obstructed a quest for absolute power behind a façade of righteousness: defeating the filibuster has absolutely nothing to do with religious mandate and everything to do with secular authority.

Senator Frist, James Dobson and others involved in this charade have either forgotten the founding American principles or have chosen to disregard them. Clearly they do not accept that all men are created equal and that they are endowed with certain unalienable rights. The saddest aspect of the event is that the person in whose house they spoke preached the same creed they so blithely ignore. Jesus' ministry was anti-authoritarian. He understood that our personal relationship with God and humane treatment of our brothers and sisters is of more importance than theological exactitude or political power.

Sigmund Freud conceives of human nature as being essentially competitive and asocial. Competition and mutual hostility are inherent in human nature—so there is a necessary conflict between human nature and society. Fromm disagrees and views this conflict as a product of social circumstance. As western history progressed through feudalism to the industrial age our relationship to nature grew increasingly acrimonious.

> Being "freaks of nature" and by the gift of our reason transcend it, we have tried to solve our existential problem by giving up the Messianic vision of harmony

> between humankind and nature by conquering nature, by transforming it to our own purposes until the conquest has become more and more equivalent to destruction. Our spirit of conquest and hostility has blinded us to the facts that natural resources have their limits and can eventually be exhausted, and that nature will fight back against human rapaciousness. Industrial society has contempt for nature—as well as for all things not machine-made…(Fromm 1976, 8)

Freud considers destructiveness an instinct arising from sexual drives while Fromm considers destructiveness a response to fear. The individual proactively destroys his environment to prevent it from destroying him. This mode of escape from freedom results in random acts of brutality, humiliation, vandalism and other destructive behaviors. Our present "War on Terrorism" will remain stagnated until the root psychological, economic and sociological causes are recognized and addressed. Terrorists are not attacking the west because they hate our culture and ideologies. They attack because they either fear becoming victims first or already feel victimized.

Physical violence and criminal property violations are the most visible forms of destructiveness. Less obvious forms abound today—legislation legalizing corporate despoiling of the environment, an energy policy relying on the depletion of fossil fuels with little or no attention paid to renewable sources of clean energy and a media blithely ignoring the genocidal crisis in the Sudan.[21]

Conformity presents an interesting contrast with authoritarianism. Authoritarianism emphasizes a hierarchical structure while conformity suggests that equality is the preferred social structure. In reality the two methods of escape from freedom work very well together when conformity as a socio-ethical norm results in a compliant and complacent object for the oppressor. The example above concerning the media report about the president's Independence Day speech illustrates how well they function cooperatively.

The incidence of fads in popular culture demonstrates how powerful the urge to conform has become. Advertising is an amazingly powerful medium for disseminating the concept that equivalence is synonymous with equality. Erich Fromm refers to it as essentially an opiate saying, "these methods of dulling the capacity for critical thinking are more dangerous to our democracy than many of the open attacks against it." (Fromm 1941, 128) When effective advertising tells us a particular product or service will earn us instantaneous acceptance among our peers we are presented with a virtually effortless resolution to our need for security.

Fromm's suggestion that conformity is an escape from freedom echoes Frankl's diagnosis of mass existential anxiety and reflects Maslow's identification of a human need for security. One of Frankl's symptoms of anxiety neurosis is collective thinking. "Man would like to submerge himself in the masses. Actually, he is only drowned in the masses; he abandons himself as a free and responsible being." (Frankl 1986, xxii) These perspectives point to a less than sane society but do leave room for optimism as they allow for individual transcendence. As Chilton's book, The Biology of Transcendence, indicates, their optimism may not be misplaced. Fromm recognized the importance of early development and family structure prior to the neuroscientific developments cited by Chilton.

Family Structure

Fromm believed the family structure helped determine which means of escape an individual would ultimately tend to use. When fear functions as the primary emotional state, whether recognized or not, a vicious cycle can occur. The parent unknowingly transmits a sense of unease to the child, inadvertently creating another generation

dominated by the reptilian hindbrain that provides for limited reaction based on fear and impedes the development of the forebrain that provides for creative action based on reason and compassion. In order to encourage development of the emotional and intellectual forebrain, the parent must become conscious of the prevalence of fear and protect the child from its negative influences.

This approach to parenting runs counter to contemporary prevailing wisdom that insists children be prepared for "the real world" as soon as possible. Parents are counseled to expose their children to reality rather than shelter them from its painful aspects. The supposition is a sheltered child will develop into an emotionally immature, intellectually naïve, easily wounded adult when nothing could be further from the truth.

Fromm identifies two types of unproductive families, the symbiotic and the withdrawing. A symbiotic relationship is one in which two organisms are unable to survive without the other. In a symbiotic family, some members are subsumed by others and thus do not develop robust independent personalities of their own. The stereotype of the overbearing mother is an example of this phenomenon. The child's trepidations may simply be a reflection of the mother's concerns. The strong patriarchal family structure in many traditional societies is prone to functioning in this manner. Children are raised to mirror their parents' expectations rather than discover their own unique gifts.

The converse may happen in which the child dominates the parents either overtly or through manipulation. The parents' existence becomes predicated on service to the child. This is not as unlikely as it may sound, particularly in a contemporary consumer society in which parents feel their primary responsibility is to provide their children with a happy childhood, especially by means of material goods. The social paradigm of

progress implying “more is better” has helped generate such an approach to family structure.

The symbiotic family naturally results in an enculturation to dominance and submission. Although one cannot exist without the other, the hierarchical placement of each individual is of paramount importance. Once again we encounter paradox as this family structure runs contrary to our contemporary value of equality but “this is the way people lived for thousands of years. It is a very stable social system, it allows for a great deal of love and friendship, and billions of people live in it still.” (Boeree 1997) The symbiotic family structure produces individuals most likely to engage in the authoritarian means of escaping freedom either as oppressors or willing submissives.

The withdrawing family structure is exhibited by two different parenting styles. The puritanical “cold” version in which affection is doled out or withheld based upon the child’s behavior, which is measured against very high and specific standards. This version is older and is most prevalent in northern Europe and parts of Asia. Fromm links this family structure to areas in which merchants form a powerful base within the society. Children are driven to succeed in the manner dictated by the culture.

> This puritanical style of family encourages the destructive escape from freedom, which is internalized until circumstances (such as war) allow its release. I might add that this kind of family more immediately encourages perfectionism -- living by the rules -- which is also a way of avoiding freedom that Fromm does not discuss. When the rules are more important than people, destructiveness is inevitable. (Boeree 1997)

The modern family is the second form of withdrawing family structure and is prevalent in the United States. The approach to discipline within this family is a result of confusing permissive parenting with positive parenting. Parents who subscribe to positive parenting disciplinary techniques eschew the violence and the disrespect inherent in

corporal punishment and guilt inducement. Permissive parents carry this a step further and attempt to relate to their children as equals rather than responsible guides and caregivers. Their desire to become playmates rather than parents results in unnatural emotional control and a lack of substantial adult counsel. As a result the children seek acceptance and guidance from their peers and obtain their values from popular culture. This family structure produces an individual most likely to seek an escape from freedom through conformity.

According to Fromm, the family structure most likely to produce individuals willing to embrace freedom rather than seek escape from it is the loving family. Parents understand and accept the responsibility for instructing their children in a loving and caring environment. Parents encourage their children to develop sound reasoning ability and to take responsibility for themselves. Self-discipline rather than obedience is the objective of parental disciplinary measures. More importantly, the children become aware of their responsibility toward others as well. Parents can adopt two important aspects to childrearing to support their offspring's development into mature adults with a strong sense of self and a creative intellect capable of addressing the world's problems rather than retreating from these challenges out of fear. Loving families nurture their children and recognize the primary importance of modeling desirable behaviors.

Nurturing must begin before a child draws his first breath. Brain development begins in-utero with developmental spurts immediately prior to birth, after birth and at key intervals throughout a child's life until approximately twenty-one years of age. When the gestating mother is agitated, depressed or fearful, the hindbrain develops at the expense of the forebrain. Mothers and their partners must begin positive nurturing

literally from the moment they consider conceiving a child. This is one reason why reproductive education and conscious personal decision-making are vital. A wanted and valued child has a developmental advantage from the start.

Jack Kornfield says, “Our birth temperament or karmic tendencies are shaped by early feedback and mirroring from our childhood environment to create a sense of who we hold ourselves to be. If we have good bonding with and respect from our parents, a healthy sense of self develops.” (Kornfield 1993, 206) Bonding is a term used freely without a true understanding of its import. Most mothers fantasize about the instant bonding they will have with their newborn without realizing the effort true bonding entails. Breastfeeding and other bonding practices may be natural but natural does not automatically translate into easy. Mother and child require a good deal of support from their family and friends to transition as seamlessly as possible into a bonded relationship. Sleep deprivation is certainly no help. Mothers love their child from birth but it takes time to fall in love with your child. Families working together to accomplish this goal have a greater chance of helping their children develop a healthy sense of self.

Positive nurturing ignores the preposterous notion an infant, or even an older child, can be spoiled with too much loving attention. Children can be enculturated with too much distracting material acquisitions or too little interaction with their caregivers, but accommodating their mental and emotional need for positive affirmation and genuine love can never “spoil” them. The idea children can be spoiled is related to the concept that children are incomplete adults rather than complete children. As Pearce indicates in a 1998 interview, “The three-year-old-is not an incomplete five-year-old, but a complete, total and whole three-year-old. If a child is given all the nurturing to be here as a three-

year-old, they'll be the perfect five year old later on, and so on." (Walker 1998) As painful as the teenage accusation is, adults do forget what it was like to be a child, especially when it comes to reacting from a child's perspective. Adults too often ascribe mature motives to immature behavior not realizing what would be abnormal in an adult is perfectly normal, sometimes even delightful, in a child.

Nurturing probably comes more naturally for most people than the associated parenting aspect of modeling. Instructing a child to "do as we say" instead of providing silent guidance and acknowledging they will "do as we do" is the majority position with respect to discipline. Parenting books abound with all manner of creative disciplinary approaches and punishments. Very few encourage the more relaxed approach of allowing children to be children and behaving the way you expect them to behave when they have attained your level of maturity. Just as we treat a tension headache with a quick swallow of two aspirin, parents seek the fastest resolution to perceived misbehavior. Modeling works more slowly, particularly if the parent is also struggling to adjust his or her own behaviors to comply with desired results. Modeling takes time and energy; two commodities we are enculturated to believe are in short supply.

Modeling requires interaction with our children. According to Pearce, the triad of family needs is comprised of audiovisual communication, nurturing and play and these three needs constitute "the springboard to transcendence itself. Our failure to provide all three disrupts intelligence and social development but at the same time supplies the means for enculturating us, thereby sustaining culture." (Pearce 2002, 99) In other words, parents must engage their children rather than allow other institutions such as television, school and social norms to expropriate the emotionally safe and caring environment

provided by the family. “The family triad includes by default nature’s imperative that a model be given for all aspects of development…no model, no development.” (Pearce 2002, 100-101) If parents want children who exhibit a curiosity about their world, they must turn off their own television shows and spend time exploring their own intellectual interests. If parents want to prepare and equip their children to be present to life rather than prepare for life, they must set an example and actively demonstrate what it means to fully engage.

Fromm sometimes suggests children will develop similarly to their parents and at other times suggests they will develop opposite to how they have been treated by their parents. He never provides a definitive prognosis, which is not surprising considering an exception can always be demonstrated when predicting the outcome of a nurturing experience. Not all abused children become abusers themselves and some inmates in the American penal system were likely raised by loving parents. The truth is found in probabilities and weighing risks. A child raised in a loving and stimulating environment is *more likely* to have higher intelligence and in turn become a nurturing parent. A child raised in a neglectful and dangerous environment is *more likely* to have lower intelligence and in turn become a withdrawn or abusive parent.

Fromm’s exploration of family types is highly relevant in the context of faith communities. Familial language is prevalent in the Christian heritage of Unitarian Universalism. The church functioning as the primary family is evident in the letters of Paul. Christians are children of God and therefore brothers and sisters. Paul uses the phrase “my brothers” more than sixty times in his letters.[22] The familial language of our Christian heritage is present in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. In 1975, Unitarian

Universalist composer, musician and artisan Carole Etzler used the music of the popular African American spiritual, *Jacob's Ladder* to write a popular hymn entitled *We Are Dancing Sarah's Circle*, each verse ending with the refrain "sisters, brothers, all."[23]

The modern social phenomena of the mobile nuclear family, the "broken home" and the "blended family" call religious life to an ever more important role in our lives. People blessed with close extended families must still interact with others being raised in a variety of family environments. Religion must help provide the nurturing and modeling necessary for both child development and adult spiritual fulfillment. A faith community should educate, encourage and guide rather than dictate and chastise. The community must creatively and earnestly demonstrate the shared commitment to its doctrines, principles and values. Sermons extolling the virtue of compassion are meaningless without sincere social action rooted in compassion. Members of a healthy faith community must take care to function as Fromm's loving family rather than exist as a withdrawing or symbiotic family structure.

Fromm's developmental theory may be the weakest area of his work because of his blending of biological and sociological influences upon human psychology without the corresponding neuroscientific research available only in the last few decades. Nature and nurture *both* contribute to the development of the human personality and potential. Nature comprises the biological-genetic influence and nurture comprises the influence of history, society and structure. Fromm's personality theory recognizes the influence of both but weighs more heavily on the latter. He posits an ideal Productive Orientation for which there is no societal model developed yet and four Nonproductive Orientations corresponding with periods of history, societal types and family structures.

Character Orientation

Fromm's personality theory includes Freud's assumption that a single character trait is far less indicative of personality than an organized synthesis of multiple character traits. (See Fig 5.) People who passively wait for their needs to be met and assume the satisfaction will come from beyond themselves exhibit the receptive orientation. Fromm notes this character type is prevalent in environments where people do not have to work hard to reap the benefits of their resources and among the socio-economic bottom of a stratified society—those who depend upon the mercy and charity of others. The receptive orientation is associated with the symbiotic family structure in which the child is swallowed by the parents and with submission to authoritarianism as a means of avoiding the fear associated with freedom.

People who believe they must take from others what is necessary to satisfy their own needs exhibit the exploitative orientation. Exploitative characters assign value based on theft, intimidation and coercion and prize forceful acquisitions more highly than gifts or the products of their own effort. The colonial conquest of many portions of the world in the previous five centuries typifies the exploitative character. This orientation is associated with the symbiotic family structure and with the dominance of authoritarianism as a means of avoiding the fear associated with freedom.

People who view everything—including people—as possessions and go to great lengths to preserve their property exhibit the hoarding orientation. Fromm correlated this orientation with the Protestant work ethic and Capitalism. "Man became a cog in the vast economic machine—an important one if he had much capital, an insignificant one if he had none—but always a cog to serve a purpose outside of himself." (Fromm 1941, 110) Self-worth and validation of God's favor became dependent upon acquisitions. The

hoarding orientation is associated with the withdrawing family structure and with destructiveness as a means of avoiding the fear associated with freedom.

People who link success not with capital gain but with popular acceptance exhibit the marketing orientation. They expect to engage in transactions rather than relationships and believe appearance is of paramount importance. Fromm links this orientation most closely with the modern industrial society of which contemporary America is a large part. The marketing orientation is associated with the cool withdrawing family structure and with conformity as a means of avoiding the fear associated with freedom.

The prevalence of youth and vitality in advertising, uniformity in appearance of chain stores and restaurants and unprecedented levels of consumer debt lend credence to Fromm's association of the marketing orientation with our form of social organization and our place in history. The reverence granted people of wealth hints at the pervasiveness of the hoarding orientation as well. The growing disparity between the upper and lower income brackets indicates the danger of a potential increase in the receptive and exploitative character types. Fromm postulates an ideal character type he refers to as the productive orientation.

> The "productive orientation" of personality refers to a fundamental attitude, a *mode of relatedness* in all realms of human experience. It covers mental, emotional, and sensory responses to others, to oneself, and to things. Productiveness is man's ability to use his powers and to realize the potentialities inherent in him. If we say he must use his powers we imply that he must be free and not dependent on someone who controls his powers. We imply, furthermore, that he is guided by reason, since he can make use of his powers only if he knows what they are, how to use them, and what to use them for. Productiveness means that he experiences himself as the embodiment of his powers and as the "actor"; that he feels himself one with his powers and at the same time that they are not marked and alienated from him. (Fromm 1990, 84)

Fromm Character Types

Receptive Orientation

Positive Aspect	Negative Aspect
Accepting	Passive, without initiative
Responsive	Opinionless, characterless
Devoted	Submissive
Modest	Without pride
Charming	Parasitical
Adaptable	Unprincipled
Socially Adjusted	Servile, without self-confidence
Idealistic	Unrealistic
Sensitive	Cowardly
Polite	Spineless
Optimistic	Wishful thinking
Trusting	Gullible
Tender	Sentimental

Exploitative Orientation

Positive Aspect	Negative Aspect
Active	Exploitative
Able to take initiative	Aggressive
Able to make claims	Egocentric
Proud	Conceited
Impulsive	Rash
Self-confident	Arrogant
Captivating	Seducing

Hoarding Orientation

Positive Aspect	Negative Aspect
Practical	Unimaginative
Economical	Stingy
Careful	Suspicious
Reserved	Cold
Patient	Lethargic
Cautious	Anxious
Steadfast, tenacious	Stubborn
Imperturbable	Indolent
Composed under stress	Inert
Orderly	Pedantic
Methodical	Obsessional
Loyal	Possessive

Marketing Orientation

Positive Aspect	Negative Aspect
Purposeful	Opportunistic
Able to change	Inconsistent
Youthful	Childish
Forward-looking	Without a future or a past
Open-minded	Without principle and values
Social	Unable to be alone
Experimenting	Aimless
Undogmatic	Relativistic
Efficient	Overactive
Curious	Tactless
Intelligent	Intellectualistic
Adaptable	Undiscriminating
Tolerant	Indifferent
Witty	Silly
Generous	Wasteful

Figure 5. Fromm's Unproductive Character Types (Fromm 1990, 114-116)

Unlike the nonproductive character types (See Fig. 5), Fromm does not offer a list of positive and negative aspects for the productive orientation. Fromm declined to do so because he felt the productive character to be too unpredictable. He uses productiveness in a manner emphasizing creativity and transcendent experience rather than simply an abundance of activity. Additionally, Fromm conceives of the productive orientation as an

ideal characterization rather than a realistically achievable character type to be exhibited by any individual. Instead he imagined a combination of some aspects of the productive and nonproductive orientation to explain his inclusion of positive character traits in the nonproductive orientations. In reality, the production orientation would consist of functioning creatively, perfecting capabilities and maximizing positive character traits within the dominant non-productive orientation. This is reminiscent of actualization, Maslow's highest level of need, and engaging in Frankl's three means of addressing meaning in life: creativity, experience and relationships, and attitude.

Productiveness, as Fromm uses the term, should never be confused with activity. Watching television, painting by numbers and lying to a spouse are all activities but they are hardly productive for addressing the four core human needs according to Fromm—relatedness, transcendence, rootedness and personal identity. He says, "productiveness is an attitude which every human being is capable of, unless he is mentally and emotionally crippled." (Fromm 1990, 85) and also says, "…by far the most important object of productiveness is man himself." (Fromm 1990, 91)

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi[24], a professor and former chairman of the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago, has spent his life studying the concept of satisfaction and fulfillment and is a leading researcher on creativity. His findings echo Fromm's conclusions when he describes people who have found ways to escape the depressing complacency of our modern culture.

> These are people who, regardless of their material conditions, have been able to improve the quality of their lives, who are satisfied, and who have a way of making those around them also a bit more happy. Such individuals lead vigorous lives, are open to a variety of experiences, keep on learning until the day they die, and have strong ties and commitments to other people and to the environment in which they live. (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, 10)

Professor Csikszentmihalyi's description could very well be a composite of an individual actively living the principles and purposes affirmed and promoted by the Unitarian Universalist Association. Fromm's core human needs and the inherent paradox generating a tension between personal freedom and a need for community are also present in a life governed by the Unitarian Universalist principles.

The Paradox of Relatedness and Independence

Productivity is positive freedom in action and includes comprehending, acting and relating. For the free person to be capable of comprehension and relationships, the logical conclusion is that productivity requires both reason and love. Erich Fromm wrote:

> Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward an "object" of love. If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism. Yet most people believe that love is constituted by the object, not the faculty. (Fromm 1956, 38-39)

Viktor Frankl's experience in the concentration camps illustrated love as a creative action rather than a condition requiring a physical object. Not only were individuals wrenched from the presence of their loved ones, they often did not know whether their loved ones were alive or dead, but still found strength and solace in the act of loving them.

Fromm does not restrict love to the personal realm but extends it to the social realm as a character trait. As a character trait it must transcend relationships with family and friends and be a part of every relationship. "There is no 'division of labor' between love for one's own and love for strangers." (Fromm 1956, 108) Fromm's definition of the character trait is a direct correlation to the admonitions found in sacred texts worldwide. [25]

- Christianity: Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. *(Luke 6:30-38, NIV)*

- Buddhism: He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me!" In those who harbor such thoughts hatred is not appeased. He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me!" In those who do not harbor such thoughts hatred is appeased. Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world; through love alone they cease. This is an eternal law. *(Dhammapada 3-5)*

- Sikhism: What kind of love is this that to another can shift? Says Nanak, True lovers are those who are forever absorbed in the Beloved. Whoever discriminates between treatment held good or bad, Is not a true lover--he rather is caught in calculations. *(Adi Granth, Asa-ki-Var, M.2, p. 474)*

- Hinduism: A superior being does not render evil for evil; this is a maxim one should observe; the ornament of virtuous persons is their conduct. One should never harm the wicked or the good or even criminals meriting death. A noble soul will ever exercise compassion even towards those who enjoy injuring others or those of cruel deeds when they are actually committing them--for who is without fault? (*Ramayana, Yuddha Kanda 115)*

- Judaism: God said, "Resemble Me; just as I repay good for evil so do you also repay good for evil." (*Exodus Rabbah 26.2)*

Fromm's description of love as a character trait merely echoes the moral and ethical dictates known to religious communities for millennia—moral and ethical dictates that continue to be a struggle within the human psyche and among human societies. Maslow, Frankl and Fromm all acknowledge basic needs that comprise human nature. They begin with the individual, move outward to encompass interpersonal relations and then return to the individual who is fully actualized, fulfilling meaning or functioning productively. In other words, to become a truly free individual and satisfy the spiritual

need for fulfillment and connectedness, one must do so within the context of relatedness—a communal environment.

The character of the communal environment can either aid or hinder an individual's journey towards a productive orientation. Existence within a mass obstructs the potential while participation in a community provides a safe haven in which the individual can explore freedom without the need to escape via authoritarianism, destructiveness or conformity. A healthy Unitarian Universalist congregation can provide exactly that. Encouraging spiritual growth, accepting one another and allowing for a free and responsible search for truth and meaning in an atmosphere of equity, justice and compassion is part of the creative activity necessary for individuals to fulfill the basic needs of relatedness, rootedness, personal identity and transcendence.

The order in which I place these needs is deliberate. Relationships provide roots. Roots provide the security necessary to develop a personal identity. Personal identity provides the baseline from which to experience transcendence. Erich Fromm's personality theory, explanation of love and description of our fear of freedom speak directly to the core of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. We come together as a community to enable each individual to develop a productive orientation thereby improving the individual, the community, the society and the world. Unitarian Universalists can experience this in a mythological context.

CHAPTER IV:

IDENTIFYING MYTHOLOGY WITHIN A PLURALITY OF BELIEFS

The word "myth" is problematic. In the vernacular of modern American English the word is generally accepted as referring to a lie, particularly an outmoded belief that has been disproved. The Christian scriptures use the Greek term for myth in the same way. According to Amos Wilder, "myth, *mythos*, occurs only five times and these in the latest writings of the canon, always in the pejorative sense of heretical fables and old wives' tales." (Campbell 1970, 70) This common usage influences perspective when the concept being addressed may be more in line with the following definitions:

- "Myth…is an imagery in terms of which we make sense out of life." (Campbell 1970, 14)
- "myth is the expression of man's total response to his encounter with reality and his subsequent effort to secure his own existence meaningfully in the face of that reality." (Campbell 1970, 52)
- "myth, a way of looking at oneself including one's body in relation to the world." (Campbell 1970, 210)
- "It is myth because it touches what is ultimate in man and in his life, expresses it symbolically, and provides an inner perspective by which the mysteries of human existence are felt and entered into. " (Campbell 1970, 177)

Language is quite a barrier when definitions of a single word encompass the polarities of untruth and ultimate truth.

According to Joseph Campbell, "Mythology is the language of the self, speaking to the ego system and the ego system has to learn how to read it. And for the most part we in our world have forgotten." (Campbell, *Mythos: 1.1*) The explosion of scientific activity over the last few centuries and the success of Cartesian philosophy—which has successfully divorced mind and matter—resulted in a loss of connectivity with the sacredness of existence. Literal scriptural interpretations serving as the basis for fundamentalist theologies and complete reliance on science and reason are an indication of the amnesia of which Campbell speaks.

The scientific revolution brought sweeping transformations faster than religious institutions could adapt. Astronomical discoveries, for example, challenged the cosmological relevance of traditional myths while the application of human reason to philosophy challenged the sociological relevance of traditional myths. Higher criticism in literature as applied to the Bible revealed ambiguity on holy ground where none had previously existed. This developing reliance on science and reason worked against the collective cultural symbol systems. Symbols attach to emotional strength and the stronger the attachment, the more resistant the individual is to change. While some can live in ambiguity, others are stirred to great passion by the challenge. (Wilson 2004) The evolution of a concept of the divine from autocratic monarch to automated machine (Campbell 1970, Alan W. Watts) during this critical period of development is understandable but ultimately has proven unsatisfactory.

This continued feeling of disassociation and the resultant longing is evident today in the bulging self-help shelves in bookstores, proliferation of televangelists, lag time in securing a therapy consultation, and widespread appeal of the "new age" philosophies and practices. Western civilization seems desperate for a myth to convert disassociation into meaning and clings to any idea indicating promise, but does so without the meaningful criticism necessary to determine if the myth is a valid life-sustaining one. According to Philip Wheelwright, a specialist in literary criticism of mythology, "Our current motivating ideas are not myths but ideologies, lacking transcendental significance." (Campbell 1970, 114)

School children, including teenagers capable of symbolic interpretation, are taught traditional mythology as trite little stories intended to literally explain natural phenomena. The myth of Demeter and Persephone is offered as an ancient explanation of why the earth experiences four seasons rather than teaching us "that mothering is not a simple matter of taking care of the immediate needs of another; it is a recognition that each individual has a special character and fate—qualities of soul—that must be safeguarded even at the risk of losing ordinary assurances of safety and normality." (Moore 1992, 45) The quad-fold purpose of myth as espoused by Joseph Campbell; mystical, cosmological, sociological and psychological is truncated into a solely cosmological intent which given our present scientific knowledge renders these stories absurd. Their mystical and psychological relevance has been forgotten by the masses in their quest for meaning through less spiritual sources.

Joseph Campbell refers to two types of mythology—the right and left hand paths. The right hand path refers to the local mythology of the village compound and is fixed in

a provincial image of the world. The left hand path refers to the universal mythology based upon elementary ideas and human imagination—the archetypal realm. (Campbell, *Mythos: 1.1*) Modern American Christians interpreting their foundational myths relative to actual events in Jerusalem two thousand years ago are struggling with the tension between literalizing a "local" mythology displaced by time and facing the same challenge as their early Christian forefathers—that of "restructuring of myth in close relation to social and cultural change." (Campbell 1970, 86) In other words, they are recognizing the need to explore the left hand path of Christian mythopoesis. Controversial clergy, such as the former Episcopal bishop, John Shelby Spong[26], are attempting to do just that.

Individuals resistant to restructuring find themselves either clinging to literalism in a state of incongruence between their religious myths and scientific evidence or abandoning their belief structure as antiquated and irrelevant. The irony is the latter are also applying literal interpretations but then dismissing them as absurd. Neither option is optimal to human health. This dilemma is not limited to the religious realm as contemporary cultural myths can also be at odds with biology. There is an equal danger in establishing a set of cultural symbols based on science. "I have the right answer!" can be as divisive and inconsequent. Belief structures must evolve with scientific advancements to maintain contemporary relevance, but scientific advancements must also harmonize with what it means to be human.

Joseph Campbell claims that, "To be effective, a mythology…must be up-to-date scientifically, based on a concept of the universe that is current, accepted, and convincing." (Campbell 1970, 144) This may prove challenging in a world that continues to grow smaller through technological advancements, yet is heterogenous sociologically,

religiously, politically and economically. Restructuring provincial myths and tapping into traditional myths are important actions that return us to a state of congruence while remaining mindful of the benefits of pluralism.

Myths are effective or ineffective not right or wrong. (Campbell, *Mythos 1.5*) Western culture is in need of a new myth, one that illustrates how humanity relates not just to society but also to the entire planet and the cosmos. The myth has yet to be revealed as a prevailing worldview although some seekers are recognizing the need. "You can't predict what a myth is going to be any more than you can predict what you are going to dream tonight. Myths and dreams come from the same place. They come from realizations of some kind that have to find expression in symbolic form." (Campbell 2001) Perhaps the myth will be recognized as more people dream of a world in which humanity lives in harmony with our planet and our cosmos.

The Mythic Problem

The thesis of Dr. Eugene G. d'Aquili's[27] paper, "The Myth-Ritual Complex: A Biogenetic Structural Analysis," is that "the generation of myth, its structure and transformations, as well as the resolution of the myth problem via ceremonial ritual are derived from the functioning of neural structures, which evolved and became progressively elaborated because of the adaptive advantage they conferred on their bearers." (d'Aquili 1993, 45) The "myth problem" is the feeling of distance or separation between humanity and its source. In the Western monotheistic traditions this may be experienced as a perception of estrangement from the Deity. Erich Fromm explains the phenomenon in terms of becoming aware of being outside of nature.

According to Dr. d'Aquili, humans are compelled to explain their world by means of mythology, whether it is the construction of social myths or individual dreams and fantasies. He says that, "…as long as human beings are aware of the contingency of their existence in the face of what often appears to be a capricious universe, they must construct myths to orient themselves within that universe." (d'Aquili 1993, 62) The cognitive operators within the human neural structure—holistic, causal, abstract, binary, formal quantitative and value—are what confer mythopoeic ability, with the binary operator being of particular importance.

The binary operator enables humans to arrive at meaning by arranging input into pairs with varying degrees of polarity enabling each pole to establish meaning by contrast with the opposite pole. In other words, humans would be unable to recognize a joyful experience without being able to contrast it with sorrow and the concept of 'up' has no meaning without the perception of 'down.' Dr. d'Aquili notes that myth addresses existence by means of polarities such as life-death and good-evil. A myth is most meaningful, or effective in Joseph Campbell's terms, when it achieves a resolution between diametrically opposed antitheses—in our case, the paradoxical need for both individuality and communality.

The Occidental Resolution

The Occidental concept of the divine is transcendent from the world whether the deity is the omnipotent, omniscient, ex-nihilo Creator of the Jews, Christians and Muslims or a pantheon of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses in so-called "pagan cults." The Celtic, Norse and Greco-Roman deities may interact with mankind and influence events but they are not immanent in the fabric of the universe. Unlike Oriental

thought that understands transcendence as meaning beyond human knowledge and expression, biblical perceptions of transcendence are absolute. God is utterly and completely independent of the universe over which he reigns. A worldview of this type reflects an earthly monarchy in which a ruler sets himself over and above those he rules and probably considers himself ungoverned by the laws he establishes. There is "an absolute distinction in being between Creature and Creator, which can be bridged, and even then but precariously, only by man's obedience to a particular, quite specific, schedule of announced rules." (Campbell 1964, 109) This is reminiscent of the precarious relationship between monarch and subject, although the rules are accepted as ethical and moral constructs instead of legislative statutes.

This contractual arrangement between Creature and Creator, whether formalized by a covenant like that of the Jews or understood by means of the favors and curses of the gods, results in the assumption of free will and its moral corollary of individual responsibility. Campbell considers the principles of free will and individual responsibility to be a distinguishing characteristic of specifically Occidental myth. (Campbell 1964, 24) Greek heroes such as Odysseus and Perseus are capable of defying the will of the gods—but not without consequences. Moses, Samson, the state of Israel and the fates of the early Christian martyrs Stephen and Paul are Judeo-Christian examples of man's ability to make a choice with respect to his relationship to the divine and his fellow man.

An appreciation for scientific inquiry and rationalism combined with these principles leads Campbell to conclude that "chief creative development in the period of the waning Middle Ages and approaching Reformation was the rise of the principle of individual conscience over ecclesiastical authority." (Campbell 1964, 504) This historical

development in world mythology was not easily achieved and it cannot be considered a complete transformation. The clash between the European elevation of the individual and the near Eastern worldview that suppressed the rights of the individual below the needs of the social order—be it a clan, a nation or a church—has been a major obstacle.

Another characteristic of Occidental mythology is that "The patriarchal point of view is distinguished from the earlier archaic view by its setting apart of all pairs-of-opposites—male and female, life and death, true and false, good and evil—as though they were absolutes in themselves and not merely aspects of the larger entity of life."(Campbell 1964, 26) The Oriental yin yang (See Fig 6.) shows opposites flowing into one another, each containing a part of the other, which symbolically represents the concept of universal unity absent in Occidental thought. Instead light and dark are utterly opposed as are the good and evil they represent.

Figure 6. Yin Yang

Zoroastrian creation mythology postulates two creative powers, Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Life, Wisdom and Light and his antagonist Angra Mainyu, The Demon of the Lie. Universal experience is viewed as an on-going struggle between good and evil with good ultimately prevailing. Evil is viewed as an inherent component of creation not an accident after the fact. Judeo-Christian creationism envisions a perfectly good creation,

"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day." (Genesis 1:31, NIV) The myth of the Garden of Eden brings the opposition of evil into our world, a dualist perspective that persists today.

The Occident resolves the mythic problem by postulating a transcendent Creator and establishing legal and ethical mores that theoretically enable an individual to transcend the gap through proper behavior and reverence. Mythically, transcendence is generally allowed by the Creator rather than attained by the Created.

The Oriental Resolution

In the time of the hieratic city-state, 3500 – 2500 BC, the entire city was a mirror of the cosmic order. A highly organized society based on specialties and classes is structured to maintain harmony with the mathematically ordered universe. The efforts of the royal and priestly class are devoted to understanding and remaining in accord with the perceived rhythm of the cosmos. Such a perspective results in several important developments that have remained in the philosophy of the Orient. Joseph Campbell contrasts the Occident as ethical-historical and the Oriental as metaphysical-poetic mythological systems. The Orient has a psychological emphasis that seeks the divine within and the Occident has a relational emphasis that seeks the divine beyond.

The notion of a cosmic law accepted as a god-given natural order provides the basis for recognized virtues—an individual's function in the order of society supercedes his personal desires and the virtuous individual performs his or her functions within the accepted framework. The general concept is known as *maat* in Egypt, *me* in Sumer, *ṛta* in the Vedas, *dharma* in India and *tao* in the Far East. By contrast to the Occidental

exaltation of the individual, the Oriental principle of order is a "systematic, steady, continually drumming devaluation of the "I" principle. (Campbell 1962, 23)

A mythic view that recognizes a divine order to the universe naturally conceives of divinity as being immanent rather than completely transcendent. Time is perceived as cyclical rather than linear, which provides fertile psychological ground for the belief in reincarnation rather than a single lifetime followed by ultimate reward or punishment. As a consequence, no single creation myth exists as it does in the three major occidental monotheistic faiths.

Everything in creation is of divine substance including humanity. Our perception is a fractured illusion. A forest of quaking aspen trees appears to be composed of separate specimens but below the ground they are all connected through the roots as one large organism. The individual trees represent the Indian concept of *maya,* the illusory and transient appearance of the physical world, while the presence of the unseen roots represents the Indian concept of *brahman*, the single absolute being pervading the universe and found within the individual, *ātman*. Everything is connected and everything is one. Duality in the Biblical tradition taken to its absolute extreme by the transcendent gap between God and man—and the Christian theological tension between the spiritual and material realms—is a matter of perception rather than reality.

The absence of an utterly transcendent Creator and a mythic "fall" analogous to the Garden of Eden leaves a sense of divinity immanent in the world and within each person. As Joseph Campbell quotes Dr. Suzuki,[28] "Every baby is a Buddha baby." (Campbell, *Mythos 2.2*) This perspective is the ultimate heresy in western monotheistic traditions. In the Occident, rules are handed down from above while in the Orient, rules

arise from the nature of the universe. The consequence is no personified divine Monarch against whom to transgress and the "inhabiting spirit of the mythology is wonder, not guilt." (Campbell 1962, 102)

Man's earthly condition is not one of sinfulness requiring reparation to a patriarchal divinity. Although the pantheons of Eastern religions include anthropomorphized gods and goddess, they are not the ultimate reality in and of themselves. In the Occident, energy proceeds from God, while in the Orient, gods proceed from Energy. In the Occident, consciousness emanates from the brain while in the Orient, from Consciousness comes the brain. (Campbell, *Mythos 2.3*)

The divine is immanent and also transcendent in the sense that humans are incapable of expressing it adequately and it lies beyond the ordinary range of human perception. Standing amidst the divine but unable to describe it other than symbolically and poetically evokes a sense of awe. The Orient resolves the mythic problem by envisioning the universe from a human perspective—as an illusion that can be bridged psychologically.

Identifying an effective unified mythology within Unitarian Universalism is problematic given the plurality of beliefs among those affiliated with this faith system. No common basis for a cosmology exists and no specific means for bridging the perceived existential gap is promoted. The Occidental solution is inappropriate as the Universalist tradition eschews the doctrines of original sin and eternal damnation. Contemporary Unitarian Universalists need not even subscribe to a theological belief system dominated by an utterly transcendent deity of any sort. The primary emotion of

guilt with the corollary expectation of repentance is not remotely as pervasive within Unitarian Universalism as it is in the Western monotheistic traditions.

Despite the Christian origins of both the Unitarian and Universalist traditions, contemporary Unitarian Universalism seems to share more in common emotionally with the Orient than the Occident. The seventh principle regarding respect for the interdependent web of all existence is more reminiscent of Oriental regard for the natural order than Occidental duality. The introduction to the Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship website says:

> Since the introduction of the first Buddhist texts to America in the mid-nineteenth century, Buddhism has been as extremely influential force among Unitarians and, over the last thirty years, Unitarian Universalists. Early Unitarians, such as Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Ralph Waldo Emerson responded with great enthusiasm to Buddhism's emphasis on individual experience, rather than appeal to scriptures or belief in miraculous events, as the basis for authority in spiritual matters. In recent years, Unitarian Universalists have increasingly been drawn to explore Buddhist religious practices, especially seated meditation, in order to ground the "free and responsible search for truth and meaning" that is one of the guiding principles of the UU tradition. Meditation invites a direct and immediate experience of reality and provides a balance to purely intellectual inquiry. (Ford 1996)[29]

Both the Judeo-Christian roots and the appeal of Oriental philosophical systems exert a strong influence over Unitarian Universalism, but Unitarian Universalist theology is considered a personal endeavor rather than a denominational activity.[30] The Unitarian Universalist Association offers a three-volume adult religious education course entitled Building Your Own Theology by Richard S. Gilbert[31] in which participants are provided tools for creating their own religious beliefs, values and associated ethics. Heterogeneity in theological perspective is not only tolerated it is expected! Little wonder that a unifying myth is difficult to ascertain in the midst of staunch diversity and precisely why

the opening story avoids theological language even though it proposes a resolution to the mythic problem of feeling isolated.

Storytelling alone does not resolve the mythic problem. In order for us to transcend the rift between humanity and its source we must translate a meaningful idea into an intimate experience. The translation and corresponding opportunity for transcendence is addressed through ritual. Ritual shares characteristics with myth in that it "aims at existentially uniting opposites in an effort to gain control over an essentially unpredictable universe," (d'Aquili 1993, 63), it is either effective or ineffective and the actions contained within a ritual cannot be regarded any more literally than the details disclosing the ideas within a myth. Ritual viewed literally, even secular ritual, may appear patently absurd. A United States flag does not have the cognitive ability to recognize the respect being directed towards it by a salute, a tip of the hat or a hand over the heart but the ritual action still has the power to evoke strong feelings of national pride and communal attachment.

Ritual proceeds from myth, therefore, if Western society—not just Unitarian Universalism—is in need of identifying a new myth, it is also in need of new ritual. Psychologist Thomas Moore recognizes a "disorder" not found in the DSM-IV[32] that is reminiscent of Viktor Frankl's existential anxiety. Moore has termed his diagnosis "psychological modernism" and describes it as an uncritical acceptance of the values of the modern world. This uncritical acceptance has negatively impacted the spiritual nurturing the human soul receives when acting out myth through ritual. We must recognize the traits of psychological modernism in order to proceed to ritualizing the Unitarian Universalist response to the mythic problem.

CHAPTER V: EXPERIENCING THE MYTH THROUGH RITUAL

Thomas Moore's "psychological modernism" is akin to Frankl's "Age of Anxiety," however Moore's description is more specific than Frankl's four symptoms—planless, day-to-day attitude toward life, fatalist attitude toward life, collective thinking and fanaticism. Moore's diagnostic list coincides with Fromm's description of unproductive character types associated with the Industrial and post-Industrial eras. Psychological modernism consists of an inordinate degree of uncritical devotion to:

- technology, particularly gadgets and convenience
- scientific progress
- the electronic media
- a lifestyle dictated by advertising
- a mechanistic view of the body—mind, heart and soul

Such devotion results in a tragic adherence to literalism. (Moore 1992, 206-207) The depression of the human ability to express meaning symbolically is a natural development under these psychological conditions—explaining both the appeal of religious fundamentalism and the paradoxical decline in formal religious practice. Formal religious practice is a "valuable symbolic and reflective experience" (Moore 1992, 211-212) that provides important spiritual nourishment. An attachment to literalism results in a corresponding detachment from a religious tradition that now seems absurd due to a literal interpretation of scripture, liturgy, symbols and ritual meant to be experienced figuratively.

The religious fundamentalist has frozen a dynamic living tradition into a stationary and rigid belief system. This static condition enables the individual to escape the anxiety associated with personal responsibility and the inevitable change occurring around and within the person. Ritual becomes a matter of orthodoxy through orthopraxy rather than the opportunity for a unique transcendent experience. The individual must have the courage to reach beyond the symbol in order to truly encounter the myth and experience its meaning.

Components of an Effective Ritual

Twenty years have passed since I took my first typing class but I still find my fingers wiggling to the rhythm of a keyboard when I mentally draft a letter. My son leans in the direction of the goal when his soccer ball seems inclined to roll too far to the left or right. Everyone I know gestures with their hands to some degree when carrying on a lively conversation. We have an innate compulsion to physically mimic our thoughts. Competitive athletes and professional musicians use this ability to their advantage when they mentally rehearse before a performance. This capability may have conferred an evolutionary advantage by honing hunting and other survival skills.

Dr. Andrew Newberg sees a connection between this phenomenon and ritual:

> If the brain contains such a compulsion to act out thoughts and ideas, it would be no surprise if the brain compelled us to act out the stories of myth. The ideas these stories convey about fate, death, and the nature of the human spirit are of immediate and lasting concern, and would most certainly gain the mind's attention. (Newberg 2001, 94)

He imagines that while acting out myths some people may have inadvertently created the mythic conditions necessary for the neurological chain of events that result in feelings of transcendence.[33] The experience, symbols and mythic themes combine to form an

effective ritual. The synthesis of neurological function and meaningful cultural content is the "true source of a ritual's power." (Newberg 2001, 95)

Rhythmic Behavior

Several important components are necessary to trigger the neurological events of effective ritual behavior. Dr. d'Aquili defines ritual behavior as a sequence of behavior which:

1. is structured or patterned;
2. is rhythmic and repetitive (to some degree at least), that is, tends to recur in the same or nearly the same form with some regularity;
3. acts to synchronize affective, perceptual-cognitive, and motor processes within the central nervous system of individual participants; and
4. most particularly, synchronizes these processes among the various individual participants. (d'Aquili 1993, 65)

Rhythmic behavior merges movement with ideas—the blending of the physical with the mental. Dr. d'Aquili's fourth point is important when evaluating effectiveness of ritual intended for a group. The ritual should produce similar neurological responses even if the meaning of the ritual is not consistent among all participants.

Evidence of the effectiveness of rhythmic behavior is seen in both the euphoric state in the Sufi dancing tradition and the intense concentration of the solemn chanting of Buddhist monks. Such behavior alters the body's autonomic responses in the arousal and quiescent systems respectively. The alterations to the autonomic responses in these two systems affect the orientation association area of the brain in which the human distinguishes self from other and orients the self within a point in space. Transcendence is not only felt it is a biological event.

Rev. Dr. Gregory Wilson[34] and I, co-creators of the *Unitarian Universalist Service of Meaning Through Remembrance,* included a responsive reading, a structured four-part dramatic vignette and a collective candle lighting to allow for the ritual need for rhythmic behavior. We added a song with a repetitive refrain in Polish for the third performance of the ritual.

Marked Actions, Auditory and Olfactory Components

Although repetitive rhythm induces emotional qualities, the intensity of the experience can be augmented by other components. A behavior that is specific and meaningful because of its uniqueness or incongruence is a "marked action." A priest elevating the host above his head is performing an action that is not repetitive and rhythmic, nor is it a practical and efficient movement. Dr. Newberg postulates that marked actions may stimulate the amygdala in the human brain long enough to result "in a mild fear or arousal responses…Blended with the blissful calm of the hyper-quiescent state, this arousal might be experienced as "religious awe." (Newberg 2001, 88-89) Rev. Wilson and I incorporated marked action into the service when one of the service leaders steps down from the speaking platform to extinguish candles during the dramatic vignettes and two of the actors exit in an unexpected direction in the final vignette.

Odors are powerful memory triggers and particular smells generate specific emotional responses. The aroma of a soiled diaper or a bouquet of roses would certainly evoke entirely different reactions. Arousal of the sense of smell, like marked behavior, affects the amygdala because it receives nerve impulses from the olfactory system. Rituals that combine fragrance with repetitive behavior and marked actions intensify the

neurological response, consequently we recommend the use of scented candles during the service and the placement of heated oil or burning incense at the entrance of the venue.

Sound, particularly repetitive sound, is another component of an intensified effective ritual experience. Instrumental music, song, chanting and responsive prayer serve to heighten the experience by incorporating more elements of neurological stimulation. Auditory elements of a ritual have the power to evoke a wide range of emotional responses. Loud, clanging, cacophonous sound affects the arousal system while soft music or murmured chanting can alter the quiescent system—the two means of autonomic response influencing the orientation association area of the brain. We recommend period music as a prelude to the service as a means of establishing an atmosphere of historic contemplation. A song, inspired by the service and written by one of the volunteer actors, was added following the second performance in early March 2005.

Historical Context

Our spiritual need for community extends not only biologically and geographically but also chronologically. We need to orient ourselves within history by affirming our ancestral relationships. This may be one reason why Unitarian Universalists perpetuate claims about our denominational roots that are tenuous or even wildly inaccurate at times. As mentioned in the brief history of Unitarian Universalism, the religion does not have a direct lineage connecting our current tradition to early church Fathers but that has not prevented some people from asserting a descent from the Arian position in the theological debates of the Council of Nicea. Our historical connections are perceived sympathetically rather than arising from a direct transmission. Regardless, this

perception is no less important than if a linear transmission had occurred through the centuries.

Carl Jung, in his memoire Memories, Dreams, Reflections, wrote, "I became aware of the fateful links between me and my ancestors. I feel very strongly that I am under the influence of things or questions which were left incomplete and unanswered by my parents and grandparents and more distant ancestors." (quoted in Moore 1992, 209-210) Rev. Dr. Wilson and I felt it important to identify a critical period in Unitarian Universalist history in which we could locate a positive example of personal responsibility and communal courage operating in tandem. We desired to link a historical crisis with questions consequential to contemporary American Unitarian Universalists.

Our research led us to the seventeenth century Polish community of the Socinians. They existed as a religious minority although more centralized geographically than Unitarian Universalists today. The Socinians had enjoyed a century of religious freedom guaranteed in writing by the government only to find themselves persecuted and expelled for their heretical beliefs. The expulsion declaration forced individuals and family groups to make pivotal decisions. Their communal ties provided them with the courage necessary to either recant and remain in Poland or flee and risk an arduous journey to a new home. Neither option provided the individual with a guarantee of physical, psychological or spiritual safety.

Christian fundamentalists have exerted increasing influence over the American political and social environment in the last few decades. The United States Constitution unequivocally guarantees the separation of church and state—a constitutional interpretation affirmed by quotations from the Founding Fathers.[35] Unfortunately,

legislation, judicial rulings and the behavior of American citizens are in the process of eroding this guarantee.[36] Unitarian Universalists, as a religious minority in the United States, are confronted with the fear that constitutional provisions protecting their rights may be as tenuous as those conferred on the Socinians in seventeenth-century Poland.

Of course the belief system and political environment of the Socinian community is vastly different from contemporary American Unitarian Universalism but Thomas Moore explains why the differences are immaterial in the context of identifying and ritualizing a modern myth based on historical events. "Mythological thinking doesn't look for literal causes but rather for more insightful imagining. It considers the past, but the past as myth is different from the past as fact. As myth, the stories we tell about our lives suggest themes and figures that are operative in the present." (Moore 1992, 223) The critical relationship between the Socinians and Unitarian Universalists today is the presence of doubt, reason and faith. The philosophy of the Socinians survived because individuals possessed all three attributes and the community provided the security and courage necessary to act responsibly within a value system dependent upon these attributes.

Communal Meal

The meal has long been a communal affair, although the family dinner table has dramatically declined in favor of swallowing fast food while alone in an automobile, at a desk or in front of a television set. Food nourishes the body and serves as a powerful symbol for spiritual nourishment. The rituals associated with preparing and consuming healthy food among family and friends do more than provide our physical being with the nutrients necessary to survive—they connect us with others via social conventions

fulfilling the human need for community. The phenomenon of fast food denies us physical, psychological and spiritual contentment. Thomas Moore claims "all eating is communion, feeding the soul as well as the body." (Moore 1992, 205)

Rev. Dr. Wilson and I agree with Moore's assertions and felt it vital to include a communal meal as a concluding component to the *Unitarian Universalist Service of Meaning Through Remembrance*. The communal meal is an opportunity to maintain the historical connection to our spiritual ancestors so our pamphlet provides a menu with recipes using eastern European ingredients to create a perceived connection to seventeenth century peasant food. Recipes are provided to encourage communal preparation as well as consumption and a sample blessing is included to relate the meal with the ritual.

Food also serves as a metaphor for the mythic problem of spiritual separation from our universal source. The Christian Eucharist is an example of ritual intended to unify the human with God through the absorption of the host. Food taken into the body is a literal action with symbolic power when recognized as a metaphorical representation of unity. A communal meal merges the individual need for sustenance with the communal need for acceptance and companionship, the necessary ingredients for courage.

A Living Ritual

The inclusion of the components necessary for an effective ritual does not guarantee a meaningful ritual, particularly as time passes. Dr. Newberg points out "…if the ritual is to maintain meaning from one generation to the next, the balance between rhythm and content must constantly be adjusted." (Newberg 2001, 95) Changes in social custom, language and scientific knowledge are just three examples of factors with the

potential to render a ritual obsolete with respect to producing a meaningful spiritual experience. Catholic laity with no knowledge of Latin may find a traditional mass meaningless without the ability to comprehend the liturgy. A modern Jew may lose the spiritual connotation of the *bris milah* when confronted with modern medical information about the risks of circumcision. Neither mythology nor ritual exist in a socio-historical vacuum and must accommodate inevitable change in order to remain effective. According to Thomas Moore:

> When we look at the history of world religions, in almost every case we see a living tradition. The fundamental insights of every tradition are ever subjected to fresh imagination in a series of 'reformation,' and what might otherwise be a dead tradition becomes the base of a continually renewing spiritual sensibility. The process is not unlike the work of Jesus, who made a new law out of the old by replacing the commandments of Mount Sinai with the softer beatitudes of his own Sermon on the Mount, or the many reformations within Judaism itself. It is like the emergence of Zen out of Taoism and Buddhism. An individual's life may reflect this cultural dynamic in religion, going through various phases, experiencing conflicting allegiances and convictions and surviving radical reforms and reinterpretations. (Moore 1992, 212)

Unitarian Universalism removes the possibility in the last sentence and affirms it as an imperative. A responsible individual's spiritual journey *will* constitute religious dynamism, proceed through phases and survive reforms and reinterpretations. Rev. Dr. Wilson and I attempted to identify a ritual that would be customizable and developmentally fluid in an effort to respect personal growth, variances among congregations and evolution through time. We solicit recommendations from the congregation following each performance as we consider the *Unitarian Universalist Service of Meaning Through Remembrance* to be ever open to adaptation.

The service has been conducted three times since its inception and will continue to evolve as congregations have more opportunities to participate and reflect upon its strengths and weaknesses. The Unitarian Universalist Church of Brevard held the

inaugural service, complete with the communal meal, on July 16, 2004. The church sponsored a reprise service to accommodate seasonal members on March 5, 2005 and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vero Beach hosted a performance on March 25, 2005. Their fellowship opted to perform the service without the accompanying communal meal.

A review after the first service concluded that although the response from the congregation was quite favorable we had strayed from our original intent. The introduction to the drama had become a lengthy history lesson rather than a sacrificial experience of a unifying myth. The element of sacrifice for religious liberty was present but we failed to fully convey the meaning and importance of our spiritual ancestors' courage. We had drawn a historical connection to our spiritual roots in the seventeenth century Socinian community but did not quite capture the tension between personal responsibility and loyalty to a higher cause—the ethical construct arising from the paradoxical need for freedom and community. We amended the text of the introduction to the drama after each service and added a song written by an inspired congregant after the second service. We anticipate further changes as we continue to progress from a historical focus to a fully mythic context.

CHAPTER VI:

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE OF MEANING THROUGH REMEMBRANCE

The following chapter consists of the booklet I compiled to enable additional Unitarian Universalist congregations to host the service independently. The booklet includes a complete description of the ritual, dramatic scripts, recipes for the communal meal, suggestions for adaptation, sample printed materials (See Appendices A and B) and contact information.

Front Matter Quotation

> *Any political movement directed against any body of our fellow-citizens because of their religious creed is a grave offense against American principles and American institutions. It is a wicked thing either to support or oppose a man because of the creed he professes. This applies to Jew and Gentile, to Catholic and Protestant, and to the man who would be regarded as unorthodox by all of them alike.*
>
> - Theodore Roosevelt, Address, Carnegie Hall, October 12, 1915

Purpose

Rev. Dr. Gregory Wilson and I first conceived of the need for a *Unitarian Universalist Service of Meaning Through Remembrance* in the winter of 2004. Social issues in the United States were becoming increasingly divisive with religion playing a disturbingly large role. We felt the administration of President George W. Bush was

moving in a direction which would compromise not only civil liberties but the tradition of religious toleration upon which our nation was founded.

We began planning the ritual in March 2004 with a series of meetings in which we first determined required elements and then structured the service content. Recent challenges to religious freedom engendered awareness of our potentially precarious status in a contemporary society experiencing the growing secular influence of Christian conservatives. Court decisions in the United States since the creation of the *Unitarian Universalist Service of Meaning Through Remembrance* have served to emphasize the need for liberal religious communities within which individuals can develop courage in the context of a safe environment.

We perceived a need for a uniquely Unitarian Universalist myth serving to communicate who we are and who we want to be as a relational community by reminding us of our past. Many Unitarian Universalists remain unaware of the dramatic impact our spiritual and philosophical predecessors made upon history. We enjoy the religious freedoms we have today because of the ideas and practices of those who have gone before us, many of whom remain nameless. Their actions remind us of the courage community can offer individuals who exercise personal freedom by making difficult choices during oppressive circumstances.

As human beings, we share a physiological need to create myths conveying our purpose for being. When we speak of myth, we do not use the term in the negative connotation. “It is myth because it touches what is ultimate in man and in his life, expresses it symbolically, and provides an inner perspective by which the mysteries of human existence are felt and entered into.” (Campbell 1970, 177) Carrying the idea of a

Unitarian Universalist myth to the next logical conclusion, we felt it important to ritualize the story. Our goal for the service, as is "the goal of virtually every ritual ever performed – to lift participants out of their isolated individual sensibilities and immerse them in something larger than themselves." (Newberg 2001, 80)

We acknowledge that this particular ritual is steeped in Western European history and intra-Christian conflict while contemporary American Unitarian Universalists represent a much broader cultural environment. We could have chosen any number of communities and events to commemorate as human history is rife with religious conflict and non-secular governments. We selected the Socinian community in seventeenth century Poland because of their perceived—though indirect—philosophical contributions to the United States Constitution. We also selected the Socinians because of their uniqueness in history. The process became as important as the content of belief systems.[37] This has enabled Unitarian Universalism to evolve rather than become defensive with respect to claims about truth. Have we stumbled upon a cornerstone of Unitarian Universalism from which other events may have their roots?

Our intent was to create a service capturing the essence of what it means to be an American Unitarian Universalist today while enhancing a sense of community. We drew upon such diverse resources as Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief by Andrew Newberg, Escape from Freedom by Erich Fromm and For Faith and Freedom: A Short History of Unitarianism in Europe by Charles A. Howe. Ultimately however, we desired a service that would plumb the depths of the Unitarian Universalist soul and provide a means to conceptualize the potential loss of freedom to live the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

We must never take these principles for granted because for many of us they reflect our highest values and serve as a guide in life. For some, these words and the principles they embody are something sacred. As Unitarian Universalists, we embrace the often frightening and isolated state of personal freedom moving us toward the prophetic thread of our history. We recognize that "organic growth is possible only under the condition of supreme respect for the peculiarity of the self of other persons as well as of our own self." (Fromm 1941, 264) Our spiritual ancestors gave us this gift. We should honor their memory by remembering their thoughts and deeds as well as understanding the meaning of their accomplishments for our faith tradition. In this we share their courage and ideals.

Material and Personnel Requirements

The service is designed to be customizable depending upon congregational resources, therefore some quantities will be presented as ranges. The service is not cost-prohibitive but there are some expenses associated with the ritual. Congregations have the option of performing just the service, serving a meal followed by the service or performing the service and processing into a communal meal.

If opting to perform the service followed by the meal, the service and the meal should be held at the same venue. We will refer to the ritual as being held in a sanctuary and the meal in a dining hall but we recognize these terms may not be strictly analogous to every congregation's circumstances.

Participants

(5-8^{+} people)

- 1-2 service leaders
- 2-3 female actors
- 2-3 male actors

Your congregation may find it helpful to designate an additional individual to be responsible for sound and lighting. Actors may be used to perform the duties of greeters and distribute candles at the conclusion of the service or you may wish to include additional congregants for these tasks.

Props

- White Pillar Candle, either a 4-wick wide pillar or 4 standard pillars
- White Standard Taper Candles, quantity should be at least equivalent to expected attendance
- Candleholders to accommodate the pillars and the tapers.
- Reading lamp at the lectern
- 3 x 5 index cards and writing utensils

Some congregations may prefer to perform the remembrance drama in period costume but this is certainly not a requirement. Actors should be in simple attire, perhaps dressed similarly in basic black.

Music

Period music should be clearly audible as the congregation enters. If no musicians are available for a live performance, there are several suitable CD recordings readily available through such outlets as Amazon.com. The following recordings are suitable compilations of period music.

- Musica Polonica
- Musica Antiqua Polonica
- Górecki and Friends: Polish Chamber Music

Printed Materials

- Invitations

Your congregation may wish to invite former members, proximate congregations, district personnel and other distinguished guests. Invitations can be an informal email or a formal printed invitation.

Sample Wording:

UU _____ of ____

Invites you to join us for a

Unitarian Universalist

Service of Meaning Through Remembrance

On _____(date)

At _____(time)

At_____(place)

In this service we will open a window into our history and honor the sacrifices made by our spiritual predecessors, the Socinian community living in Poland in the 17th century.

It is our belief that remembering the strength and commitment of our faith ancestors will inspire and encourage us to be faithful to our UU tradition in a complex and troubling time. Our hope is that this service will nurture our individual spiritual lives and the bonds of our community.

As there is a communal meal following the service, you may wish to designate a contact person and include a response request for planning purposes.

For example:

While an RSVP is not required to attend, contacting Jane Member at 555-1111 or JaneM@email.com by Month Date will help in planning the dinner arrangements. Thank you.

- Scripts

Scripts for the service leaders and the actors are included as reproducible handouts later in this publication.

- Order of Service

Congregants should be given an Order of Service indicating the names of the participants and providing the words for the pillar lighting and the responsive reading. See Appendix A for a sample Order of Service. Based upon feedback we've received, printing a few copies of a large print version of the Order of Service may be greatly appreciated.

Meal

- Dining space
- Table settings
- Food
- Beverages

The meal, including recipes, will be described in its entirety in a later section. We designed the menu for simplicity of preparation, ease of serving and similarity to Eastern European peasant food of the era. While the meal is delicious, Death by Chocolate was not a staple in seventeenth century Poland.

Optional Props

- Floral arrangements
- Incense or scented oil burners
- Additional candles and candleholders
- Costumes

Committees

While the service is not an inordinate amount of work, ad hoc committees will enable a congregation to plan and implement the service more quickly. The event will also be more fun for all involved if no one person is burdened with the majority of the preparatory work. We recommend the following committees.

Publication

The Publication Committee is responsible for compiling guest lists, creating and printing invitations, creating and printing the Order of Service. They would communicate with congregational and district publications to ensure announcements are submitted well in advance for publicity purposes.

Props

The Prop Committee is responsible for acquiring the candles, candleholders and any other desired props for the service, such as a music CD if necessary. An individual from this committee may be a good choice for taking responsibility for sound and lighting.

Service

The Service Committee is comprised of the service leader(s) and actors. They are responsible for learning the order of the service and, if particularly ambitious, memorizing their lines. In addition to preparing for the readings, the service leaders may find it helpful to read pages 61-100 in Charles A. Howe's book For Faith and Freedom: A Short History of Unitarianism in Europe. The Center for Socinian Studies also maintains a website at http://www.socinian.org which contains several good articles about Socinian influence on our philosophical heritage.

Meal

The Meal Committee is responsible for all aspects of the dinner. They are in charge of arranging for appropriate dinner space, acquiring the food, ensuring its timely preparation and if desired, arrange for serving staff. A member of this committee would be a good choice for the RSVP contact name. The Meal Committee should work with the Prop Committee with respect to the number of candleholders required for the dinner tapers.

A member of this committee may also want to be responsible for arranging for childcare.

The Ritual

Setting

The congregants should enter a dimly lit sanctuary. This effect can be achieved by including additional candles other than the pillar and dinner tapers, dimming the overhead lighting or lighting only sections of the sanctuary. Due to the nature of the lighting throughout the service, we recommend scheduling the program in the evening.

As the congregants arrive, they should be handed an Order of Service. You may wish to have the actors act as greeters and/or ushers. Burning incense or scented oil at the entrance aids in preparing congregants for the ritual experience.

Overview of Service

The service consists of seven to nine stages depending upon customization and configuration on the part of the service committee. They are as follows:

1. Prelude: Period music playing audibly, but not too loudly, in a dimly lit sanctuary.
2. Opening Words: Once the music is concluded, a service leader delivers the opening words.
3. Pillar Lighting: A service leader asks the congregation to join in reading the pillar lighting while a second individual attends to the candle(s).
4. Responsive Reading: A service leader asks the congregation to join in the responsive reading.

5. Remembrance Drama: A service leader provides the historical context and introduces the drama. The actors perform four dramatic vignettes followed by a few moments of meditative reflection.
6. Reflective Reading: A service leader provides the conclusion of the story and a reflective reading.
7. Closing Words/ Candle Lighting: A service leader concludes the service and provides direction concerning the candles and index cards if that portion of the ritual is to be included.
8. Communal Meal
9. Card Burning Ceremony (Optional)

Opening Words

A small reading lamp should be positioned at the lectern allowing the service leader to read the opening words without it being necessary to raise ambient lighting in the sanctuary.

> Service Leader: We are gathered to celebrate one of the beginning stories of our faith tradition, Unitarian Universalism. Who we are and who we will become is dependent upon our stories. They form and shape our lives and the life of our community. Who we will become is also influenced by how we hold and organize our stories within our imaginations.
>
> When we know more about our faith history and become part of the story of Unitarian Universalism we add our gifts and talents to the values, hopes and dreams of that community. We begin to make the story of Unitarian Universalism our story.
>
> The responsible individuals and courageous communities who gave birth to religious freedom and sacrificed for the endurance of their faith have given shape to the principles of the religious community we affirm today. The path created by those who went before us will call and guide us to our spiritual home.

> For a community to be true to itself, its values and its members, there must be an awareness of its story and the courage it conveys. For members to continue to breathe life into a community's values and principles, there must be awareness of personal responsibility in the context of loyalty to a greater cause.

Pillar Lighting

Ambient lighting should be raised just enough to allow the congregation to read along in the Order of Service without having to strain their eyes. A designated individual should light either each wick of the 4-wick wide pillar or 4 separate pillar candles after each sentence.

> Service Leader: We light this flame in remembrance of our spiritual predecessors, the men and women before us whose courage and convictions brought us to this present hour.
>
> We light this flame in affirmation of the strength that is not only theirs, but ours to possess, granting us the potential to create a world community in which religious tolerance is experienced by all.
>
> We light this flame in hope that we will not falter on our path towards peace and justice and in the assurance that we will give aid and comfort to our brothers and sisters who should stumble.
>
> We light this flame in affirmation of our faith, that our minds be enlightened and our hearts opened. So may it ever be.

Responsive Reading

The responsive reading is comprised of a passage providing for religious liberty in the Confederation of Warsaw passed by the Polish Senate and Chamber of Deputies in 1572 (Howe 1997, 69) and "We Need One Another" by George Odell. (UUA 1993, Reading 468) Ambient lighting should be dimmed at the conclusion of the reading.

> Service Leader: The Confederation of Warsaw is notable in its unusual provisions for the time. It is one of the earliest European documents granting religious toleration on a continent where discrimination, property confiscation, and indeed murder were the norm with respect to religious difference. Adopted by the Polish

Senate and Diet in 1572, the provisions for toleration, while not always adhered to, conferred unprecedented freedom to the Unitarians and other groups that arose during the Reformation. Let us join together in a responsive reading that includes both these historic words and a reading by George Odell.

Since there is in our Republic no little disagreement on the subject of religion, in order to prevent any such hurtful strife from beginning among our people on this account as we plainly see in other realms,

Congregation: we mutually promise for ourselves, and our successors forever, under the bond of our oath, faith, honor and conscience, *that we who differ with regard to religion will keep the peace with one another,*

and will not for a different faith or a change of churches shed blood nor punish one another by confiscation of property, infamy, imprisonment, or banishment, and will not in any way assist any magistrate or officer in such an act.

We need one another when we mourn and would be comforted. We need one another when we are in trouble and afraid. We need one another when we are in despair, in temptation, and need to be recalled to our best selves again.

We need one another when we would accomplish some great purpose, and cannot do it alone. We need one another in the hour of success, when we look for someone to share our triumphs.

We need one another in the hour of defeat, when with encouragement we might endure, and stand again. *We need one another when we come to die, and would have gentle hands prepare us for the journey*.

All our lives we are in need, and others are in need of us.

Remembrance Drama

Overview: The body of the service begins with a few words from a service leader providing the historical context of the drama. A service leader should introduce each of the four scenes by announcing the date at the beginning of each script. As each scene ends the service leader steps forward to extinguish one of the wicks in the 4-wick pillar or one of the four pillars. At the conclusion of the fourth scene, the actors representing the exile to Transylvania should exit in a different direction from the actor representing those who stayed in Poland and recanted. At this time all of the candles and lighting should be

extinguished after the actors' exit. The service leader(s) will allow for a few moments of silent reflection in the darkened sanctuary before resuming the ritual with the reflective reading.

> Service Leader: From the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries we hear stories of people who called the prevailing power structures into question. Their voices reveal an awareness of oppression and a desire to live freely. Their protests were sporadic and met with swift brutality. We see the beginning of Unitarianism Universalism in these early stories.
>
> John Wycliff translated the Bible into English in the late fourteenth century so the laity could read and judge the truth for themselves. Independent study of the Bible is the most fundamental influences in shaping the Unitarian movement, it allows for a different way of being in the world because the individuals take responsibility for looking at the world through their own eyes rather than through the eyes of those in power. Individuals can interpret the meaning of the behavior of those in power and this inspired men and women to imagine how life could be as opposed to accepting how life is. The ability to read, understand, discuss and create meaning is the breeding ground for political and religious freedom and tolerance. This ability was met with fierce resistance by the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant reformers such as Calvin when his theology became the prevailing power structure.
>
> In the midst of the dark horrors of mass executions and the burning of people at the stake, a light began to shine in sixteenth century Poland. Theological debate occurred in an atmosphere of civility and order. Although those in attendance could reach no agreement, they unanimously adopted a statement affirming mutual tolerance and the right of conscious in beliefs and practice, with "no one wishing to impose his faith upon another"—a notable break in history. (Howe 1997, 66-67)
>
> Due in large part to this religious climate, the Polish Senate and Chamber of Deputies enacted the Confederation of Warsaw in 1573 containing a provision for religious liberty that had been drafted jointly by Protestant and Catholic clergy. The majority of Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church had their differences but were somewhat united in their trinitarian theology. The Anabaptists, Socinians and antitrinitarians were excluded from a Protestant federation and forced to defend themselves alone when the Counter Reformation began.
>
> The wife of a wealthy Calvinist who sympathized with Unitarian beliefs became fearful of the growing persecution and persuaded her husband to establish a new town named Raków. Antitrinitarians, Anabaptist, Socinians—including members of the nobility and ministers—were at once attracted to this New Jerusalem and the town grew rapidly. For several years it was chaotic both in social order and in religious belief but grew to become a strong center of Socinianism governed by the Polish Brethren.

A British visitor reported what he saw after visiting Raków, “a town in little Poland, where the heresy of Socinians flourishes greatly, he felt as though he had been transported into a another world; for whereas elsewhere all was full wars and turmult, there all was quiet, men were calm and modest in behavior, so that you might think them angels, although they were spirited in debate and expert in language.’ (Howe 1997, 68)

The most brilliant period for the Polish Brethren was between 1585 and 1638 with the center at Raków which won the honorable name of the Samaritan Athens. They founded a world-renowned school in 1602. Their famous printing press filled Europe with treatises written in Polish, Latin, Dutch, English and German. They were well praised and read by people like John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and Isaac Newton.

Their social and political thought underwent a significant evolutionary process—from the very utopian trend condemning participation in war and holding public and judicial office to a moderate and realistic stand based on mutual love, support of the secular power of the state, active participation in social and political life, and defense of social equality. They were the first to postulate the complete separation of church and state—an idea never before discussed in Christian societies. Their rationality set the trend for the philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment and affected future development of all modern intellectual endeavors.

Their ideology was characterized from the beginning by propagating freedom of religious thought; the principle of applying reason to the interpretation of the scriptures, the revelation and theological matters in general; absolute tolerance of all creeds; and the struggle for social equality among people. Protestant and Catholic reaction characterized the Socinian principles of freedom of conscience and tolerance as the most dangerous of dogmas.

In the early seventeenth century the political and religious climate in Poland changed. Socinians were gradually excluded from the protection of the Confederation of Warsaw. They were forbidden to gather as a church, could not make converts and were denied the vote in the Polish Diet. Violence escalated and their murderers went unpunished.

The final blow came when an old law was enforced. Socinians refusing to renounce their faith would be put to death by official sanction. They were granted a reprieve and given three years to leave the country. Let us listen in to what it must have been like to be a member of this free and vibrant community forced to make decisions as individuals and a community to protect their way of life.

Scene 1: The Announcement

- Man: Boros

- Woman: Kendi

Service Leader: July 20, 1658

Boros: (enters into house with intensity) They've done it! Have you heard? The Jesuits have done it. They've convinced the King, for the sake of the Holy Virgin to expel us from Poland in three years or we forfeit our lives. (incredulously) Can you believe they have finally done it?

Kendi: (puzzled) How can they do that? What about the Confederation of Warsaw?

Boros: (scoffing noise) They don't care. They have convinced the King the Warsaw Statutes are a "criminal conspiracy against God!" Besides, that piece of paper did not stop them from cutting off Ivan's head, taking his property and throwing his family on the streets did it?

Kendi: Boros, you're scaring me. What are we going to do?

Boros: They cannot be allowed to get away with this. We've lived peacefully here for a hundred years. This is our home. We can fight this unholy declaration. I'll call a meeting for tonight.

Kendi: Are you mad? That is alone is dangerous.

Boros: You are right. Meeting may well be quite dangerous. They've made it clear that should we meet as a religious group we may be sacrificing our lives and our homes. But I don't see that we have a choice.

Kendi: (attempting to settle his excitement) I know you're enraged but try to think rationally Boros. Surely cooler heads in the king's court will prevail and this declaration will be repealed.

Boros: I envy your optimism Kendi, but I assure you it is misplaced. We've already seen how they bypass proper procedure. Do you not remember what they did to those two students falsely accused of throwing rocks at a crucifix?

Kendi: (hand flying to her mouth) Oh my God, what about the children?

Scene 2: Deadline Shortened

- Man: Jozef (Joe-sef)
- Woman: Basia (Bah-see-ya)
- Man: Karoli (Care-oh-lee)
- Woman: Alka (Ahl-kah)

Service Leader: March 22, 1659

Basia: Yes, I heard they reduced our grace period to two years.

Jozef: (sighing) We are meeting this evening to make plans. We need to know who will stay and who will leave. We need to decide how to help those who cannot or will not travel. This is such an impossible situation, Basia. We'll surely be lucky if any of us make it out of here alive.

Knocking sound, another man and woman enter.

Jozef: I was just about to contact you Karoli. I suppose you heard the news. I have been ignored for almost a year now. The brethren must listen to me now. There is no longer any doubt they will do this. You do realize they are prepared to kill each and every one of us…and our families as well.

Karoli: Yes Jozef, they know, but this will not stop them from making every possible effort to avoid exile. You and I know it is no longer possible to deny the inevitable but can you blame them for holding out hope?

Alka: What angers me the most is the total disregard for Poland and the freedoms we have worked for all these years. They are like bloodthirsty animals. (glancing defiantly at her husband) I'll not leave and I'll not give them the satisfaction of recanting.

Basia: (sharply) Then you and your family will die.

Alka: But how can we protect ourselves? My parents cannot travel and many others have small children.

Karoli: As I've told Alka, I don't care about my land, nobody is going to tell me what to believe and what to think. I talked with my family and neighbors and we're going to Transylvania. That's final.

Jozef: But you, of all people, must stay. You have the most land, power and capacity to help those of us who cannot make the journey.

Karoli: Don't do that to me Jozef! Be realistic. My land you speak of will likely be taken by the Jesuits. They'll not allow it to go to one of us. If they take it, you can be assured I'll not see compensation, no matter how meager.

Basia: (sardonically) They'll turn it into a monastery and you will be out on the streets. (becoming calm and serious) Karoli, you *should* consider staying. You must recant and you must do so as soon as possible. We must stop and plan very carefully for the welfare of the entire community. We must consider what is best for every generation.

Karoli: You can have my land but my family will not stay.

Alka: (quietly) They are right Karoli. We must think this through slowly to make the best decision for the whole community…I know I've been insisting otherwise, but for the sake of others most of us will likely be forced to recant……

Scene Three: Less Than One Year Left

- Husband
- Wife

The woman is distraught. The man is trying to comfort her, but is also clearly frustrated.

Service Leader: January 14, 1660

Woman: We have less than a year until we forfeit everything. Do you not see how important it is that we leave?

Man: How can you make that decision so easily? Our family has been here for generations. You can see my father's grave beyond that window. Can you truly ask my mother to leave after all they have worked for here?

Woman: Your father's grave is exactly why we must leave. He was able to die in peace in his own bed. The same courtesy is not likely to be extended to you…or your sons. If we stay, your children's lives may be forfeit. I do not mean just their livelihood, I'm referring to the heads on their shoulders.

Man: They're just children. If we renounce and accept communion they may be spared.

Woman: Aleksandr perhaps, but Kaspar has already received the attention of authorities at school. He's been too careless in his disdain for the Jesuits who are now charged with his education. Apparently the Brethren have already educated him too well.

Man: I have always assumed I would raise my children on the same land where my father raised me. Three generations ago my family came here seeking freedom and found it. The Warsaw Confederation should have conferred protection. I fail to see how it can be erased by the stroke of a single pen. How easily the actions of strangers destroy so many lives.

Woman: I understand how you feel. This is my home too. But your words have flowed too freely as of late. I admire your desire to speak out against injustice but at what expense? You'll not be passing on your ideals to your children from below an axe. Better we go and leave a legacy to our children through life rather than death. Did you not hear the dire news from Kisielin? (*Kiss-eh-lin*)

Man: There is some logic in what you say but it strikes me as cowardice. Are we not giving the Jesuits exactly what they want? And you do realize this means great hardship? There are lawless men on the roads. I've heard there are towns in Transylvania that will welcome us but our chances of arriving unmolested are quite low.

Woman: I do know, that but our chances of living unmolested here are non-existent.

Man: The bishop has agreed to a meeting between the Catholic leadership and the Brethren. Andrew Wiszowaty has agreed to speak for us. I am hopeful he can make a fine impression.

Woman: (shaking her head sadly) Your hope is a forlorn one my dear. You know we will leave.

Man – (sighing) Yes, I know.

Scene Four: The Farewell

- Man: Acachy (Ah-kah-chee)
- Man: Brother
- Woman: Sister-in-law

Acachy Tasych, the only historical figure featured in these scenes, bidding farewell to a brother and sister-in-law. Acachy Tasych did remain behind and financially support some exiles. Any family members who may have emigrated without him is purely speculation.

Service Leader: July 10, 1660

Acachy: May God bless you on your journey.

Brother: (shaking hands) I admire your courage to stay Acachy.

Acachy: This is not courage, my brother, this is a self-serving decision I make. I would rather accept Catholic baptism than be exiled from my children.

Sister-in-law: (quietly) Yes, I had heard they'd converted. We will not forget your generous assistance. We could not make this journey if not for your help.

Acachy: It is the least I can do. So many remain here in peril because of their lack of means. (Shaking head) Fine Christian men are taking shameless advantage of the families forced into exile. Antonin had to accept a twentieth of what his land was worth.

Brother: He still does not know if his family will make the journey. He's in hiding for now.

Acachy: (placing a hand on his brother's shoulder) Our children and grandchildren may have no experience of the liberty we briefly enjoyed but we will help them to remember. I consider it a sacred responsibility. I have faith our posterity will once again be free to follow their spiritual conscience. Attend to that.

Brother: I shall. Our brethren bound for Holland are endeavoring to compile their works for publication, so perhaps our beliefs will spread well beyond Krakow. Our plight may well be a means to share our dreams of religious autonomy with other communities.

Sister-in-law: (to Acachy) I've heard of your patronage of Socinus' (Soh-cee-nus-uz) great-grandson. You are a good man.

Acachy: No sister, I'm a man who obeys the will of God.

Brother: The Jesuits insist they too obey his will when they strip us of our land, our dignity and our lives.

Acachy: (wry laughter) Indeed, this is true.

Sister-in-law: (hugs Acachy and kisses him on both cheeks) God bless you and keep you from all harm.

Brother: The whims of man are more frightful than the hand of God but if one government can allow their citizens' liberty, even if it was temporary, surely others may some day see reason and follow. Let us view this calamity as but a momentary diversion rather than an indication of God's will as the Catholics would have us believe. God keep you brother.

Acachy: (hugs brother) Reason must prevail. Farewell my friend and brother.

The brother and sister-in-law exit in another direction while Acachy exits in the direction the actors used in the previous three scenes.

(Moment of Silent Reflection)

Story Conclusion

As a service leader reads the conclusion, another individual should relight the four-wick pillar or four separate pillars representing a return to enlightenment and

freedom. During the reading, ushers or actors should discreetly distribute the white dinner tapers to the congregation if they were not passed out as congregants entered the venue.

> Service Leader: No more than a few hundred families were actually able to leave Poland in exile. Perhaps a thousand more wished to do so yet lacked the resources necessary to make the journey. Three hundred eighty men, women and children set out for Transylvania in the largest exodus. They had hardly crossed the Carpathian Mountains when they were attacked and robbed by a band of mercenaries. Many in the group retraced their steps and made their way to East Prussia. The rest, about 200 people, continued on to Transylvania. The journey took its toll and weakened the exiles by weather, plague and hunger—barely thirty survived. (Howe 1997, 88)
>
> Other exiles eventually joined them and small communities of Socinians gathered in Holland, Germany and England as well. They published compilations of Socinian writings that likely had a philosophical influence on our founding fathers. Like the Socinians before us, we rely on legal protections spelled out in written documents to protect our rights. May we remain mindful that we enjoy religious freedom because of the principles espoused by the Declaration of Independence and granted by the United States Constitution and that they too could be placed in as grave a peril as the Confederation of Warsaw.
>
> We will pause for a few moments to reflect on the following words:
>
> "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." First Amendment to the United States Constitution
>
> I believe that until we roll up our sleeves and join hands as a community of faith, we cannot fully experience the redemptive power of our convictions or our witness. A community of faith that does not try to mold history is not only undependable but, in the end, impotent. The Reverend Jack Mendelsohn.[38] (Mendelsohn 1985, 137)
>
> May we possess doubt, reason and faith that enables us to come together as a community conferring the courage necessary to resist oppression as a group and realize our potential as responsible compassionate individuals.

Closing Words and Candle Lighting

At this point a service leader closes the service and provides the congregation with instructions regarding the candles and/or index cards and writing utensils they have

been given. Ambient lighting should remain low or raised a bit if there are safety concerns.

> Service Leader: As Unitarian Universalists, we are grateful to our philosophical and spiritual predecessors for bringing us to this hour. We honor their memory and seek meaning in the ideals of religious toleration through individual responsibility and communal courage. We accept that we must make personal and cooperative sacrifices in order to achieve tolerance and freedom in our present community and for our posterity. We cherish our individualism but acknowledge that we must combine our personal growth with loyalty to a greater cause.

The following instructions may be customized depending upon how the congregation is configured, where the meal will be served, whether the index cards will be utilized, etc. The congregants may remain seated in silent reflection as the candles are lit in relay style or the service leader may instruct the congregants to come forward by rows to life their candles from the pillar(s). The service leader may direct the congregants back to their seats, to form a circle around the sanctuary or to form a procession to convey the candles to the dining area, placing them in empty candleholders available on the dining tables. At this point in the service, period music should once again be played softly as the congregational tapers are lit.

The following instructions may be given if the service committee includes the component of index cards. Specific directions will vary depending upon whether the index cards and writing utensils were made available upon entry to the sanctuary, are distributed in the sanctuary upon the conclusion of the service or presented during the meal.

> Service Leader: Please take a few moments to reflect upon any sacrifices you are prepared to make to ensure religious freedom for the individual and the community. Write down your thoughts on the index card. When you have finished recording your thoughts, place it in the ashtrays/bowls provided. At the conclusion of the meal our cards will be lit from the ceremonial pillar. As the ashes and smoke from our individual contributions mingle so may our willingness to sacrifice unite us in courage of the spirit.

The last sentence may be repeated during the actual lighting of the cards or this portion of the ritual may be carried out in silent reflection. Based upon personal experience, the committee should select the location of the card burning carefully. The cacophony of smoke alarms is not conducive to the ritual experience.

The Communal Meal

The tables should be set before the service. If hiring serving staff is cost prohibitive or impractical, the meal committee should designate table leaders to direct congregants in an effort to minimize confusion. We have found it helpful to serve family style if at all possible. Salads may already be distributed to each place setting or diners may serve themselves from a communal salad bowl. Diners should serve themselves the bread, stew and grapes from communal serving vessels.

The service leader will have already instructed the congregants to adjourn to the dining hall, select a seat and perhaps place their taper in a candle holder already present on the table. In the event the number of candleholders is less than the number of lit tapers, suggest the congregants left holding lit tapers extinguish their candles at the conclusion of the blessing. The congregation should remain standing behind their chairs.

When all are assembled a service leader recites the following blessing:

> Service Leader: May the community we build together help make our world a more tolerant home for all. May it be a family of honor and high ideals, of companionship and of kinship, where all who seek are welcomed and where all remain mindful of their unique purpose. Above all, may we find such gratification here that we never cease to relate to one another in love and concern. May those who follow in our footsteps have cause to rejoice not only in our joy, but also in our courageous and generous living. We share this meal in remembrance of those who lived bravely and generously before us, and for the meaning we continuously seek in the enduring challenge to uphold the Unitarian Universalist principles that allow for doubt, faith and reason to exist in harmony and guide us in courage.

Menu

The communal meal consists of salad, brown bread, millet stew and minted honey grapes. The salad can be as simple or as elaborate as time, energy and expense will allow. Feel free to use any industrious bread bakers in your congregation—but we picked up pumpernickel loaves from a local bakery. Do not forget to put butter or margarine on the table. The stew is flavorful but your more adventurous eaters may like to have a spicy sauce on hand. Remind them they are in seventeenth century Poland, not twenty-first century Louisiana.

Millet Stew Recipe

This stew is a crock-pot recipe that results in porridge than can be served either on plates or in bowls. The ground meat can be substituted with vegetarian crumbles. (Morningstar Farms brand is particularly good.) The meat can also be substituted for TVP (texturized vegetable protein) or omitted entirely for vegans.

- Two potatoes
- Two carrots
- Two onions
- Two celery stalks
- 4 cups of liquid (2 cups of water and 2 cups of vegetable broth works nicely, bouillon cubes can be substituted for the vegetable broth)
- 1 pound ground meat or 1 package of vegetarian crumbles
- 1 cup millet
- dried thyme, basil and garlic powder to taste (about 1-2 teaspoons each)

- salt and pepper to taste

Toast the millet in a dry skillet on medium heat for approximately 5 minutes, stirring constantly to avoid scorching. Chop the vegetables into large pieces. Put all ingredients except the meat into a crock-pot. Cook on high for 2.5 hours. Add browned meat, vegetarian meat crumbles or TVP and cook for an additional 1.5 hours. Stir well as the millet will settle on the bottom.

Crock-pots are an excellent way to keep the stew warm during the service or the stew can be transferred to baking pans and kept warm in an oven.

Minted Honey Grapes Recipe

This dessert is extremely easy to make, delicious and refreshing. Quantities need not be measured and the recipe can be readily adapted for vegans.

- Grapes
- Honey (agave nectar for vegans)
- Mint (fresh)

Remove the grapes from their stems and rinse thoroughly. Place in a large bowl and drizzle with honey or agave nectar. Finely chop fresh mint leaves. Stir the mint into the honied grapes and refrigerate. The grapes can be prepared up to 48 hours in advance without sacrificing quality or flavor.

Feedback and Contact Information

The feedback from congregants has thus far been extremely positive. We would like to share some comments we have received.

- "The service reminded me how brave and concerned the early 'free thinkers' were – and how much they sacrificed. I felt the service was much more solemn than a Sunday service – but it also engendered a sense of tranquility to realize what a platform of strength in their belief the early martyrs held onto."
- "…gave a special sense of history and appreciation for the freedoms we now enjoy and tend to take for granted."
- "It made me aware of the plight of UUs and the hardships they encountered."
- "I knew nothing of UU history. I have a greater respect for the UU community."

While it is wonderful to hear good news about one's efforts, we recognize there is always room for improvement. Any type of feedback is greatly appreciated. The authors may be contacted at 321-725-6125 or admin@uubrevard.org with questions, comments or suggestions.

Peace.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

The *Unitarian Universalist Service of Meaning Through Remembrance* is intended to provide an experiential awareness of the courage found in healthy connectivity. We hope to capture the tension between personal development and service to others by identifying with the sacrifices necessary to achieve a balance between the two. Historical parallels are drawn to remind participants they must resolve the same issues their ancestors confronted. The service illustrates how the ideals of free and independent people can prevail when nurtured within the bonds of commitment.

A faith community based on mutual respect and support provides the courage necessary for realizing individual freedom, thereby resolving the seemingly antithetical human needs for freedom and security. True freedom is attainable within the context of relatedness. The religious freedom and right of lawful assembly granted by the United States Constitution—coupled with a religious tradition with roots coinciding with the founding of our country—identifies Unitarian Universalism as a distinctly American religious tradition. The ability for Unitarian Universalism to respond positively to the psychological and spiritual needs of the human being identify Unitarian Universalism as a global faith.

In my experience, Unitarian Universalists can be extremely reluctant to speak openly about their faith community. They typically consider it a private matter, are unwilling to risk offense or believe that sharing their own personal views might infringe upon the religious freedom of the other person. Few are even aware of our great

evangelical heritage, particularly within our Universalist ancestry. Universalism was the sixth largest American denomination in the 1840s due to evangelism by ministers such as Reverend Hosea Ballou—an outstanding orator who countered the "Great Awakening" conservatives. While many churchgoers were being harangued as innately depraved and already doomed to eternal damnation, Reverend Ballou was gently and joyfully sharing the good news of universal salvation.

Nineteenth century Unitarianism and Universalism enjoyed popularity in large part because of an aching spiritual need that the sin-saturated Calvinist theologies could not and would not address. Both denominations began as radical and optimistic Christian heresies in response to the grim doctrines of eighteenth century Calvinistic Puritanism. I perceive a strikingly similar need today in the midst of conservative fundamentalist Christians inserting religious beliefs into the political arena. I believe people do want to be an active part in creating love, experiencing compassion and embracing humanity. We are weary of being afraid but do not know how to escape from the clutches of fear mongering.[39]

Unitarian Universalists must overcome their reluctance to evangelize—an activity that sometimes leaves a bitter taste in the Unitarian Universalist mouth due to its Christian origin, its present association with conservative fundamentalism and a perception of emotionalism rather than rationalism. John C. Morgan, the district extension minister of the Joseph Priestly District of the UUA, is a strong advocate for Unitarian Universalist evangelism. He says, "The whole purpose of evangelism is to tell the good news so that others may share in its blessing," while cautioning us that "the lessons of our Universalist evangelists might be that we need to heed their cry for sharing

our faith with others, but become wiser about how we plant the seeds of organization." (Alexander 1994, 21, 26)

Proper planning within a prevailing organizational culture is important but Unitarian Universalist congregations must also prepare and learn how to graciously accommodate inevitable change without splintering—unless to do so improves pastoral services within the larger community. Individualism is so important to Unitarian Universalists that a natural tension arises between supporting personal growth needs and loyalty to a higher cause. Balancing that tension will enable Unitarian Universalist individuals and congregations to improve their outreach to other individuals desperately in need of our saving message.

Evangelism entails sharing a vision intended to transform the world. In order to evangelize an individual, congregation or denomination must understand the vision and commit to a life response based on that vision. The Unitarian Universalist vision is not the goal of uniformity of thought, but one of positive freedom. Fromm reminds us that "positive freedom as the realization of the self implies the full affirmation of the uniqueness of the individual." (Fromm 1941, 263) Living and sharing the Unitarian Universalist principles is an act of creative love celebrating positive freedom. We transform the world by optimizing what it means to be human. Possession of three distinct attributes with corresponding needs define what it means to be human—the physical, psychological and spiritual. The prevalence of the sacredness of the trinity may be a reflection of human nature in the symbol of God.[40]

The physical attribute is the easiest to ascertain while the distinction between the psychological and spiritual is frequently blurred. The seemingly contradictory human

need for both independence and security is best understood when a clear line is drawn between the psychological and the spiritual. The psychological aspect of humanity allows us to mentally process an event while the spiritual converts that event into a meaningful experience. We need to be able to analyze a situation but we must also be able to emotionally immerse in it in order to feel whole and connected.

Abraham Maslow, Viktor Frankl and Erich Fromm identify a variety of human needs and motivations I believe can be compressed into a single need for each aspect of humanity. To optimize the physical aspect we must be well. To optimize the psychological aspect we must be free and independent within the context of relationship. To optimize the spiritual aspect we must be secure in our connections with not only other people, but also our environment.

Unitarian Universalism recognizes and responds to these needs in its commitment to social justice.

- Eliminating poverty, providing universal health care and protecting the environment address our physical health.
- Standing up to oppressive regimes and encouraging the development of personal theologies address our psychological health.
- Establishing communities to provide comradery, encouragement and support addresses our spiritual health.

A unifying myth with a corresponding ritual binds these three aspects into a cohesive faith—celebrating the courage that arises when doubt, reason and faith unite in a healthy communal relationship, resulting in unique individuals exercising responsible choice to actualize the meaning of life.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INVITATION

Rev. Gregory Wilson and I felt it important to share our ritual experience with other Unitarian Universalists so we created a packet for use by other congregations. Not only do we describe the ritual, we provide useful information for adapting, planning and executing the service independent of our involvement. The service is suitable for small, medium and large congregations as it can be scaled back or elaborated to the extent practical. Appendix A illustrates and describes a sample invitation for congregations wishing to establish a more formal environment for the service or extend invitations beyond those reached by congregational publications.

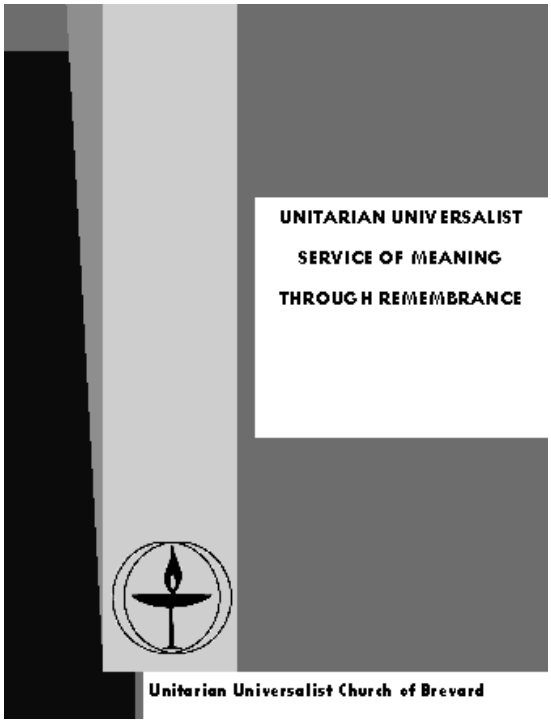


Figure 7. Cover of the UU Service of Meaning Invitation

Interior Text (left):

You are invited to a Unitarian Universalist Service of Meaning Through Remembrance. In this service we will open a window into our history and honor the sacrifices made by our spiritual predecessors, the Socinian community living in Poland in the 17th century.

It is our belief that remembering the strength and commitment of our faith ancestors will inspire and encourage us to be faithful to our UU tradition in a complex and troubling time.

Our hope is that this service will nurture our individual spiritual lives and the bonds of our community.

Interior Text (right):

The service will be held

On Day, Month #, 200#

At 6:00 in the evening

At Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

123 Main Street

Anytown, USA 32904

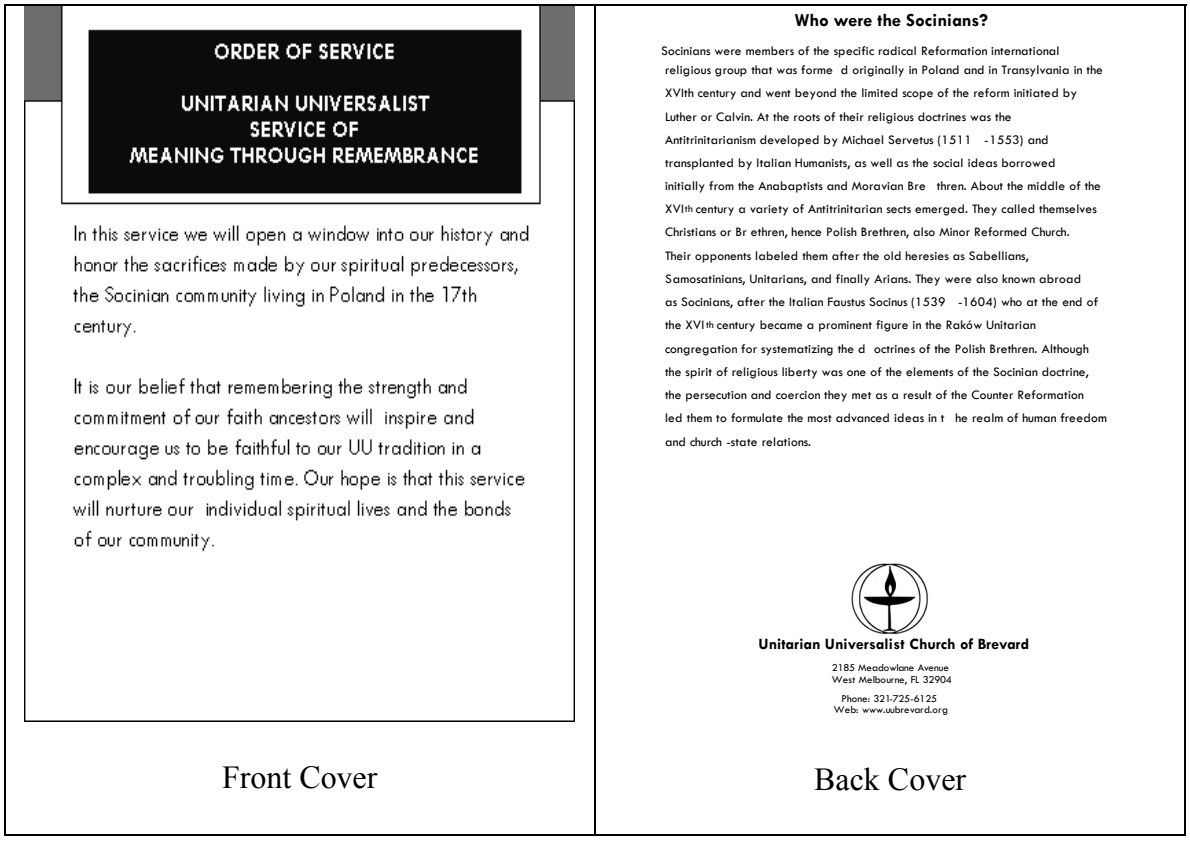
The service will be immediately followed by dinner in the social hall.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE ORDER OF SERVICE

This specific Order of Service (Fig.8 and 9) was used at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brevard on March 5, 2005 for the second performance of the ritual.

Figure 8. Sample Order of Service (Exterior)



ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude	Musica Polonica
Opening Words	Gregory Wilson
Pillar Lighting	Ann Fuller
Responsive Reading **Confederation of Warsaw 1572 and "We Need One Another" by George Odell**	Ann Fuller
Remembrance Drama	Gregory Wilson& Ann Fuller Rita Aranna, Dennis Fariello, Dave Hofman, Celia Phillips, and Bill Whitehead
Reflective Reading:	Ann Fuller
Closing Words	Gregory Wilson
Candle Recessional	Congregation

Please join us in the social hall for a communal meal following the service.

Pillar Lighting

We light this flame in remembrance of our spiritual predecessors, the men and women before us whose courage and convictions brought us to this present hour.

We light this flame in affirmation of the strength that is not only theirs, but ours to possess, granting us the potential to create a world community in which religious tolerance is experienced by all.

We light this flame in hope that we will not falter on our path towards peace and justice and in the assurance that we will give aid and comfort to our brothers and sisters who should stumble.

We light this flame in affirmation of our faith, that our minds be enlightened and our hearts opened. So may it ever be.

Responsive Reading

Since there is in our Republic no little disagreement on the subject of religion, in order to prevent any such hurtful strife from beginning among our people on this account as we plainly see in other realms,

we mutually promise for ourselves, and our successors forever, under the bond of our oath, faith, honor and conscience, that we who differ with regard to religion will keep the peace with one another,

and will not for a different faith or a change of churches shed blood nor punish one another by confiscation of property, infamy, imprisonment, or banishment, and will not in any way assist any magistrate or officer in such an act.

We need one another when we mourn and would be comforted. We need one another when we are in trouble and afraid. We need one another when we are in despair, in temptation, and need to be recalled to our best selves again.

We need one another when we would accomplish some great purpose, and cannot do it alone. We need one another in the hour of success, when we look for someone to share our triumphs.

We need one another in the hour of defeat, when with encouragement we might endure, and stand again. We need one another when we come to die, and would have gentle hands prepare us for the journey.

All our lives we are in need, and others are in need of us.

Figure 9. Sample Order of Service (Interior)

NOTES

[1] http://www.uua.org/programs/congservices/uncommon/index.html

[2] Examples of sermons that address this issue can be found at the following websites.

http://www.uurockford.org/sermons/S2003-21%20Good%20Without%20God.htm
http://www.uufr.org/events/sunday/2000/what.church.believes.html
http://uupensacola.org/previous%20sermons/26sep99.html
http://www.wildflowerchurch.org/index_files/Archived_sermons/martin.html
http://www.fuusm.org/srm020324.htm

[3] The dispute over whether Unitarian Universalism is a religion carries more serious repercussions than simply academic debate. "On May 18, the Texas state comptroller ruled that the Red River Unitarian Universalist Church was not a "religious organization" for tax purposes. The comptroller based her denial of tax-exempt status on the fact that "the church does not have one system of belief" and does not require belief in a deity."
http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050808/OPINION/508080341/1002

The Comptroller later reversed her decision but only under pressure from religious liberty organizations. Her position stance is important to consider as she has declared her candidacy in the Texas gubernatorial race.

[4] William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), minister of the Federal Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts, 1803-42, was a spokesman during the Unitarian controversy for those liberal—or Unitarian—churches within Massachusetts' Standing Order of churches. His published sermons, lighting a path between orthodoxy and infidelity, were widely influential abroad as well as throughout the United States. His Christian humanism inspired both religious and literary features of the Transcendentalist movement. An exemplar of Christian piety and a champion of human rights and dignity, he effectively fostered social reform in areas of free speech, education, peace, relief for the poor, and anti-slavery. http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/williamellerychanning.html

[5] Unitarian Universalism is able to claim a wide range of famous members throughout American history although it is uncertain whether these individuals would seek to join contemporary Unitarian Universalist congregations or even recognize them as such. Despite the dissimilarity between the denominations today and in the18th and 19th centuries, there is no question that Unitarians and Universalists have made an impact

on our society in large proportion to membership numbers. The faith can legitimately acknowledge four Unitarian Universalist presidents and lay dubious claim to Thomas Jefferson as a fifth. A list of famous Unitarian Universalists categorized by occupation can be found at http://www.famousuus.com/

[6] http://www.uua.org/clf/

[7] The website for the Unitarian Universalist Christians describes their organization as "a liberating faith that has its heart, mind, and spirit, in Jesus but not any creeds about Jesus." This definition essentially renders Christian the modifier rather than the noun, particularly to traditional trinitarian Christian sects. http://uuchristian.org/

[8] The website for World Pantheism in Unitarian Universalism provides an example of how modifier and noun are used almost interchangeably. "World Pantheism is a religious orientation in the same sense that atheism, Christianity or Judaism are. It is a position about our place in Nature and the Universe. Many people need both a social context AND a belief context in order to feel comfortable with their place in society and the universe. There are pantheist Unitarian Universalists, just as there are pagan, Humanist, Christian, or Jewish Unitarian Universalists." http://www.pantheism.net/uu/uupantheists.htm

[9] Robert Sardello is a pioneer in bringing the concept of Soul back into consciousness. Building on the works of Jung, Steiner and on his collaborations with James Hillman and Thomas Moore, he wishes to evoke a sense of the world as soul-filled and alive. Through his School of Spiritual Psychology, and courses taught in many locations, Sardello uses careful and closely-reasoned deliberations to pull open complex issues of our time so that we can breathe again as soul-and-spirit-embodied beings in this gracious world. http://www.banyen.com/INFOCUS/SARDELLO.HTM

[10] Thomas Moore's brief autobiography can be found at http://www.careofthesoul.net/bioframe.htm

[11] Forrest Church is currently serving his twenty-seventh year as Senior Minister of All Souls Church (Unitarian) in Manhattan. He was educated at Stanford University (A.B., 1970), Harvard Divinity School (M.Div. 1974), and Harvard University, where he received his Ph.D. in Early Church History (1978). http://www.allsoulsnyc.org/whoweare/ministers/forrest.htm

John A. Buehrens is a former President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, minister, activist and author. His most recent book is Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals.

[12] John O'Donohue is an Irish poet and philosopher who lives in the solitude of a cottage in the West of Ireland and speaks Gaelic as his native language. He has degrees in philosophy, English literature and was awarded a Ph.D in philosophical theology from the University of Tubingen in 1990. http://www.jodonohue.com/biography/

[13] Peter Bowden: http://www.peterbowden.com/clipart/chalices/uu_yinyang.gif and http://www.channinguuc.org/ic9.gif

[14] A college teacher of literature, Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) was an editor and popularizer of comparative mythology. He created comprehensive theories of mythology that synthesized the discoveries of modern science, psychology, art history, and literature and used modern media, including television, to popularize his subject. http://www.bookrags.com/biography-joseph-campbell/

[15] Freud worked with the mentally ill and Skinner worked with animals and statistical descriptions of people. Maslow held a more positive view of human nature and human capacity focusing on what allows humans to progress rather than dwelling on illness and abnormality.

[16] World-renowned thinker, author, and advocate of evolutionary child-rearing practices, Pearce has expertise that spans a broad range of disciplines: psychology, anthropology, biology, and physics. He has been a seminal figure in the study of human consciousness and child development for over a quarter century. http://www.wie.org/bios/joseph-chilton-pearce.asp

[17] Jack Kornfield, Ph.D., was trained as a Buddhist monk in the monasteries of Thailand, Burma, and India, and has taught meditation worldwide since 1974. His work has focused on bringing alive the great Eastern spiritual teachings in a way that is accessible and truly helpful to our western society. He is a husband, a father, and a founding teacher of Spirit Rock Meditation Center and the Insight Meditation Society. He also holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. http://www.itaconferences.org/presInfo.asp?pid=14

[18] Definitions from http://www.answers.com

- Psychoanalysis: The method of psychological therapy originated by Sigmund Freud in which free association, dream interpretation, and analysis of resistance and transference are used to explore repressed or unconscious impulses, anxieties, and internal conflicts, in order to free psychic energy for mature love and work.

- Individual Psychology: A theory of human behavior emphasizing the drive to overcome feelings of inferiority by compensation and the need to achieve personal goals that have value for society.

[19] Pascal Boyer is the Henry Luce Professor of Individual and Collective Memory, College of Arts and Sciences, Washington University in St. Louis. http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~pboyer/

[20] A recent conversation with an acquaintance revealed that despite her and her husband's growing alarm regarding President Bush's policy decisions, they still feel compelled to support him simply because he holds the office of President. They have become unable to distinguish between the constitutional office and the human being temporarily exercising the duties incumbent upon that office.

[21] An internet search of mainstream American media for July 8, 2005 did return a handful of stories on the Sudan but none were featured on the front page or highlighted on section pages. Only by searching the news sites with the word "Sudan" was I able to find current reporting.

[22] "Such greetings were not merely pious niceties. The church Paul knew met in households. Paul expected and depended on Christians' opening their homes (and thus their biological families) to Christian brothers and sisters (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:15; Col 4:15; Philem 2). Such hospitality extended to a wide network of Christians, including missionaries and those on business trips (2 Cor 8:23). By so opening their homes, these Christians in effect recognized and welcomed "relatives" near and distant." http://ivpress.gospelcom.net/title/exc/4974-X.html

[23] Singing the Living Tradition, #212

[24] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi was awarded the "Thinker of the Year" award by Brain Channels in 2000 for his Flow Theory of optimum experience. http://www.brainchannels.com/thinker/mihaly.html

[25] WORLD SCRIPTURE
A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts
Dr. Andrew Wilson, editor
International Religious Foundation, 1991
http://www.unification.net/ws/

[26] Bishop Spong has been a strong proponent of feminism and gay rights within both the church and society at large. Towards these ends, he calls for a new Reformation, in which many of Christianity's basic doctrines should be reformulated. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Shelby_Spong

[27] Eugene d'Aquili, M.D., Ph.D., was a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania for twenty years. His numerous books include Biogenetic Structuralism; Brain, Symbol and Experience; and The Mystical Mind. Dr. d'Aquili died in August 1998. http://www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/index.cfm?author_number=610

[28] Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro , 1870–1966, Japanese Buddhist scholar, educated at Tokyo Univ. After studying (1897–1909) in the United States, he became a lecturer at Tokyo Univ.; he later taught at leading universities in Japan, Europe, and the United States. In his day, Suzuki was a leading authority on Buddhism and is known for his introduction of Zen Buddhism to the West. http://www.factmonster.com/ce6/people/A0847346.html

[29] From the announcement in the *World* of a UU-Zen retreat with Rev. James Ishmael Ford, March 1996

[30] While Unitarian Universalism moved away from creeds, and even a requirement to believe in God, the denomination did not lack prominent twentieth century theologians.

James Luther Adams (1901-1994) was a Unitarian parish minister, social activist, journal editor, distinguished scholar, translator and editor of major German theologians, prolific author, and divinity school professor for more than forty years. Adams decisively shaped the minds of hundreds of students in preparation for the liberal ministry, and other scholarly professions as well. Adams was the most influential theologian among American Unitarian Universalists of the 20th century, and one of the finest 20th-century American liberal Christian theologians generally. http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/jameslutheradams.html

Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000) was the 20th century's leading exponent of process theism. In his long career of more than 70 years, he vigorously defended the thesis that God presides over an everlasting universe as its eminent creative power and is supremely open to creaturely influence. Hartshorne navigated between what he considered the Scylla of traditional theisms and the Charybdis of atheistic humanisms. He maintained that his philosophy, which he called "neoclassical theism," is logically more coherent than these rivals, more sensitive to human and non-human values, and in better agreement with the sciences. http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/charleshartshorne.html

Johannes Abraham Christoffel Fagginger Auer (1882-1964) was a Unitarian minister, author, professor of Church History and of the Philosophy of Religion at the Tufts College School of Religion, and Parkman Professor of Theology at the Harvard Divinity School. He was probably the first and only Humanist professor of theology in the United States. http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/johannesauer.html A.

Powell Davies (1902-1957), a Unitarian minister, was a renowned orator and a prominent social activist for civil liberties, government accountability, civilian control of atomic energy, family planning, and desegregation. As a denominational leader, he helped push for the formulation of a more visionary and explicit statement of Unitarian faith that contributed to congregational extension. http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/arthurpowelldavies.html

Henry Nelson Wieman (1844-1975) Wieman has often been cited, along with the Jesuit paleontologist, P. Teillard de Chardin, and the mathematician-philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, as one of the three great pioneers during the first half of the twentieth century who began to forge an interpretation of Western religion that would constructively relate it to contemporary scientific views of the nature of things. http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/unitarians/wieman.html

[31] Building Your Own Theology by Richard S. Gilbert is available at the Unitarian Universalist Bookstore http://www.uua.org/bookstore/index.php

- Vol. 1 The classic model for developing a personal theology. Begins with an introduction to the Purposes and Principles. Participants will learn the critical steps towards creating a personal credo--a specific set of meanings, values and convictions that inform and direct the living of one's life. (UUA) 2000. 112 pp.

- Vol 2. Participants fully develop and articulate their own set of religious meanings, values and beliefs. This 10-session program includes essays for participants to read before meeting. (UUA) 2005. 112pp.

- Vol. 3. Ethical scenarios challenge participants to consider the real-life implications of their UU beliefs in a variety of ways. 8 sessions of extensive readings with resource materials. Comprehensive bibliography for further study. Participants are encouraged to have their own copies of this program. (UUA) 1994. 64 pp.

[32] Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders - Fourth Edition (DSM-IV), published by the American Psychiatric Association, Washington D.C., 1994, the main diagnostic reference of Mental Health professionals in the United States of America including: description, diagnosis, treatment, and research findings.

[33] Detailing the neurological conditions resulting in a transcendent experience is beyond the scope of this paper. The Newberg 2001 and Pearce 2002 texts cited in the Bibliography provide excellent biological explanations for the lay reader.

[34] Gregory V. Wilson is a Fellow with the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and an ordained Minister. Gregory earned his M.Div. degree at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, continued his studies with doctoral work at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and received his D.Min. from Columbia Theological Seminary, in Decatur, Georgia. Gregory is a certified practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, a supervisor in Belief Systems Therapy, creator of a program of Congregational Pastoral Care and Education and was trained in Clergy Consultation by Alban Institute. Gregory has a private practice in Vero Beach and Stuart, Florida offering individual, couple and family counseling. He is a specialist in relationships and uses family systems, psycho-dynamic theory and a focus on spiritual transformation as the foundation of his work. Gregory is the creator of Belief Systems Therapy,™ which has been used in workshops and groups since 1989. http://www.uubrevard.org/minister.htm

[35] Every man "ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience." - George Washington (Letter to the United Baptist Churches in Virginia in May, 1789)

"During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity; in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution." - James Madison (Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments, 1785.)

"The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, nor shall any national religion be established, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience be in any manner, or on any pretence, infringed." - James Madison (Original wording of the First Amendment; Annals of Congress 434 (June 8, 1789).)

"As the Government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility, of Musselmen; and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mehomitan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries." - (Treaty of Tripoli, 1797 - signed by President John Adams.)

"As to religion, I hold it to be the indispensable duty of government to protect all conscientious protesters thereof, and I know of no other business government has to do therewith." - Thomas Paine (Common Sense, 1776.)

"That religion, or the duty we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience." -Patrick Henry (Virginia Bill of Rights, June 12, 1776.)

"History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government. This marks the lowest grade of ignorance, of which their political as well as religious leaders will always avail themselves for their own purpose." (Thomas Jefferson to Baron von Humboldt, 1813)

[36] Examples include:

- Indiana: In a divorce settlement, Judge Bradford took the initiative to forbid a child's parents from exposing their son to "non-mainstream religious beliefs and rituals." http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050526/NEWS01/505260481

- North Carolina: The pastor of a small Baptist church has refused calls to take down a sign posted in front of his church reading "The Koran needs to be flushed," saying Tuesday he has nothing to apologize for. http://newsobserver.com/news/ncwire_news/story/2439884p-8844338c.html

- Florida: Americans United for Separation of Church and State today asked a federal court in Florida to block public high school graduation ceremonies from occurring in a church sanctuary that features a 25-foot cross http://www.au.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=7381&news_iv_ctrl=1241&abbr=pr

[37] The Socinian community engaged in social and religious debate arguing over such topics as obligatory military service, distribution of wealth and payment of taxes. The process of free and public debate was every bit as important as any consensus reached by the community.

[38] The Rev. Dr. Jack Mendelsohn was the recipient of the 1997 Award for Distinguished Service to Unitarian Universalism. Mendelsohn has been a UU minister and a leader for social justice for half a century. He has been a recognized activist for racial justice nationally, within the UUA, and in the communities where he has served as minister, including Chicago and Boston. Mendelsohn was a candidate for the UUA presidency and has served as president of the UU Ministers Association, vice president of the UU Service Committee, chair of the board of Beacon Press and more. He is the author of seven books, including Being Liberal In An Illiberal Age: Why I Am a Unitarian Universalist and Channing: The Reluctant Radical. http://lists.uua.org/pipermail/uua-l/Week-of-Mon-19970428/000082.html

[39] The following two examples are hopeful indications of a shift away from the success of personal attacks on marginal groups such as homosexuals, liberals and Muslims and appeals to fear based on the threat of terrorism.

In a special congressional race on August 2, 2005 Democrat Paul Hackett lost to Republican Jean Schmidt by a margin of 4 percentage points. The margin is incredibly narrow considering President Bush won that district with 64 percent of the vote nine months earlier and the former Republican representative regularly won with 60-70 percent of the vote. Mr. Hackett's routinely criticized the corruption and fear mongering of the Bush administration and Schmidt campaign. His responses to the right wing conservative stance regarding such issues as abortion and same-gender marriage were in complete opposition rather than conciliatory disagreement. Information from: http://www.wcpo.com/news/2005/local/08/02/race_results.html and http://www.hackettforcongress.com/

"In the fourth quarter of 2004 Al Franken's ratings in New York were 44% of Rush Limbaugh's. In just 3 months that ratio rose to 60%; that is bad news, but not for Air America. In the same New York winter 2005 ratings, Air America's Randi Rhodes, on in the crucial afternoon drive-time, went up 33%, while the conservative talk shows in the same time slot on WABC and WOR each went down 33%. Air America's evening show, *The Majority Report* starring Janeane Garofalo and Sam Seder went up 100%; while the WOR show in that time slot was flat and the WABC show went down 33%. In total audience, *The Majority Report* was the number one talk show in New York City in its time slot." Quoted from http://blogcritics.org/archives/2005/07/27/133632.php

[40] Triads abound when considering the nature of God. In the west, the most obvious example is the trinitarian theology of Christianity in which God is experienced in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This response to understanding the nature of Jesus took several centuries to develop and is still not entirely understood by many of the laity. Additionally, while both the Roman and Orthodox churches adopted trinitarianism as doctrine, their interpretation of the components is not in accord. The Quran presents the nature of God in three recurring basic themes: Creator, Refuge and Judge. This tension between God as pure unity and yet the source of a diverse creation and the paradox of refuge and judge became a serious question from the beginning. The theological responses to this dilemma evolved over time and are still debated today.

In the East, Hinduism expresses the three forms of "God manifest in all life: creation, substance and dissolution" (Bowker 2002, 90) in the Trimurti consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and Shiva the destroyer. Daoism maintains the Three who are "decisive agents in bringing the manifest world into being." (Bowker 2002, 154) The Asian triad of heaven, humans and earth are one way the Three is perceived.